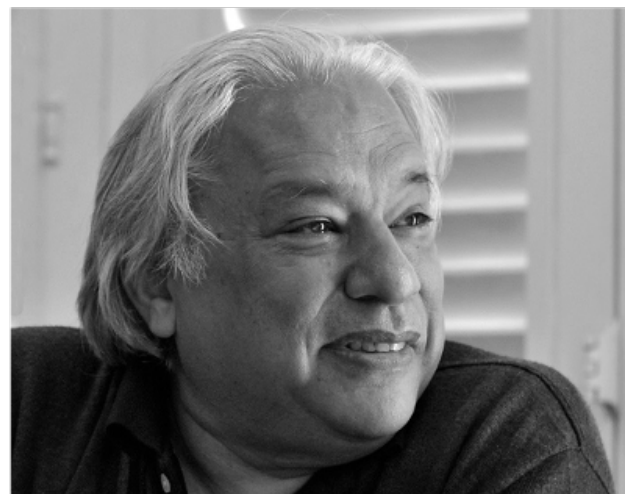


Pide P&R Talks To Lead Thinkers

Arif Hasan

Arif Hasan has defined the Pakistan's architect, planning and urban activism culture. He has a keen eye on urban issues, street economy like no other, and he has been involved in dialogue on cities, planning and architecture in country for decades. His work in Karachi and other parts of country has invited great attention and laud; therefore, the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics invited him for a talk. In the following lines, we are presenting his interview and responses to our questions.



PIDE: Do we have any good cities in Pakistan? Why do we have strong fascination with homes as we see our Schools, shops, warehouses are all developed in houses, largely. What has gone wrong?

A part of it largely is because of our colonial inheritance. Bungalows were the unit showing enrichment and affluence, and became important for elite. We never thought of planning in terms of essen-

tial services. We didn't develop cargo terminals etc. We are bound to have city master plans every 10 years which are not researched. These plans are designed around land speculations. Cities are empty with announced schemes. No regional plan to protect ecology or share resources. Urban land reforms essential. What you want our cities.

PIDE: If you're mandated to suggest urban reforms, what would you include in urban reform?

1. Non-utilization fee on certain types of development. Higher densities for higher and middle income groups.
2. By laws and regulations shouldn't be anti-streets and anti-mixed use. There should be institutions of research and development. Currently, LDA officer just scrutinizes the proposals by the rules he follows. Environmental impact assessment is highly rigged. Corrupt practices of approving maps, changes made in violation of law can be approved. Profession needs to change.

PIDE: Is there housing inadequacy in Pakistan? Is there homelessness in country?

There wasn't inadequate housing a decade ago, but now it's becoming reality. Can we support this high density? Formal developer comes in. there's demand. Process in place, has faulty process. First problem from politicians and real estate developers. Policy, teaching process, ground realities acceptance.

The Prime Minister's announcement of providing 5 million houses is unrealistic. Building 50,000 houses shall be an achievement as well. This is because poor can't afford the houses that are being built currently and on other hand state can't afford subsidising. Also, now there's lack of land now, and it is becoming a big issue. Until you approve legislation for the acquisition of land, we don't have land.

In order to develop the cities that are human-friendly, people need to have love for cities. The developers of NYC looted the land. The next generation developed the city.

PIDE: Why are our real estate developers working in silos and shadows?

There are rarely real estate developers listed big listings or in stock exchange. This is possible because the real estate developers can operate at small levels with higher profit margins. They prefer running 10 smaller projects with grater

accumulated profits than one big project. This way they can avoid formal procedures, labour laws, and can engage informal vendors. The flats built in this country are largely for higher income groups. Most are for speculations. There are 68,000 empty flats as per our estimates and more than 300,000 plots in the city. Therefore, these developers go for smaller projects as they can get through without following rules.

Rent laws are in favour of renter in Pakistan.

PIDE: There's seems to be no middle class in country, can most people afford the housing in Pakistan? what do you call middle class?

We call these people waiters. They wait all their lives to get some housing unit in reasonable area only to sell their house to get 5 smaller plots in far-flung area? In this country, poor can't get mortgage. By depriving the middle class of housing, we have lost the vision of city. Karachi's vision was to be world class city. Over the last 25 years we've replaced planning with projects. But there's no criterion to accept or deny the project. You get the money, and accept the project. More often than not, the projects have been failures. They overlook ordinary needs. As the money from project ends, the donors compile their reports and disappear. We are unable to think long-term and beyond documented rules.

For example, a justice ended 60-70 thousand jobs just by removing vendors through an order to implement a city plan. Even though this is according to law, but there is difference between law and justice. We should have that debate.

PIDE: Karachi has Katchi Abaadis and high-rise. Lahore and Islamabad don't have katchi abaadis. How do you see Punjab?

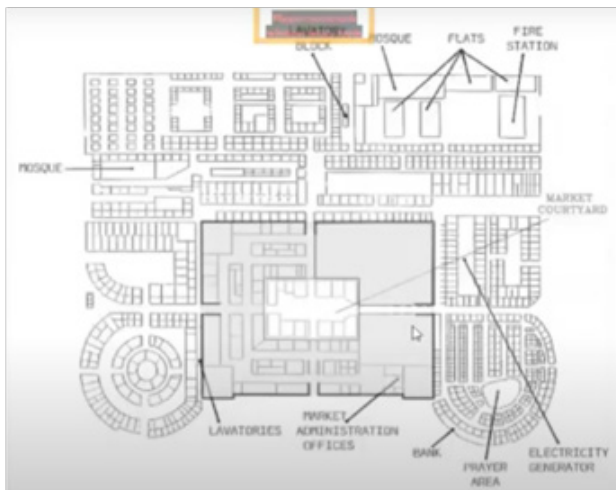
With some knowledge that I have, Faisalabad has 2,000 to 3,000 houses built in formal sector every year. In informal sector the number rises to approximately 10,000 to 15,000. The informal sector is discounted from agricultural land and is facilitated by patwaris, and MPA/MNAs help secure gas and water through their funds and streets are cemented. Many of these settlements are away from home. In cities there are housing schemes with expensive land that are lying empty. Because of motorbikes, there is increase in the sprawl. It is eating away agricultural land. That'll impoverish countryside and has already impoverished agricultural land.

PIDE: What does informal labour do to informal land? Street Vending is banned by court in Karachi.

In 1986 Vendors were being removed, I made a plan for rehabilitation as per training in the West. We thought it was a good plan. When I took it to the vendors, they literally tore it to shreds. They said it doesn't fulfil requirements. Urban Resource Centre started meeting and cooperating with vendors. And we published it all. In early 2000s we conducted a study and published it in book *The Hawkers of Saddar Bazar*. That study informed us that it wasn't about vendors, there's whole world of retailers, whole sellers, importers, exporters, urban cyclists that ends with vendors at tailing end. The study looked at various relationships that the vendors had with each other, their suppliers, the government agencies and those who extorted bhatta from them. It took 3 years to compile the study and we found that vendors were a small part of huge street economy.

PIDE: What are the effects of Supreme Court Decision on implementing City Plan?

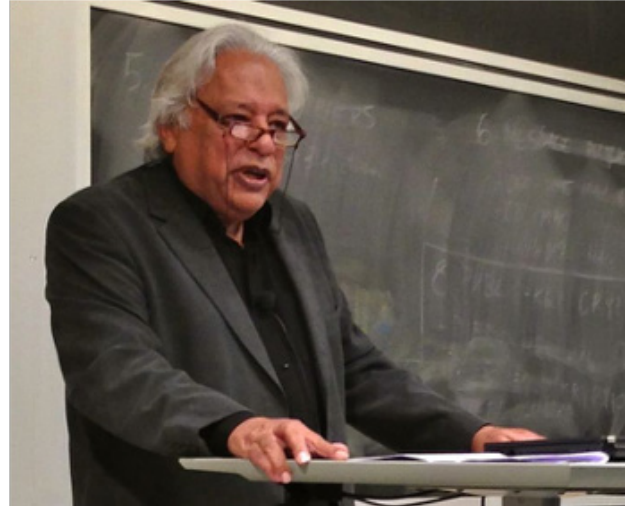
The supreme court ordered in 2018 the demolition post the 1975-85 plan. The street economy of Karachi was badly mauled.



The street economy is part of a larger informal economy which employs 72% of Karachi's workforce. All formal markets have active street economy around them. These places also become major transport hubs, and often because of vending activity, markets develop.

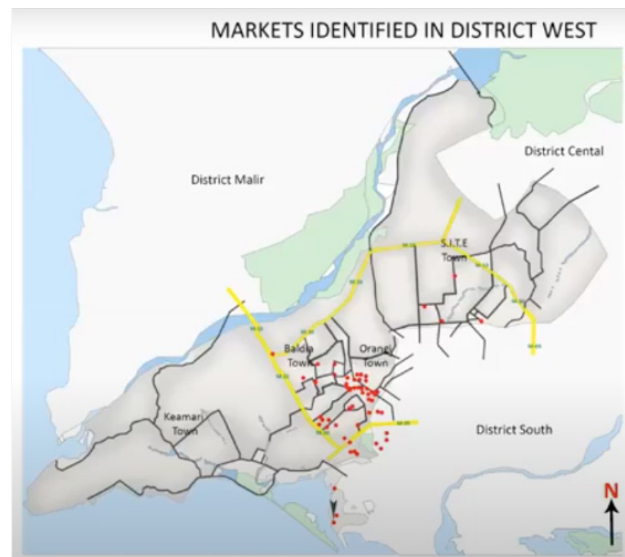
The Supreme court through its order of October 2018 ordered the removal of all street activity that was obstructing pedestrian and vehicular movement. According to Urban Resource Centre survey, it resulted in the demolition of

3,495 shops and removal of 9,000 hawkers including at least 82 women hawkers from empress market. In Saddar, it led to increase in Bhatta. Government promised alternative location, some who got were too far from original location. This time anti-encroachment drive was successful as compared to previous years.



There was huge economic and social including loss of social and economic informal relations build in last 70-80 years. The number of commuters has declined 50% after the demolition.

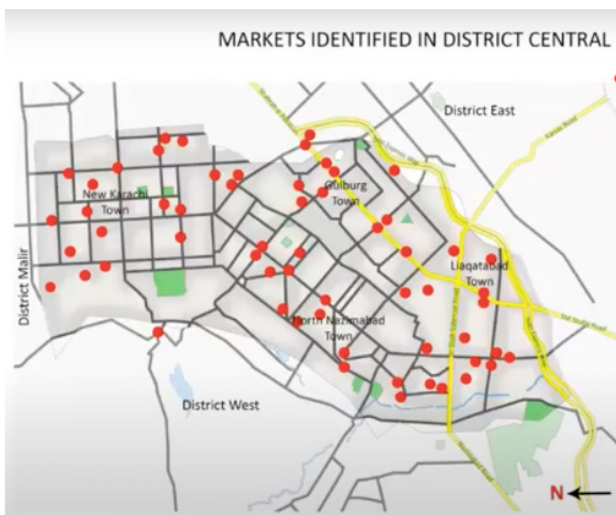
PIDE: What were the key take-aways of your study on street economy in Karachi?



In order to evaluate the size and impact of street economy, we studied District South and Orangi Town in District Wing and has included mapping of locations, scale, and nature of businesses. It took observation of thousands of hawkers, detailed interviews of 182 hawkers, formal business owners and customers. We used Dr Noman's 14 parameters including transport connections etc.

The hawkers are preferred to formal sector by low-income and lower middle-income groups because of selling approximately 20% cheaper, culturally closer to people and located at convenience. Some shopkeepers install hawkers in front of their shops intentionally to attract customers and increase sales. They paid Bhatta, paid to security guards, local government etc. It takes 20,000 to 25,000 to establish a business and the supply chain is complex.

Government has largely tolerated vendors and established bachat bazaars. Kiosks and shops established by the Mayors paid rents to local governments. Karachi Municipal Corporation built many shops and the government received the rents. Street economy grows significantly during the religious and celebratory occasions.



The major reasoning against regularization of bazaars is that the street economy disrupts pedestrian and vehicular movement, creates unaesthetic conditions in city and is unhygienic; and deprives the city of revenues as hawkers don't pay taxes. There is need to develop criteria for policy of regularizing the street economy of Karachi because it already exists and is an important part of informal economy. It generates 72% of jobs in city. 75% say that they have direct dealing with hawkers, dhabas, and informal eating places.

What are your policy recommendations in case of street economy?

It should not increase poverty, and cause no disruption to the existing economy. The policy must be placed in stage and in wake of COVID-19, there should a policy of no evictions and demolitions. Bachat Bazaar should be promoted and special bylaws and zoning regulations must be introduced for hawkers in parks and recreational areas. A special focus should be on hygiene of public toilets, and provision of clean water. There should be well-representation of stakeholders and civil society in policy formulation.

