

# FACTS & FIGURES

## Ruins without relief

Two catastrophic temblors jolted Awaran and Kech districts of Balochistan in September last year. While the episode has been obscured by a series of new headlines in media, miseries continue to shake the affectees. According to the data of the National Disaster Management Authority, 386 people were killed and 816 injured. Malar and Mashkai tehsils of Awaran were the worst hit. The NDMA confirms more than 32,000 houses were flattened out and more than 14,000 partially damaged. Unofficial sources claim that the digits are watered down. Numbers aside, death and devastation is certainly enormous. Life is still scrambling through the heaps of debris particularly in Awaran district. Countless people are still homeless taking shelter with their relatives and acquaintances in neighbouring Lasbela, Hub and other areas. Local communities bemoan that only a fraction of the promised compensation has been disbursed by the government. Hundreds of hapless families are unable to reconstruct their mud houses. Most of the schools and health facilities are not yet restored.

Balochistan is a chronic victim of natural and unnatural miseries. Earthquakes, floods and droughts keep visiting the province frequently. Socio-economic indicators of the province are at sub-human level and Awaran is among the bottom districts of the province. Awaran is victim of a double whammy i.e. distressful human development indicators and pervasive militancy. The district is among the least developed areas of the country and the disaster has further devastated the poverty-stricken people.

In a national ranking of districts carried out by a renowned research organisation Social Policy and Development Centre (SPDC), Awaran was 20th most deprived among 26 districts of the province in 2001. It ranked as 93rd most deprived among 100 districts in the country. Another study of SPDC "Social and Economic Development Ranking of Districts of Pakistan" also ranked Awaran at 84th number out of 94 districts. SPDC and the World Food Program reports show 54 per cent population as poor in the district.

Awaran is the 4th largest district of the province, sparsely populated with only four persons dwelling per sq. kilometre. According to the district profile of Awaran published by "Punjab Lok Sujag", agriculture and livestock are the two major sources of livelihood.

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## Lack of planning contributing to urban poverty

Pakistan is rapidly urbanising, cities have grown and are further rising. However, benefits generated by urban economies are not equally shared and poor people who migrate from rural to urban areas with the dream to become prosperous have to face many challenges. Urbanisation in Pakistan is only shifting poverty from rural to urban centres.

These ideas were shared by the participants during one day consultation on 'Understanding Urban Poverty — A way forward', organised by Oxfam here on Wednesday.

Talking on the occasion, urban planner Arif Hasan pointed towards several issues related to urbanisation in Pakistan which include rise in informal settlements, increase in urban poverty, poor water and sanitation management and related prevalence of health problems, lack of rights for urban women particularly those who are informally employed, rising urban food insecurity and lack of policy and action on urban disaster preparedness.

He said that Pakistan has changed urban definition; which has led to under-estimation of the urbanisation and has contributed in distortions of planning and policymaking. The settlements developed around cities have not been included in urban areas. The nature and magnitude of the urbanisation process has significant implications for the understanding of politics, governance and poverty alleviation. He further added that major factor in historical urban migration was peoples' willingness to settle in cities. They could easily find land to settle and have skills to earn.

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## Polluted underground water Water insecurity threatens survival of Malir dwellers

“Look at this well. We dug it up a few months ago, but it is also now contaminated. We are tired of looking for a land where we can find underground potable water to quench the thirst of our children.”

These concerns were not expressed by the people of Tharparkar district or those living in Kohistan or Kachho areas of rural Sindh, where clean drinking water is a rare commodity, but by people living in the centuries-old villages in the Malir district of Karachi. These villages were once fertile for agriculture purposes.



“The main water pipeline was laid down by our parents, who worked as labourers on daily wages. At that time, they had requested the contractors, government officials and politicians to provide a connection to our village as well. But their pleas fell on deaf ears,” said community chief MeeralJokhio, adding that the struggle to fetch clean drinking water continues till day as they dig up one well after the other.

To further assert his statement, Jokhio pointed his fingers to the nearby main water line passing through their village carrying water from Keenjhar Lake to Karachi.

### Self help

During a visit to the areas, it emerged that many people have dug up water wells and installed hand pumps near the agriculture lands, but hardly anyone gets potable water. The villages in the limits of UC DarsanoChano, UC Memon Goth, UC Ghaghar, UC Gadap and UC Gujro — part of Karachi metropolitan city — are the worst affected areas, where it is the job of the women to fetch drinking water.

The dumpy roads and streets of the villages are riddled with garbage leaving hardly any place to park vehicles. Flags of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) are hoisted on the houses with portraits of party leaders on the walls. But, looking at the poor condition of these people, it was evident how the incumbent rulers have ignored these ‘jijyalas’.

The villagers have made many attempts to install hand pumps in their village, but the underground water is brackish. Therefore, they have no other option but to walk a distance of one kilometre or so to obtain sweet water at the agriculture lands. “Earlier, we used to carry matkas (earthen pots) to fill up water, but now we have plastic drums. Some young women still carry matkas, but I prefer to go on a donkey cart to fill five to six drums which are sufficient for my four family members,” said HusnaKhaskheli of Khair Muhammad Khaskehli Goth.

“It takes a few hours if you walk,” she said, adding that some influential people with the help of relevant officials have obtained

illegal water connections from the main water line for their farms houses, but the villagers are deprived of this facility.

### Health woes

“Seventy per cent of the people living in Malir, Gadap and Bin Qasim areas have no tap water facility. Even those who have access to it are getting contaminated water,” said MumtazKhaskheli of the Health Nutrition Development Society (Hands) referring to a study conducted by his organisation in collaboration with the Aga Khan University.

The survey covers demographic, water, sanitation, hygiene and health issues. The findings of survey tell that every tenth person of this area is suffering from hepatitis. “The consumption of contaminated water is one of the factors behind the spread of diseases. I think this area is worst hit by hepatitis,” said Khaskheli, adding that three former union council nazims were among dozens of people who have lost their lives because of this deadly disease.

(By Hafiz Tunio, The Express Tribune, 20/01/2014)



## HRCP blames Rangers for Christians' exodus from Lyari

**R**angers are allegedly forcing Christian families to flee their homes in the Slaughterhouse area of Lyari with the help of gangsters as the paramilitary force plans to build its regional headquarters there.

This assertion was made by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) during a press conference held on Thursday at the Karachi Press Club where a few members of the evicted families were also present.

"We have reasons to believe that the paramilitary force is behind the evictions," claimed Amarnath Motumal, the HRCP head in Sindh. "They are using local gangs to intimidate the minority community members."

At least 550 Christian families living in the Slaughterhouse area, the rights group says, have left their homes since October 26, the day when members of an unidentified gang in Lyari killed at least three Christian men. The Rangers never came forward to provide them security.

"Although we do not have any proof but the residents believe the Rangers are responsible for the forced evictions as they did not act against those who were openly firing gunshots that day," alleged Zohra Yusuf, the HRCP chairman. "We have written to the [Sindh] chief minister and the Rangers director-general to look into the situation but to no avail."

The Christian community members claimed that the families were now living in various Christian neighbourhoods in the city and were afraid to return. "The families have shifted to Akhtar Colony, Korangi, Landi, Essa Nagri and their homes are now vacant. More families are packing up as the law enforcers are not taking any action against them [criminals]," said Peter Bernard, a former councillor from the Slaughterhouse area.

"The day the gang war elements attacked our homes, Christian women went to the Rangers soldiers and pleaded for security. But they refused to help saying they did not have orders from the high-ups."

Amarnath claimed that some powerful quarters had been after the land for a long time. "In 2001, I fought a case and won it for the residents. So I have every reason to believe that this is a conspiracy to get the lands vacated."

Rubina Masih lost her husband on October 26 when he was allegedly called out of their home and shot.

"The children were at school. One of the neighbourhood boys called my husband saying some people wanted to meet him," she said while talking to The News.

"He was not feeling well. But the boy kept on insisting, so he left. After 10 minutes, I heard gunshots and the boy came running to inform me that they had killed him," she narrated while breaking into tears. Now Rubina lives in Akhtar Colony with her four sons with the youngest four years old only.

The HRCP demanded that the government should provide the victims with security and help them return to their homes, where the community has been living before Partition.

(By Ammar Shahbazi, The News, 03/01/2014)

## Office of LDA director works torched

**T**he office of the Lyari Development Authority's (LDA) works department director was torched on Monday allegedly by some disgruntled people affected by the Lyari Expressway project. The office staff told the police that four armed men barged into the office near Civic Centre in the morning and subjected the workers to violence.

The unidentified men called them names for not paying them the compensation, subjected some of them to torture and later set the office ablaze after sprinkling petrol. Cupboards containing files and records and office furniture were gutted in the fire. The fire brigade officials said they had sent a fire tender to the LDA office after it was informed but when the fire fighters arrived at the spot, the fire had been put out by the staff.

The SHO of the New Town police station, Inam Hussain Junejo, claimed the men were some of those displaced by the construction of the Lyari Expressway who were not paid compensation by the LDA as announced by the government.

"The LDA staff claimed the attackers were armed and had brought petrol with them. They held the LDA staff hostage at gunpoint and then torched the office before fleeing." No case was registered till the filing of this report.

(By M. Waqar Bhatti, The News, 07/01/2014)



## Celebrating 'shattered' Karachi

For all those who have lost their precious lives and loved ones in violence that Karachi has long been engulfed in, Tehrik-e-Niswaan organised a theatrical and dance performance under the name, 'Celebrate Karachi' on Sunday.

Aptly titled as 'Kirchi Kirchi Karachi' (shattered Karachi), the Drama mustered quite a number of people who didn't seem to mind the cold weather as Sheema Kermani along with her students started her performance in the amphitheatre of Arts Council.

The Drama scripted and directed by Anwar Jafri, a veteran activist of the Tehrik, shed lights on how peaceful and enjoyable this city Karachi used to be. People from all walks of life lived freely here and shared happiness and sorrow alike.

The festivals were always celebrated with passion. "Eid, Naurooz, Holi, Muharram, Milaad, Deewali, how many festivals were there to find joys and meanings in," said the characters of the theatre. "We would just need an excuse, a chance, a day to celebrate and enjoy life through those events." But things changed, said another character, ruefully. To let the viewers know about the root cause of the growing intolerance that feed violence in our society, the script was meticulously written awash with satire and sarcasm towards the extremist elements of the society.

Between the lines, the dialogues of the actors trod upon the dangerous issues, criticizing Hudood Ordinance, Blasphemy Law, Declaring Ahmedis as 'infidels' and other steps State took in the past decades to impose a certain version or school of thought that waged a war against cultural diversity of this beautiful land.

The drama took another turn by highlighting the tireless efforts of Parveen Rahman, the slain Director Orangi Pilot Project, by depicting her inspiring story of helping the poor inhabitants of Orangi get rid of land grabbers and mafia. Although the situation is deplorable, the script goes, there are still people striving and struggling unabatedly for a better Karachi one of whom was Parveen, a pupil of Dr.Akhtar Hameed Khan who faced discrimination too when he was charged with blasphemy cases several times.

"Pity the leaders of this country, for one of them put prohibition on alcohol despite being a drinker, and another tried feverishly to implement Islam here forgetting he had nothing to do with religion," said a character in the drama, recounting the days when the very first initiatives of turning the society upside down were taken. "The holy Friday was now an off day instead of Sunday so that everybody could attend the 'Jumma Prayers'."

What received much applause was the mentioning of Saudi Arab, as a character maintains 'what a spectacular Islamic society the country is, where there is no crime, bribery, theft', to which another character retorts, "What about Kings who have always ruled there, and it's the only country, which is named after a 'family'!"

In order to promote religious harmony, tolerance between different ethnicities and cultural diversity, two awe-inspiring dance performances were presented. First came the Sindhi Jhomar by

Tehrik activists. Lastly, 'Hindu Sewa Group' gave the performance of 'Krishna Dance' that left the audience dumbfounded as they applauded their show. Afterwards, Sheema Kermani called upon Arif Hasan; a renowned architect and a colleague of Parveen Rahman, Arts Council Karachi President M Ahmad Shah and veteran activist and health worker DrSher Shah.

Speaking to the audience, Arts Council president said, "There has been a surge in theatrical activities lately, but unfortunately they are way too commercialised unlike Tehrik-e-Niswaan that works on social issues and remains open for the masses. We will organise the Tehrik-e-Niswaan Festival in May 2014 to highlight the massive work the movement has produced so far."

As the event came to an end, the air was filled with voices of different languages, varying dialects of people as they chatted joyfully, wearing colourful regional clothes, proving that the event did succeed in uniting people hailing from various ethnical backgrounds who can live in their city, Karachi peacefully. (By Fawad Hasan, DailyTimes, 06/01/2014)

### **"Urban Housing Policies and Approaches in a Changing Asian Context"**

**by Arif Hasan**

The paper originated as an outline for the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR) in 1992. It was developed into a paper for a policy seminar on 'Training for Housing and Development' organised jointly by the UNCHs (Habitat) and the Katholieke Universiteit, Leuven (Belgium). It has now been updated and jointly published by the ACHR, City Press and URC. Price Rs 50 excluding postage

## Urban Forum concludes with hint to preserve Karachi's character

Preserving a city's character and giving it a friendly living environment were the main themes of the final day of the 2nd Pakistan Urban Forum South Asian Cities Conference at the Frere Hall lawns here on Sunday.

Rafay Alam, a lawyer and director of the Urban Policy Unit, spoke about the Lahore Bachao movement that they had started a few years ago after the government, in 2006, decided to widen the Canal Road in Lahore to make more space for vehicles and help reduce traffic congestion. "Which, by the way," Rafay pointed out, "is a false notion".

He explained: "It would have only hurt the green belt and the trees bordering the canal for if you widen the roads, you'll only find more cars there.

The congestion wouldn't go away. That's when we started opposing this step and were successful in delaying it till the end of the financial year. The plan also got buried under the files for a few years after that until 2009 when someone thought about it again. That is when we went to court. It was a sight to have angry Lahoris shouting at the judges to save the 8,000 trees. But it was more than just about the trees, it was about saving Lahore's identity."

To make a long story short, they finally managed to exhaust the Supreme Court, which decided to set up a mediation committee that resulted in the passing of law in the form of the Lahore Canal and Heritage Park Act 2013. Moving on from this story of success, Rafay came to the subject of the right to mobility. The traffic congestion on the roads is really linked to the city not having walkways, cycling paths and having a poor public transport system.

"You need an infrastructure for people to be able to get around. But the government is more interested in improving roads but not really concerned about those who don't own cars," Rafay explained.

Picking up from where Rafay left off, Dr Andrew Charles Himes, the executive director of the Charter of Compassion, spoke about the Compassionate Cities Movement, the idea of Karen Armstrong, one of the most amazing writers of religion. "A compassionate city is one that works well for everyone. It is a city which allows everyone to say 'I am part of my community and I give to me city from my own individuality'," he said.

"When I once asked Karen Armstrong what she thought a compassionate city should be like, she told me that it should be a profoundly uncomfortable city that is never satisfied. It is a city that is concerned when a child is going to school without having breakfast, when someone doesn't have a decent place to live ... it is a city where a lot of social capital, collaboration, cooperation and care can help the oppressed be as comfortable as the rich citizens," he added.

To add to Dr Himes talk, businessman and activist Amin Hashwani also spoke about the Compassionate Cities Movement

in Karachi. "We were a very compassionate people in 1947, but we lost that somewhere on the way.

It is still in our DNA though, but we need to create a social environment to get back on track. We need to break down the barriers we have created within ourselves that keep us from caring for others. Treat others how you want to be treated yourself," he said.

Finally, archeologist and heritage conservationist Dr Kaleemullah Lashari spoke about the popular landmark of Karachi, the Metropole Hotel, that is in a state of ruin these days after being sliced into half with one side completely demolished. "The High Court judge wanted to know why I wanted to save the hotel and I told him that when my driver was confused about what route to take to reach the High Court I only asked him to head towards Hotel Metropole and take it from there and he had no problem reaching that point. It is that well-known a landmark," he pointed out before taking the audience on a nostalgic journey back to when the life of Karachi revolved around the hotel.

(By Shazia Hasan, Dawn, 13/01/2014)

### **The Unplanned Revolution Observations on the Processes of Socio-Economic Change in Pakistan By Arif Hasan**

The book describes the process of socio-economic change in Pakistan along with its actors and their relationship with each other on the one hand, and with the larger physical and political context on the other, as viewed by the author through his development related work and travels in the different regions of Pakistan since 1968. The writings identify past socio-economic conditions as viewed by the communities the author worked or interacted with, present conditions and emerging trends.  
Price: Rs.495.00 available at Oxford University Press

## Atmospheric pollution: Collect data before you start anti-pollution project

**T**he city is presently faced with serious levels of atmospheric pollution, especially in major traffic corridors.

Unplanned highrise buildings, concentric traffic patterns, use of adulterated oil and lack of maintenance of roads and vehicles have worsened the condition. These coupled with traffic composition and poor traffic management have led to significant emissions of greenhouse gases.

According to the findings of the 'Study of the Karachi Transportation Improvement Project', conducted in 2012 by the Karachi Traffic Engineering Bureau, the air pollution levels along the city's roads and at intersections far exceed the limits recommended by the National Environmental Quality Standards of Pakistan.

The same study also shared alarming figures on the estimated increase in vehicular load. Using sophisticated trip generation models, the number of trips generated was 29 million in 2020 and 33 million in 2030, which is the sum of the trips by travel mode. Compared to 2010, these values are 1.5 times and 1.7 times more, respectively. If urban spread continues at the same rate, the average time it takes to travel in the city will also increase.

### Get your facts

It is, nevertheless, unfortunate that the factors that are leading to an increase in traffic load and harmful emissions are not being addressed. There are grandiose plans to start a Bus Rapid Transit System, reviving the Karachi Circular Railway and introducing more CNG buses. By the way, what happened to the ones imported a few years back?. However, what is needed first is a comprehensive effort to understand the scale of the problem before planning and implementing new project-based interventions.

Firstly, the authorities must establish relations between the air quality of traffic corridors and the volume of the vehicles going through them, their movement and the development works around these traffic corridors.

There is an urgent need to document the emission levels from vehicular transport in primary traffic corridors, not on a random, but a continual basis for future reference. This will help determine how effective any greenhouse gas reduction strategies are for the promotion of environmentally sustainable urban transport.

Pakistan has a serious shortcoming in identifying what constitutes environmentally sustainable urban transport and there is an urgent need to document this issue. By applying modern information technology tools, the country needs to develop a model framework that can assess the effects of urban transport on air quality. They can also record air quality data on Geographic Information System (GIS) and develop relationships with other methods to reduce emissions.

This will have to be a goal-oriented exercise with a strictly observed schedule and use of high quality instruments that are placed in strategically located permanent 'monitoring and

documentation' stations to ensure the data-gathering procedure is reliable.

The starting point could be developing a selection criterion and identifying which corridors can be used for the study. A satellite map of Karachi will have to be prepared with the monitoring data that can be transferred from the field log in Global Positioning Systems (GPS) unit to the GIS. All information will have to be updated regularly and may be accessed by other users and stakeholders.

### Hidden costs

Traffic-related pollution is not only harming residents but also our architectural heritage, for example, parts of Saddar downtown. A serious shortcoming with us in all sectors of development is an aversion to collect comprehensive 'primary data' and establish the relevant trends and future scenarios.

As we make progress towards introducing large scale mass transit projects, there is a need to establish a comprehensive 'databank' through widespread survey and analysis to evolve an effective transportation management plan, along with an environmental management and emission monitoring plan, updated on a continual basis.

(By Farhan Anwar, The Express Tribune, 27/01/2014)

**URC News  
Clippings &  
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## Ruins without relief

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Out of 488 villages in Awaran and neighbouring Lasbela district only 83 have dispensaries. Most of these health facilities are ailing from shortage of doctors, paramedical staff, medicine and equipment.

At the time of earthquake, the district-headquarter hospital had only one doctor seen confounded to manage thousands of injured. Even first aid services were not available to meet the unexpected flow of patients. It compelled the authorities to transport hundreds of injured to Karachi and other areas to save their lives.

Poverty is rampant as 88 children out of 1000 live births die within five years and 47 per cent children are underweight. Women are at the bottom of the pit with only 11 per cent girls availing the luxury of secondary education. According to the district profile conducted by Balochistan's Planning and Development Department in collaboration with the Unicef in 2011, the total population of Awaran district stood at 124,000 and only 49 per cent of the people had national identity cards (NICs). Not having CNIC deprives one from even relief supplies during disaster and invites humiliation when roadside frisking is carried out by security agencies.

Immediately after the earthquake, relief operations were commenced. However, the efforts of national and international humanitarian groups suffered severe impediments mainly because of security related confinements. International aid agencies were not allowed to operate and national humanitarian agencies were denied a sacrosanct NoC and thus restricted from mobilising much-needed resources. All this was done under the pretext of security concerns.

While relief work was going on, an operation was also launched in the worst-hit parts of the district. Militancy is an undeniable reality in the area. There were instances when the government functionaries were intimidated and deterred from working in the area. Rockets were fired when the chief minister visited the area with his entourage. Baloch nationalist groups alleged that security agencies are trying to control the area hitherto dominated by insurgents. It triggered a fresh spate of skirmishes.

In such a hostile situation, local youth and male family members avoided risking their lives and thus couldn't move to collect relief goods as the routes were unsafe and local people, specially youth, were being stalked. It multiplied the miseries of ordinary disaster victims who suffered agonies and pains merely for belonging to this area. Women suffered the most as they remain immobile due to traditional strictures. Since male-folk could not move fearlessly, it deprived women affectees of food, medicine, water & sanitation and shelter support. Women-specific needs hardly drew any attention in this bedlam and chaos. In fact the government lost an opportunity to reintegrate the disgruntled local communities.

Because of harsh attitude of security personnel, local communities are already dejected. Restricting relief operation has further fortified their alienation. It would have been strategically prudent to facilitate relief work rather than hampering it to provide much needed solace to local communities. Thousands of affectees were denied rightful relief support due to unnecessary confinements.

Realising the intensity of miseries of local communities and lackluster relief work, at one stage the Chief Minister of Balochistan, Dr Abdul Malik, made a desperate appeal for international aid but the federal government rejected his requests and refused to issue no-objection certificates to the UN and other international agencies. Arguably, the appeal for international aid should be the last resort and one should realise that if a chief minister of the province resorted to that, it must have justified reasons.

If provinces are authorised to seek foreign loans and investments, there is no reason to deny their right to seek international support during emergencies if response is listless and insufficient. Whereas international aid appeal injures national self-esteem and pride, absence of adequate relief support hurts thousands of victims as well. Had there been a swift and sufficient local response, no one would have desired foreign charity.

Although international aid agencies were ostracised, some of them were willing to provide support through national humanitarian organisations but the enigmatic demand for NoC blocked all such initiatives. A simple NoC issued by the provincial authorities would have facilitated national humanitarian organisations to mobilize funds even without any appeal for international aid.

Surprisingly, the provincial government did not take up the issue with due seriousness. Although local authorities did not stop national humanitarian organisations from providing relief support, international aid agencies were reluctant to provide funding to national organisations in absence of NoC. Such approach of international humanitarian agencies, specially the UN, can also be questioned. Relief as a humanitarian support should not be subservient to host government's NoCs. There is no justification to deny humanitarian



support through national civil society on flimsy ground of no objection certificate. This confined national humanitarian organisations to rely only on meager local philanthropy which was soon dwarfed by the enormous needs on ground.

National Humanitarian Network (NHN), a network of Pakistani humanitarian organizations, also highlighted the plight of affectees due to insufficient aid, yet it fell on deaf ears of decision makers. Humanitarian response in conflict-stricken areas is a challenging task, yet it cannot be compromised because of security reasons. Thousands of disaster victims cannot be denied their right to receive relief aid at the time of misery, specially when it is a natural disaster.

State, civil society and international humanitarian community are under moral obligation to extend humanitarian aid even in the worse situation. What was even more ironic that while national civil society was restricted through NoC, religious outfits did not need such an exemption and operated freely to provide relief services. Whereas this act deserves appreciation, it has political dimensions as well.

Unlike civil society, faith-based organisations seize such opportunities to penetrate in local communities and proselytise their religious and sectarian dictums. It has been noticed during recent years that faith-based groups are facilitated to make inroads in disaster affected areas whereas civil society is systematically shackled and discouraged. This further shrinks space for already squeezed civil society. Disasters should be considered as humanitarian matter and access to relief should be considered as a basic right of affectees.  
(By NaseerMemon, The News, 26/01/2014)

### **Lack of planning contributing to urban poverty**

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But now landless people are forced to migrate as they have no skills and land is expensive hence these factors are contributing to urban poverty. He argued that urban planning has anti-poor bias and low quality services are provided in poor localities. Public sector allocates 35% per capita less investment in poor settlement. He further mentioned that citizens need to engage and make government responsive and accountable to the needs of poor.

Talking on the occasion Maryam Bibi a human rights activist from Peshawar said that civil society organisations can play an important role in organising and mobilising urban poor especially women to get their voice heard and make government institutions responsive and accountable.

Urban expert Imrana Tiwana rejected the argument that resources are limited, however she pointed toward the fundamental problem of development planning and allocation of resources to serve the limited percentage of rich population in urban areas. She suggested that urban areas need integrated development vision with an inclusive approach and preserving public spaces and cultural heritage.

Talking on the occasion Imtiaz Alvi from World Bank said that increasing population is putting pressure on urban population and Pakistan has highest urban population in South Asia. He suggested to finding mechanisms to create link between rural un-employed youth and urban employer. Deteriorated security is affecting cities, therefore, building peace and tolerance is important for urban prosperity. He emphasised that civil society can play an important role in strengthening citizens' voice in improving urban governance, planning and implementation of projects.  
(By Afshan S. Khan, The News, 09/01/2014)

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