**Levels of Planning in Pakistan**

**Urban Planning at National Level**

Pakistan once a predominantly rural country is now the most urbanized country in South Asia, with some 58 million people living in cities (estimates for 2007). In 2007, there were about 50,000 villages in the country with populations below 10,000; around 448 small towns with population less than 100,000; 40 medium size towns with population above 100,000; 7 metropolitan cities which include Faisalabad, Multan, Gujranwala, Hyderabad, Peshawar, Rawalpindi and Quetta with population in excess of I million; and the two mega cities (Karachi and Lahore).

The dynamics in the settlement system in Pakistan shows a tendency of people to move from small settlements to more urbanized centers in expectations of better employment opportunities and higher incomes. With the concentration of resources and more investment in industry and commerce the urbanization is likely to increase at a rapid pace. The urban population is therefore expected to rise by another 70- 80 million by 2030. Karachi and Lahore will be among the world’s leading mega cities.

The urbanization and urban development impact positively on urban growth due to the fact that the provision of infrastructure and housing enhances the efficiency of urban economy. However, the urbanization of land over surface and consumption of agricultural land have negative impacts on the environment. So, with rapid urbanization coupled with inadequate investment, the quality of infrastructure has deteriorated with the passage of time. Another impact of urbanization is that urban-rural diffusion is taking place alongside the major highways.

The Federal Government institutions are mainly responsible for providing physical infrastructure such as, power, telecommunications, highways/motorways and transport. The Federal Government has also promulgated the Act regarding environment protection and issued National Environment Quality Standards (NEQS). A National Housing Policy has also been formulated by the Government of Pakistan. It also prepares 5-10 years development plan for the entire country pertaining to various sectors including education, health, transport, housing and urban development, etc. Unlike other countries, there is no urban planning/town planning law either at national or provincial level.

**Urban Planning at Provincial Level**

Provincial and Local Governments play a vital role in the provision of urban and rural infrastructure like water and sewerage, inter-city and intra-city transport systems and some cases even electric power. The onus of land development and management is mainly rest with the Provincial/Local Government. In addition, the Punjab Housing and Town Planning Agency (PHATA) is responsible to establish a comprehensive system of town planning at provincial, regional, district, tehsil and union council levels in order to ensure systematic, integrated growth of urban and rural areas in the province of Punjab.

The main purpose of its establishment is to provide shelter to the shelter-less. In consultation with the provincial government it has to prepare schemes for different areas and implement parameters of national housing policy by coordinating with Federal Government, District Government, TMAs, concerned departments and agencies. In this regard, it facilitates housing through identifying/allocating land, finances, building material through various institutions. It identifies state and other land for developing low cost housing schemes and also facilitates construction of multi storey flats in order to provide affordable/cost effective housing. The agency has to establish a comprehensive system of town planning at provincial, regional, district, tehsil and union council level in order to ensure systematic, integrated growth of urban and rural areas in the province of Punjab. In this context, it has been in the process of formulating provi333ncial land use policy. The agency may declare any area as controlled area and all such preventive actions may be taken to control haphazard growth.

**Urban Planning at Local Level**

The planning and development activities local Level (particularly in large cities) are performed by the Local Government (LG) institutions and other agencies. The LG institutions include the City District Governments (CDGs), Town/Tehsil Municipal Administrations and the Union Councils (UCs). The spatial planning functions of the various tiers of LG are defined. The other agencies are; the development authorities (DAs), PHATA, cantonment boards, and Defence Housing Authority.

The Development Authorities (DAs) in major cities of Pakistan were created from time to time under various Acts/Ordinances. In Punjab, the functioning of DAs is regulated by the Development of Cities Act, 1976 and LDA Act, 1975. In addition, they have made their own building regulations/byelaws. The key function of the DAs is to prepare, implement and enforce schemes for housing, urban renewal including slums improvement and redevelopment. The other functions include the preparation of comprehensive development plan and periodically update the same; development, operation and maintenance of water supply, sewerage and drainage system within their area; and preparation, implementation and enforcement of schemes for solid waste disposal, transportation and traffic, health and education facilities.

The federally administered cantonment is a place in which part of the armed forces of Pakistan is quartered or where defence installations or production units are located. The Federal Government has the power to alter the limits of cantonment and also to create new cantonments. The cantonment board is authorized to prepare spatial plans in collaboration with union administration including plans for land use and zoning. The cantonment board exercises control over erection, re-erection of buildings, land use, land sub-division, land development and zoning by public and private sector for all purposes. The board enforces its own all municipal laws, rules and bye-laws governing different functions within its jurisdiction. The CDG’s rules of business do not apply within cantonment limits.

The Defence Housing Authority (DHA) is administered by the army authorities and its functioning is regulated by the DHA Order, 2002. The primary function of the authority is to develop housing facilities for its serving and retired personnel. The authority has the powers to plan new developments and projects including housing, infrastructure, commercial and amenities by acquiring land with its own resources. The area under its jurisdiction is its own master plan for entire housing estate. It follows its own rules and byelaws and no civilian authority or legislation has any bearing on it.

Under the PLGO 2001, all the TMAs are required to prepare spatial plans for their respective areas in collaboration with City District Government and Union Councils. Moreover, the TMAs are authorized to prepare land use and zoning plan of their area in the light of spatial plan/ master plan of the district. The main planning functions of City District Governments (CDGs) are to approve master plans, zoning, land use plans, including classification and reclassification of land, environment control, urban design, urban renewal and ecological balances and to review implementation of rules and bylaws governing land use, housing, markets, zoning, environment, roads, traffic, tax, infrastructure and public utilities.

Provisions for master planning can also be found as one of the functions of various (DAs) in primarily in large cities. Given the above facts and legal provisions, planning procedures and activities in Punjab are disintegrated and fragmented. Different planning and management agencies have overlapping planning functions and jurisdictions. This is due to the fact that various Ordinances, Acts and By-laws support these planning activities. The CDGs, Punjab Housing and Town Planning Agency, Town Municipal Administrations (TMAs), Cantonment Boards and DHA are all required to make urban development, master plans and schemes for urban service delivery. This muddled institutional system is resulting in uncoordinated planning and development within the urban structure and wastage of financial resources. This situation calls for a clear cut delineation of responsibilities of various planning agencies working in the large cities of Punjab.

Putting the above factors alongside the key role of our cities as engine of economic growth and what we want to get, there is a need for an economic growth strategy flavoured with physical planning at the city level, based on partnership with and understanding of the private sector, with the public sector doing the things which the private sector is not good at. This is the town planning which we need today for our cities.

**Legal Framework for Urban Planning**

There is no comprehensive legislation covering all town planning issues. Previously, the statutory powers were used from the Punjab Town Improvement Act, 1922, Municipal Administration Ordinance of 1960 and Local Government Ordinance 1979. At present, a muddled system of legislative framework related to town planning functions prevails in the province of Punjab. In a particular city existing statutory powers are emanated from various Acts/Ordinances. For instance, in Lahore, complexity of legislative framework could be seen with the fact that PLGO 2001, PHAT Ordinance 2002, DHA Lahore Order 2002, Development of Cities Act 1976 and LDA Act 1975 are in practice within the jurisdiction of the relevant agencies.

There is a need to introduce a comprehensive town planning act which cover the broad framework for development plans; resolve inter-district planning issues and defines human settlement pattern. It should also provide the regulation and planning of the use of land in cities and regional areas. Moreover, the desired legal cover for the implementation of zoning plan, land use plan, master plan and spatial plan will also be the component of the proposed act. The present functioning of PHATA suggests that its role and functions need to be redefined.