

ECONOMICS OF INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS AND THE POLICY RESPONSE

Khuwaja Shafique Ahmed¹, Muhammad Asfand Yar², and Jaweria Ali³

Abstract

Urbanization in Karachi is driven by numerous factors be it is search for a better life, quality education, access to healthcare services, employment, social security, and the natural growth of population. This has contributed to the rise of housing demand in Karachi, notwithstanding, increased the cost of housing in the city. The rising cost of housing has forced the middle and lower-middle-class to migrate to the suburbs of the city; this paved the way for the formation and expansion of informal settlements in Karachi. Slums in Karachi are formed exploiting the wide-spreading housing backlog, state and non-state actors collaborate and systematically grab land in perry-urban areas of Karachi and convert into an informal settlement, developing a sustainable source of income. This study was conducted in Karachi, Sindh and employed qualitative research methodology to assess the formation, expansion and flourishing of informal settlements and how Government of Sindh have responded in term of policy.

Keywords: Urbanization, Informal Settlements, Public Policy, Political Parties.

INTRODUCTION

Urbanization is a global phenomenon; it is irreversible and a continuous process. Pakistan has the highest rate of urbanization in the region and according to United Nations' Population Department estimates 50% population of the country shall be living in urban areas by the year 2025 (Government of Pakistan, 2015). Pakistan has been witnessing urbanization since 1947, but, in the last few decades, Pakistan has experienced an unplanned, messy, hidden, and horizontal expansion of urban growth at the rate of 2.7% per year which is fastest in South Asia (United Nations, 2018).

Urbanization is both an opportunity for rapid economic growth and a threat to the stability of the country. It does not take place in isolation; it creates several policy issues about the well-being of citizens and thus demands policy interventions (Almulhim and Cobbinah, 2023). Due to unplanned urbanization, Pakistan's mega as well as industrial cities have the potential to become hotbeds of discontent and unrest rather than the engines of growth and innovation. Because of urban sprawl, city administration struggles in providing adequate public services to its citizens. Such a scenario is not sustainable and ultimately hampers growth. Increasing urbanization has implications for the economy, the environment, infrastructure, and social services (Abadi, 2020). The urbanization offers a tremendous opportunity to transform the economy and enhance both livability and prosperity by investing in infrastructure and sustainable development initiatives. Countries that have joined the middle-income club have gone through industrialization and urbanization (Hussain, 2014) and vibrant cities can be a catalyst for the wider structural and economic transformation of any country.

Thus, the government's failure to manage urbanization causes the creation of slums and informal settlements in city suburbs. Slums, though, not just disfigure the beauty traditional cities; on the contrary

¹Lecturer, Department of Development Studies, HANDS Institute of Development Studies, Karachi, Pakistan. Email:Khuwaja.shafque@hands-ids.edu.pk

²PhD Scholar, Institute of Policy Studies, Universitie of Brunei Darusalam .Email:muhammadasfandyar78@yahoo.com

³Assistant Professor, Department of Development Studies, HANDS Institute of Development Studies, Karachi, Pakistan. Email:jaweriaali2@gmail.com

these also offer a case of human development (Malik and Wahid, 2014). Urbanization takes place because of rural-to-urban migration, people who migrate to cities are often found to be poor, who for a fleeting period seek shelter in the city surrounding (Vinke, 2020). War on terror, internal rifts, national calamities, and income disparities, better standards of health, education, and security motivate people at large to migrate to cities (Osman and Abebe, 2023). While there are many other reasons which encourage people in masses to develop and start living slum but to tackle slum issues it is necessary to investigate the pattern of slum formation in a specific geography (Hussain et al., 2023).

Hasan and Mohib (2003) state that “According to unofficial estimates, there are 702 *Katchi Abadi* in Karachi. Out of which 539 slums with 415,000 housing units have been officially declared as informal settlements by Sindh *Katchi Abadis* Authority, 483 have been identified to be regularized (SKAA, 2001). Even if we take random media reports, the number of slums is up to 600 in the city of Karachi. Urban sprawl has great implication on human development, Pakistan's poor economic conditions constraints its response to ever-growing urbanization and thus affects country commitments made on SDGs. Pakistan ranked 150 out of 189 UN member states (Human Development Indices and Indicators, 2018). And, when it comes to gender gap it stood on 148 out of 149 states during the year of 2018 making it the second-worst performer in the world on gender equality (World Economic Forum, 2018). Women share 49% in the national population as compared to 51% of men in Pakistan (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2017) but their overall participation in labor stand at 25.04 (Amir et al., 2018) mobility constraints, access to education, and family structure, etc. play an important for women to take part in economic activity. McKinsey Global Institute (MGI) reported in March 2020 Pakistan may add \$30 Billion to its GDP (Gross Domestic Product) by filling the gender gap (Woetzel et al., 2018).

Pakistan's labor force is consisted of 65.50 million persons, out of which 14.74 million are women rest 50.74 million are men (Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-19). The difference is significant, and it affects human development, gender equality and national prosperity are imminent. Pakistani society is a conservative and regressive while customs shape the lives of women. Since Pakistan is federation of four provinces, it is blended with diverse cultures, socio-economic, political, identity, religious, and ethnographical arrangements. “40.6% of the poorest Sindhi women (aged 18 to 49) living in rural areas are undernourished compared to 2.4% of the richest urban Punjabi women” (UN Women & UN DESA, 2019).

The study found a formation and expansion of informal settlements take place exploiting the institutional inefficiency of Government of Sindh, making informal settlements a sustainable source of income. The policy response to housing demand lack cohesion at the federal and provincial level, a few policy initiatives are in place to tackle housing backlog but the absence of mainstreaming of policy is likely to lead to absolute failure. Multiple housing schemes are under development, informal settlements are likely to increase exponentially, and more people will be living in underdeveloped areas. To respond to such policy issues, it is important to understand how these forms and to expand, thus, the study is an attempt to understand present arrangement policies and gaps within to manage issues of slums in the province.

METHODOLOGY

This section deals with a research framework and design. It will be described how the scheme of research methodology shall take place, data collection methods, data analysis methods, and the areas that will be studied. The cycle of research scheme was as under at initially, desk and literature review were undertaken, based on the research questions and research objective, subsequently it was decided that

research should be based on primary data. Considering the research questions and objectives, data collection methods were designed to be of Focus Group Discussions within the sample area and in-depth interviews with key stakeholders.

Study Area

Soon after General Parvez Musharraf took over on 12 October 1999, eighteen administrative units of Karachi were merged into one unit and were governed and managed by Karachi City District Government (CDGK) led by Muttahida Qoumi Movement (MQM) (Abadi, 2020). In 2010 PPP led GoS scraped General Parvez Musharraf's local government system and introduced new legislation in which Karachi was divided into following six districts (but it still have one mayor):-

- a. Karachi West District
- b. Karachi South District
- c. Karachi East District
- d. Karachi Central District
- e. Malir District
- f. Korangi District

Data Collection & Sampling

The study was based on primary data, collected in the form of FGDs from households in slums and informal settlements from six tehsils of district Malir, following the purposive sample technique. Two separate questionnaires; one for FGDs and one for in-depth Interviews, keeping in mind the ethics of research, cultural and ethnographical considerations were developed to collect the data from the area under study. Data collection drive included the Sindh government officials and civil society. In-depth interviews from this study group were conducted to have their views on the policy response to slums in Sindh. Documents, audio and photographs and coordinates were generated to support the research. Besides, document analysis was carried out to understand the policy inputs from different stakeholders and players.

Sample Size of the Research

This research included both FGDs and in-depth interviews as the research is based on qualitative methods. When the FGDs are an instrument of data collection then often the reasonable number of FGDs are 12 to 14 and members of these groups shall not exceed from 9 to 10 (Ritchie et al., 2003). In this research, the researcher has used both qualitative methods i.e., FGD and in-depth interview, and the sample size were as: -

Table 1

Stakeholder's In-depth Interviews

Ser. No.	Name of Dept. / Organization	Respondent	Sample Size
1	P&D Govt. of Sindh	Director General	1
2	Urban Resource Center	Director	1
3	Urban Resource Center	Founder URC	1
4	Karachi Urban Lab	Director	1
	Total		4

Table 2
Focus Group Discussion from Household's Living in Informal Settlements

S.No.	Tehsil / Area	Sample Size
1	Airport	2
2	Bin Qasim	3
3	Gadap	3
4	Ibrahim Hyderi	1
5	Murad Memon	1
6	Shah Mureed	0
	Total	10

Impact of COVID19

To back the research with data, it was decided that 18 FGDs would be conducted in six tehsils of Malir with slum dwellers. And 15 in-depth interviews with government officials of MDA, KCAA, Urban Directorate, and key civil-society organizations would be conducted. The sudden outbreak of COVID19 affected data collection drive. Many government officials and communities refused to give time for an interview or meeting. Meanwhile, the researcher could conduct 10 FGDs and 4 in-depth interviews before the pandemic.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section would cover the findings of the study, discussion, prominent issues persisting in the sample area, and Sindh in general. As research questions of this study were focused on formations of the slum, expansion of slums, and the public policy response to slums in Sindh; hence, based on findings, the discussion should be focused on these three key areas: -

- a. Formation of slums and Informal Settlements
- b. Expansion of slums and Informal Settlements
- c. Policy response to slums and Informal Settlements

Formation of Slum and Informal Settlements

Slum formation is a multidimensional and cross-sectorial problem, involving several institutions, organizations, and firms (Vaňová et al., 2023). Respondents of the study area agreed, slums were the result of the government's failure to supply affordable housing to poor people, however, the pattern of slum formation varied from area to area. Following factors were accounted for setting up slums:

Role of Housing Shortage

First and foremost, slums and informal settlements are results of government failure to supply affordable housing to the poor. Last national housing policy was passed in 2001, ever since many subsequent governments did nothing. Post 18th Amendment (April 2010), the housing sector is now a provincial subject but still no further improvements in housing policy are offered. The urban housing demand in Pakistan is 350,000 units per year. Of this, 62 percent is for lower-income groups, 25 percent for lower-middle income groups, and 10 percent for higher and upper-middle-income groups. The formal supply per year is 150,000 units (Hasan and Arif, 2018). In the absence of policy response at higher-up, the widening of the backlog of housing is increasing every year, resulting in increased formation of slums in perry-urban areas. Successive federal governments have been announcing different schemes, and mega project

to meet housing demand but each of these announcements have never made to come out of files. The government's Naya Pakistan Housing Scheme and other policy arrangements were to cope with slums (Akhtar et al., 2022). Such informal settlements are discussed in detail in the policy response section.

Role of Political Parties

The role of political parties and other interest groups cannot be ruled out to settle slums: this is a vicious cycle of crime, greed, politics, and wealth. Land grabbing, organized crime, buying political loyalties are some of the forcing factors (Abadi, 2020). Karachi is filled with many slum areas systematically patronized by the political parties (Gayer, 2014). Political parties are center to the slum formation since Karachi's political power have been held by MQM, rival political parties encourage the rural-to-urban migration and slum formation to strengthen their vote bank (Gazdar and Mallah, 2013). Whether it is PPP, ANP, MQM or other nationalist political and interest groups, everyone uses its political power and influence for land grabbing and slum formation. ANP was a focal point to help Pashtun IDPs of war on terror. Similarly, PPP and Sindhi nationalist parties encouraged Sindhi people to come to Karachi to claim their lost city. Likewise, MQM have helped settle number of the slum to accommodate Urdu speaking people in slums like Altaf Town, Mehran Town in Korangi and several others (Abadi, 2020). Numbers of slums around the Sohrab Goth are occupied by Pashtuns and likewise, PPP helps Sindhi to settle in Karachi without exercising effective check and balance (Abadi, 2020). Respondents, in a sampled area told the researcher that it was almost impossible to form a *Katchi Abadi* without the patronage of key political figures.

Role of Migration

Sindh has an old relationship with migration, starting from 1947 mass migration; there have been different waves of migration in which the substantial number of people have opted to migrate from rural-to-urban areas. Let alone internally displaced persons, Karachi has some 1.7 million illegal migrants (Masoor , 2013) and most of these are from Bangladesh (economic migrants), Muslims from Burma (political refugees) and Afghans displaced (Hasan, 2016). Since illegal migrants cannot legally rent or buy a house in settled areas so, they choose to live in slums and informal settlements becoming part informal economy. Because they do not own legal documents, their kids still are uneducated, women & men engaged in odd jobs (Khawaja and Shah, 2018). Bangali Para in Orangi Town, Afghan Bastis in Gadap Town are few examples of such cases.

War on terror in KP, unrest in Balochistan, and rising poverty in South Punjab and mega floods in Sindh motivated millions of people to migrate to cities in search of security, health, employment, shelter, and so on (Anwar et al., 2014). During mega floods in 2010, more than two million people migrated from rural-to-urban areas out of which 70% did not go back to their homes and have permanently settled in cities reported by (*The Express Tribune*). The study showed, people lived in slums were poor, had the least means of life, hardly could afford their live hood. The researcher saw several Shanti towns set up post floods on the national highway in Karachi were still there, people were living in extremely worst conditions without any kind of amenities being provided to them. It is still an unexplored subject as to how many people went back to their homes and those who decided to live in Karachi what was their status.

Role of Mafia and Vested Interests

The nexus of political elites and mafia in land grabbing and then converting it to a slum was the most

important finding of the study. The researcher found that during floods in 2010, land was systematically grabbed and turned into Shanti town which subsequently converted into slums, later. Availing the institutional leniency, mafia started grabbing land in a different part of the city, in district Malir on both sides of Main National Highway (Abadi, 2020). Indus Town is located at northern bypass was one such slum that was established using flood affected. A committee made up of representatives of mafia and local political workers take the charge to look after the entire process; from grabbing land to inhabiting people. Plots sized 120 yards were given free of cost, with a pledge that allottees would be bound to live with families and no one shall be allowed to sell the land or house. This technique is being employed to attract more people to a slum since land prices are higher and beyond affordability of middle-class families, slums offer affordable land and housing thereafter. This does not end here; allottees are charged for development charges with the promise of provision of electricity, gas, drainage, sanitation, etc. Monthly charges in lieu of sanitation, charges on sale, purchase & renting out of housing become a permanent source of income for the mafia. People who were given free of cost plots at the beginning would share 10% of their land or house value to the managing committee of the slum in case they are selling their house (Nehayan, 2016). While the covered area of slums varied but most of these consisted of hundreds of houses if not thousands. This is how slums become a sustainable source of income for vested interests.

Summary

The discussion above explains how the external factors are exploiting the housing demand by setting up slums and making it a sustainable source of income. FGDs further offer an insight concerning Malir. Establishment of slums in Malir has two main reasons; firstly, climate change has dried-up Malir River and secondly availability of land in Malir, which has been an agricultural district of Karachi, no other district of Karachi has this much land as much as Malir has. Karachi's mega housing schemes such as Bahria Town & DHA are in Gadap Town of Malir. It is important to note, the land where Bahria Town is found was also acquired through illicit means that is the reason the Supreme Court of Pakistan had slapped with PKR 460 billion penalties. One respondent from Gadap Town put it:

“Like Karachi is heart of Sindh, in coming times, Gadap would be heart of Karachi”

Agricultural land is being converted for commercial and residential purposes, destroying the ecology, environment, and natural beauty of Malir (Fida et al., 2021). While the Bahria Town and DHA City are under construction hundreds of acres of land owned and managed by the Board of Revenue have been grabbed by political groups and mafia nexus (Akhtar and Rashid, 2021). Land in Karachi has become so expensive that the middle class cannot afford to buy an apartment or flat in a working-class society let alone a piece of land. The shortage of housing in urban areas is so intense that *Katchi Abadi's* and slums, that sometimes used to have a single-story house, are now converting into scattered settlements. A key informant put it as:

“There's a momentous change happening in irregular settlements. It is now converting from single and doubles stories to high-rise. And its reason is that for poor people living far from the city has become too expensive.”

Post 18th Amendment, subject of Housing lies with provincial governments, but GoS does not have a housing policy that caters with slums and informal settlements. The currently available is the Sindh *Katchi Abadi* Authority Act 1987 but has failed to address slums issues in Sindh. The rising interest rate offers an opportunity to the private commercial banks to sanction more loans to the government with an expectation of highest returns, banks earn a handsome amount with guarantee; this trend results in a

way that now banks have reduced introducing consumer banking products. And it implies the economic activity of public, from buying; mortgaging and building a new house to education, poverty, investment, etc. all are affected. Limited loans that commercial banks offer is subjected with full-time employment, property or any other object that guarantee the return of the loan, now people living in slums (illegally, without legal documents) fail to present anything that convinces banks that loan would be returned thus they continue to live deteriorating conditions without any institutional help to upgrade their live-hood.

Expansion of Slums and Informal Settlements

To the researcher, expansion of slum is a separate subject, should be studied to understand; how existing slums are expanding and converting from single story housings to high-rise and scattered settlements. Here, we will see the major factors contributing to the expansion of slums in the city.

Anti-Poor Bias in Public Policies

Participants of FGDs were asked if there was any planning that how many households in this slum or settlement shall be accommodating. All of them were of this view; there was no planning in hand and if demand for housing arises existing slum would be expanded. According to Abadi (2020), the researcher asked the same question from founder URC, Arif Hassan, to which he replied:

“If there is a demand for housing, slums would be set up, because the government does not offer any choice. Either government or market has to provide an option otherwise slums would be kept emerging”

Natural growth in population and in Mr. Arif Hasan’s words anti-poor bias of policymakers and planners derive the slum dwellers to expand the existing slum. In Karachi alone in the last decade, we have displaced over 30,000 families from within the city to the periphery (Hasan, 2012). Displacement to this scale was because of the construction of megaprojects in the city such as Lyari Expressway. Hundreds and thousands of people lived on given routes were displaced and resettled in far-flung areas of the city.

There is a policy if settlements whether formal or informal are coming in-between mega projects they are resettled. But it is not implemented smoothly, there are many problems, the size of land that is acquired for projects is bigger than the required size (Abadi, 2020). Interviews and FGDs revealed that the number of victims could have been minimized but planners tried to increase the number of affectees as much as they could to increase the project cost and thus maximize their commission. Many fake beneficiaries were included to maximize corruption. Relocation is a very tough job; no resettlement project has ever succeeded. Director URC told that:

“In the Lyari Expressway case; numbers of affected families were 14000 but the number of resettled families was up to 33000, so you can think the numbers of fake people were accommodated and among the 14000 actual affectees, half of them couldn’t be resettled.”

Affectees of “Lyari Expressway” were resettled Under Lyari Expressway Resettlement Project 20-25 KM out of the city in Taiser Town and Baldia Town. Since slums work in the informal economy and accommodate poor segments of society, soon after resettlement; due to the absence of basic amenities such as schools for kids and jobs for men and women, forced them to return to slums next to Lyari.

Karachi Circular Railway is also a widely discussed project; it is still unknown as who will finance this project, which will run this project, who will own this project, etc. Following Supreme Court instruction, GoS very selectively has started evicting slum dwellers coming in between track and route (URC, 2012). 72 percent of the area on either side of KCR track is occupied by commercial plazas, multi-stories residential apartments, bungalows, institutional building, shopping centers, factories,

godowns, and petrol pumps and only remaining 28 percent of the area on either side of KCR track is occupied by low-income settlements and *Katchi Abadi's*" (URC, 2012). Circular Railway, which is to be built in immediately, all the slums in its way are being demolished but in the same line if apartments buildings are erected, they are not displacing them. The policy should be the same for all, if someone is being displaced due to a project, their income group should not be considered; it should not be like if there are poor, we got to demolish their houses and there are well-off we got to save them anyway. This happened in Lyari Expressway; settlements with poor people were razed to the ground but where rich people were living, road was curved. It was designed for heavy transport but due to several curves and slopes, heavy transport cannot go smoothly over it is leaving only light weighted vehicles to utilize the road, hence limiting the benefits of the project. Up till now 100s of houses are razed to the ground and they are to be shifted to Juma Goth, about 25 kilometers away from the city center, where each household will be given an 80-square-yard plot and Rs50,000, a sum not even enough to transport one's belongings to the Juma Goth site (Hasan and Centre, 2017). A shoddy village without infrastructure, basic utilities, and facilities, Lyari Expressway experience tells us affected are likely to return to the city adjusting themselves in existing slums. Demolition of thousands of shops around Express Market and elsewhere in Karachi by the city administration is another case beyond scope of this research but the same logic runs behind demolition, increase the number of victims to increase the project cost thus increasing share of bribe & commissions (Abadi, 2020). GoS cabinet has approved another 38 KM long Malir Expressway in Malir, how many people would become homeless because of this project, coming future would tell us.

Role Mega Housing Schemes

The way Karachi is expanding horizontally, expansion of slum is highly likely, considering the present growth rate of urbanization (Hussain, 2016). With the establishment of Bahria Town, DHA and several other mega housing projects on the superhighway, new development would further attract the creation of slums, because there is not any provision for people who will work there in DHA and Bahria Town, like domestic workers, tutors, beauticians, etc. These people will start living around the Bahria Town & DHA City, like DHA has slum around it in Karachi; because these are the people who work there (Hussain, 2016). For person living in New Karachi, working in DHA would be costly for him in term of money and time; it will not suit him so he will start looking for job near to his or her residence (Hasan, 2015). Bahria Town with Pakistan's largest mosque with the capacity to accommodate 8 lacs Namazi's expecting to habitat millions of peoples. Since these settlements are purely aimed to serve elites and super-rich people and there is nothing any kind of reservation of land or housing for poor within these societies. These housing schemes would generate hundreds and thousands of jobs but the difficulties in mobility i.e., travel cost, travel time would lead them to seek a house around the workplace.

Summary

Two major changes are taking place about expansion to the slums in Malir and elsewhere in Karachi. Firstly, converting of existing slums from single-story homes into high-rise apartments and then secondly, the availability of land in Malir is made possible due to the extraction of gravel and sand from the Malir River on an industrial level for construction purposes (Abadi, 2020). Sand helps in filtering and storing water and despite the ban, it continues without any interruption. Notwithstanding excessive extraction of sub-soil water for agricultural purposes without any check & balance resulting in depleting of sub-soil water extremely fast. In the absence of water storage facilities and if the same practices continue, soon Malir's agronomy would come to end, and the rest area would be used residential, commercial, and

industrial purposes (Abadi,2020).

Policy Response to Slums & Informal Settlements in Sindh

There have been several projects, plans, initiatives, schemes, and policy interventions to cope with slum issues in the country before the 18th Amendment by the Federal government and after government by the government of Sindh. Policy sciences include both knowledge *of* the policy process as well as knowledge in process (Lasswell, 1970).

Narain (2018) said that knowledge in the policy process refers to studies that focus on the prescriptive dimensions of policy. These studies typically take the form of research projects that culminate in policy prescription for governments and policymakers to act upon in a country like Pakistan where policies are made on ad-hoc basis, instead of looking for long-term solutions. When it comes to implementations of public policies, often policies do not achieve their desired goals due to conflict of interest between stakeholders (Khan et al., 2022). It is also seen that with the change of Govt. policies often changes. With an absence of a standardized mechanism to appraise the performance of policies, performance appraisal of policy administrators is also an issue, with no punishment for misconduct or incentive for better performance; governments do not “differentiate between donkeys and horses” thus it is obvious masses will continue to compromise on the quality of services. In this part, the researcher shall highlight the policy initiatives that have been undertaken by governments to solve slum issues.

Sindh Katchi Abadi Authority (SKAA)

Sindh *Katchi Abadi* Authority (SKAA) was established through an Act of the Sindh Assembly in 1987 to develop, improve, and regularize the informal settlements in the province. It is empowered to declare an area as slum and to announce an area which cannot be declared as slum. SKAA is solely responsible for handling slums and informal settlements issues in Sindh. The *Sindh Katchi Abadis Act, 1987* (TSKAA, 1987) have the following provision:

- a. Implement policies formulated by the Government for the development or improvement of the areas of the *Katchi Abadis* and regularization of such *Katchi Abadis*.
- b. Identify the *Katchi Abadis* or areas thereof which may be developed, improved, or regularized under this Act and also identify the *Katchi Abadis* or areas which cannot be regularized as *Katchi Abadis*.
- c. Arrange or carry out detailed physical surveys, census of occupants of the *Katchi Abadis* and prepare or cause to be prepared plans and amelioration plans, and designs of infrastructural works in connection with the regularization and development of the *Katchi Abadis*.
- d. Formulate development and financial programs in respect of the *Katchi Abadis* and determine implementation strategy of such programs.
- e. Evict or cause to be evicted unauthorized person or remove or cause to be removed encroachments from a *Katchi Abadi* or any area which is not regularizable as *Katchi Abadi* following the law for the time being in force.
- f. Undertake, where necessary, low-cost housing and re-development schemes for resettlement of shiftees from the *Katchi Abadis* and the areas which are not regularizable as *Katchi Abadis*;
- g. Arrange civic amenities and civic services in the *Katchi Abadis* through the Councils or other concerned agencies.

Initially, the cut of date to notify the informal settlements for regularization was 23 March 1985 but later through amendment in the Act; it was changed to 30 June 1997 in 2009. It means slums that were formed before 1997 may officially request to be notified as legal, thus, eligible for up gradation. Hasan et

al. (2015) further explains “The criteria for regularization include a minimum size of 40 households and location clear of hazards such as an embankment, high voltage overhead electricity conduit, waterways, sensitive installations, and coastal wetlands protected by compulsory conservation orders”.

Although SKAA is empowered with strong provision to upgrade the existing settlements, it has done truly little to prevent slum formation in Sindh. Official figures of slums in Sindh are 23 years old ever since then a lot has changed in Sindh. Several hundred new slums have been formed across the province. There was a surge in slum formation due to mega floods in 2010 which have had resulted in the displacement of millions in Sindh and elsewhere in the country. Figures available on SKAA official assert that there are 575 informal settlements in Karachi out of which 469 have been notified as legal, remaining 106 are yet to be notified.

Table 3

Status of Informal Settlements in Sindh at a Glance

Division	Katchi Abadis on Provincial Govt. Land		Katchi Abadis on Federal Govt. Land		Total Notified	Total Un-Notified	Total Declared
	Notified	Un-Notified	Notified	Un-Notified			
Karachi	455	70	14	36	469	106	575
Hyderabad	242	143	19	4	261	147	408
Mirpurkhan	48	33	1	2	49	35	84
Shaheed Benazirabad	91	41	0	12	91	53	144
Sukkur	50	15	15	11	65	26	91
Larkana	69	24	0	19	69	43	112
Total	955	326	49	84	1004	410	1414

Source: SKAA Website

For an informal settlement to qualify as legal, it takes a lot other than the laid down policies. If the slum is found on land owned by a private entity, federal or an autonomous body or involving litigation against it; takes years to be notified (Hasan et al., 2015). It depends on the political activism and ability of slum dwellers to negotiate with influential political figures. For example, Bhattaiabad was formed before 1985 it is yet to be declared, despite repetitive promises by GoS. Slum-dwellers of Bhattaiabad still waiting to have their houses leased on the other hand newly slums such as Sachal Goth, Marooara Goth, etc are leased. Budget constraints, political interference, skilled and well-trained staff, the influence of mafia, and vested interest have hindered the progress and efficiency of SKAA.

Its overall response to low-cost demands has been very meager. The figures available on the SKAA website suggest a total of 636 plots were allotted to poor on affordable prices and easy monthly installments in different cities of Sindh. It has not started any low-cost housing scheme in Karachi; a city 18 million where according to well-documented reports 50% of the people lives in slums and informal settlements.

Table 4
Number of Plot Allotted to Poor

Ser No.	District	Location	Areas in Acres	Total No. of Plats	No. of Possessions Handed Over	No. of Families Shifted
1	Thatta	Gharo	1.00	33	32	32
2	Jamshoro	Kotri	14.00	477	292	292
3	Sukkur	Shikarpur Road	10.70	233	206	206
4	Larkana	Near Sachal Sarmast Society	4.12	136	106	106
		Total	29.82	879	636	636

Source: SKAA Website.

Sindh Special Development Board (SSDB)

The Sindh Special Development Board was enacted following the Sindh High Density Development Board Act, 2010 of Provincial Assembly of Sindh. It aims to facilitate and undertake low-cost housing schemes, rehabilitation of informal settlements, village development schemes, multi-stories, and high-rise buildings in the province of Sindh (SHSSBA, 2010).

Its bill was presented in Sindh Assembly in 2014, wherein SSDB was vested with strong powers sidelining the city planning, environmental legislation, and other social and economic considerations. The opaque preamble of this act left many civil-society activists, notable architects, and urban planners shocked. This legislation covers wide aspects of urban management issues, with the authority to commercialize residential plots but without allowing the public to be able to object. This means, effectively, that a high-rise shopping mall could go up right next to your house and you would not be able to say anything about it (Maher, 2014). This law is parallel to much-existing law in place, the board is empowered to direct utility agencies for the provision of basic amenities, waive-off service charges, and recommendation plan to existing civic affairs managing bodies. Any member of the builder's association can approach the board with a proposal to build a high-rise building and board would decide on application within 45 days. 25% of the units would be reserved for government employees and 03% for media men. The salient features of this law for informal settlements and Slum are as under: -

- a. Every informal settlement structure shall be rehabilitated by providing an alternative tenement admeasuring 600 square feet, preferably in the same area of slum structure or the size alternative tenement decided by board.
- b. The informal settlements being used for commercial purpose shall be granted an alternative tenement having equal area of 300 square feet or the size of alternative tenement decided by the board.
- c. The board shall appoint a developer from amongst the members of association to execute the project who shall put his resources in form of money, men and material for construction of free units in such informal settlement.

d. The developer shall be compensated for his effort and investment in the form of free land out of the slum area where he may build commercial projects for public sale.

e. The land reserved for public purposes and is encroached without lawful authority in informal settlements shall also be taken up by the board for implementation of the scheme.

f. The developer shall ensure free education for residents of slums up to graduation level through use of insurance coverage and maximum number of children to be educated through the scheme shall be five per unit.

g. The developer shall ensure free basic health insurance for the period of ten years for the families who have been shifted in the new development from informal settlements.

With the enactment of this law, the authority to allow construction of high-rise buildings lies with SSDB, notwithstanding, till 2017, Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) had issues as much as 585 'No Objection Certificates' for high-rise buildings (Daily Times, 2017). Up till now, its implementation on informal settlement, slums, and Goth (village) is yet to take place.

Summary

Sindh *Katchi Abadi* Authority Act and Sindh High Density Development Board Act, 2010 are two major laws that provide the policy guidelines, rules, and procedures for informal settlements and slum issues in the province. The Karachi has some 13 different land management authorities (Hasan et al., 2015), and USIP research suggest there are seventeen land-owning agencies (see Figure 3) each have their bylaws, standards, and planning powers. Coordination and consultation with the Master Plan Authority for Karachi would be required but the provincial government has never approved an entire master plan, so this requirement has remained largely inoperative (Sayeed et al., 2016).

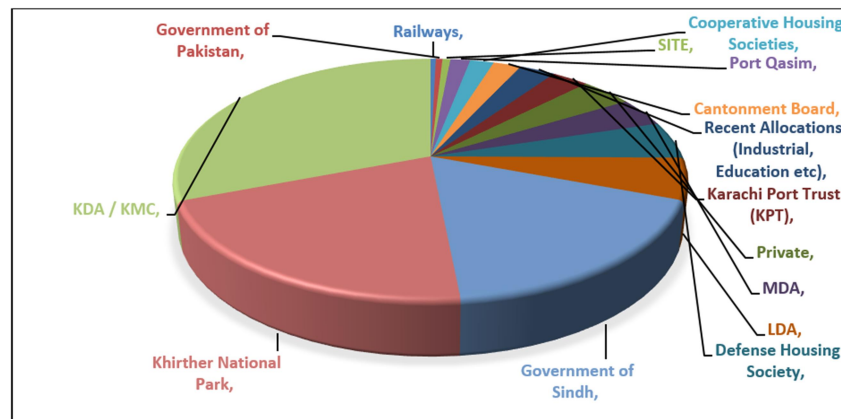


Figure 1: Distribution of Landowning Entities in Karachi, Sindh

Source: Karachi Strategic Development Plan (KSDP) 2020 – City District Government Karachi – 2007

Many studies, media reports, working papers, and researches suggest that in Karachi more than half the population lives in slums, and informal settlements. Hasan et al., (2015) have quoted a study undertaken for KSDP 2020 which found that informal settlements such as *Katchi Abadis*, slum accounted for only 8.1 percent of total land and meets 50 percent of the city's housing needs. This proves the notion that the issue is not of the shortage of land but governance at the end of GoS and its landowning and land managing agencies. The provision of NOC for high-rise buildings without consultation with other concerned departments would further worsen per capita resources in the city. This law does not provide

how it would safeguard the environmental considerations, urban planning, or how it would link the new developments with KSDP 2020. Karachi is already suffering from scarce per capita resources; this law would allow an interest group which in this case builders and developers to approach the board for the development of high-rise or informal settlements without giving a chance to the habitants of that settlement. It has implications on the environment of the city; poor implementation of building code on high-rise will further increase the temperature in the city (Cheema, 2015). According to the constitution of Pakistan, the provision of education, health facilities, and housing lie with government. GoS has tried to outsource its responsibility to builders and developers. It may provide a single solution to the larger urban problem but shall deteriorate other aspects of urban life. This is an anti-poor law that is likely to damage the fabric of society.

CONCLUSION

Urbanization is an ever-growing process. It affects the whole cycle of life across the world (Saquib et al., 2022). Literature available on urbanization reveals that countries like Hong Kong, Singapore Belgium, Japan, Israel, Qatar, and Kuwait with the highest rate of the urban population had exploited the potential of this opportunity (Szerb et al., 2022). And there are countries like Brazil, India, and Pakistan where urbanization rates are higher but continue to struggle with tackling policy issues of health, education, employment, infrastructure, social security, housing, and sustainability (Abadi, 2020). This has serious implications for human development. Pakistan being a member state of the UN has obligations to abide by and achieve the target set by the UN (Hussain and Xi, 2023). Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) retired in 2015 and a new concept of SDGs were formulated, and the period of 2030 was given to member states to achieve the targets. There are 17 SDGs in total, goal # 11, which is part of this study deal with sustainable cities and communities.

Karachi has suffered from violence in recent years, if we look at the pattern of violence, it is multidimensional, and one understandable fact among all sort of violence is conflict on resources (Effendi and Hussain, 2018). The influx of internal migrants and the natural growth of the city have created issues for the sustainability of existing resources. The rise in the cost of living in urban settlements redirects the new inhabitants of the city to find an affordable neighborhood in perry-urban areas. These, however, also accommodate certain unwanted outfits like the organized mafia, gangs, and interest groups with political patronage to exploit the economic opportunities. Be it is housing, water, transport, health, employment, or any other social service or the land grabbing, water tanker mafia, ransom from private transport operators, all have a footprint in perry-urban areas. Due to financial constraints and the tug-of-war between GoS and Karachi city administration on power-sharing matter, policies on the above-mentioned issues are still prone to failure.

According to Abadi (2020), the issue of slum formation and expansion shall further deteriorate once the Bahria Town and DHA City are completed and people starting occupying. This demands a great deal to undertake rigorous research to understand and explore what policy options are available to cope with existing and emerging issues. Mindful diversion of K-4 (Megaproject to respond issue of water shortage in Karachi) through Bahria Town and DHA City shall further sour the per capita water for Karachi with the supply of Gas, Electricity, and other basic amenities. In 1960, when Islamabad was planned, its planners and architects did not realize how the poor and middle-working-class of the city would be accommodated; the same mistake is being exercised in case of mega housing projects in Karachi (Abadi, 2020).

In Karachi, the existence of slums of around DHA, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, and other posh areas of the

city is the failure of planners to understand, people who would be working in those areas shall not be able to travel for long-distance (Abadi, 2020). It will cost them time and money; thus, they will seek a temporary residence in nearby areas. Planners could avoid slum formation and expansion in surrounding areas by reserving a portion for low-cost housing for poor and working-middle-class. Slum formation and expansion continue to grow; SKAA has stopped regularizing slums that are formed after the 30-June-1997, in the last 23 years much has changed in the county. Slum dwellers manage to live and get water through water tankers, gas through cylinders and electricity by using the Kunda system; meanwhile, they strengthen their relationship with local political, religious, and pressure group's leadership and bargain their loyalty subject to provision of utilities. The government of Sindh has selectively eradicated slums due to infrastructure projects and safety concerns in the past and their resettlement has proved to be a total failure. Informal settlements and slums are settled on BoR land, in many cases, these are formed on private land too, landowners approach the court with documentary proof that results in the eviction of those dwellers

Migration from rural-to-urban is a major factor for increased housing demand in Karachi, migration is not only driven by the war on terror in KP, unrest in Balochistan, poverty in South Punjab, or floods in 2010 that encourage indigenous Sindhis to move to Karachi. Apart from this, people from all over the country come to Karachi for jobs, education, health facilities, and a better lifestyle. Governments' failure to develop quality civil infrastructure, hospitals, universities, and colleges, industrial estates in other cities derive the people to come to Karachi. People from various parts of the country come to Karachi for medical treatment, given the uncertainty and period required for stable recovery, many people look to hire a rented accommodation which later turns into a permanent settlement. Slums in peri-urban not only raising the cost and time of travel for the poor to access the job market but also has implication for children education and women participation in economic activities. Lack of access to safe public transport network force the slum dwellers to engage in informal economic activity, 72 percent of Karachiites work informally (Hasan, 2016). In a city where up to 50% of the people live in slums and informal settlements, Karachi is estimated to represent 25% of the national GDP (ADB, 2015). This makes the compelling case why the slum needs to be upgraded inclusively to get these into the formal sector, paving the way to let the Karachi's urban economy touch its potential.

Policy Recommendations

Informal settlement and slums are not one problem, these are many small problems which required a comprehensive, multi-stakeholders push for up-gradation of existing slums and prevention and further expansion of new slums (Mbogo, 2015). Many policies are made in isolation without undertaking studies and are not backed by the evidence thus evidence-based policymaking would help resolve slum's issues. In this regard, AI, Machine Learning, and data analytics would help, not only to track the changes but also would in service delivery, demand, and supply patterns.

GoS do have an Urban Policy Unit, but it is focused to look after the donor-funded projects, GoS does not have a full-time Urban Policy to look into the urban planning and issues, though it has Planning & Development Department, a dedicated Urban Policy would help Sindh tackle growing urbanization in the province. We have seen a model in Karachi in which informal settlements and slums are now converting from single story house to high-rise and more specifically ground plus three and in some cases four to five apartment buildings. It is helping people to resolve the housing problem and people are getting houses in this way. If GoS regularizes it, not only people will stop violating building codes but also GoS is likely to generate revenue through taxation. The special interest rate for house financing

would help the public seek loans for up-gradation, renovation, and alterations. SKAA should be amended so that the informal settlements & slums formed after 1997 should also be regularized, enabling them to access to financial market uplift their lifestyle. The informality of slums keeps the economy informal in these areas; it will have a positive impact on the overall economy. SKAA rules of business and pace to regularize should also be revised. The present working style of SKAA is too rigid and corrupt, not people-friendly thus waste of both time and money (Abadi, 2020).

Building Codes for informal settlements and slums should be softened; this will allow undertaking uniform development (McCartney and Krishnamurthy, 2018). Scattered settlements in the province can be avoided if the architects and planners help the slums dwellers design their settlements keeping in view their social-economic conditions. The researcher is of this view that slum forms and expands with housing demands and major cause which in Karachi is migration. Migration is a separate debate, out of the scope of this study.

Karachi being the industrial hub, coupled with comparatively better educational institutions and health facilities have the potential to attract people from all over the country which is a major push factor why people come to Karachi (Hasan and Mohib, 2003). Special Economic Zone developed in various parts of the country under CPEC would help Karachi ease the burden of economic migrants. This will help reduce housing backlog thus expansion of slums.

The social policy response in slums should be the priority of GoS, many diseases erupt due to lack of sewerage and clean drinking water (Mehmood, 2014). All the slums were consuming substandard water and were living in unpleasant conditions. Without having formal status many slums were having suitable infrastructure at the same time many were without gas, electricity, water, road, school, playgrounds, etc., facilities.

Karachi needs a full-time planning agency that coordinates with all 13 landowning management entities on the mutual goal of development of the province. Presently, each landowning agency has its goals, plans, and preferences, and each one is empowered to decide on its own. Lack of implementation on KSDP 2020 is due to this type of practices, no one takes seriously anyone. Karachi is no short of land to accommodate its citizen; the issue is of bad governance. All the slums are settled on BoR land. If GoS is doing itself what vested interest, land grabbing mafia is doing by supplying the piece of land to the poor, it will generate huge revenue. Civil infrastructure in slums is found to be substandard. Anti-poor bias is visible in slums be it is a school building, road, or sewerage line, cannot be compared with the one provided in the city center, GoS should address this.

Public policies at federal and provincial level when made, its applicability is not determined and when out for implementation it also affect areas, not accounted for (Zulfiqar and Thapa, 2017). Judicial activism has affected the institutionalized policymaking in the country; JCP had ordered to demolish Delhi Colony and Punjabi Colony in Karachi which could have resulted in the displacement of thousands of people. Parachute orders like this hamper the existing byelaws thus make problems for GoS. Like the central agency to look after planning matters, mainstreaming of policies is also important to take all stakeholders and existing policies on board.

REFERENCES

- Abadi, K. (2020). *Khuwaja Shafique Ahmed Registration# PIDE2018FMPHILPP31* (Doctoral dissertation, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics).
- Akhtar, A. S., & Rashid, A. (2021). Dispossession and the militarised developer state: Financialisation and class power on the agrarian–urban frontier of Islamabad, Pakistan. *Third World Quarterly*, 42(8), 1866-1884.

- Akhtar, N., Habib, R. I., & Madni, A. (2022). Naya Pakistan housing program: An analytical study of mortgage-backed security model and legal framework for low-cost accessible housing scheme in Pakistan. In *Accessible Housing for South Asia: Needs, Implementation and Impacts* (pp. 259-270). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Al Nehayan, M. B. T. (2016). *Karachi in the twenty-first century: political, social, Economic and Security Dimensions*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Almulhim, A. I., & Cobbinah, P. B. (2023). Can rapid urbanization be sustainable? The case of Saudi Arabian cities. *Habitat International*, 139, 102884.
- Amir, S., Kotikula, A., Pande, R. P., Bossavie, L. L. Y., & Khadka, U. (2018). Female Labor Force Participation in Pakistan: What Do We Know?. World Bank.
- Anwar, N. H., Mustafa, D., Viqar, S., Sawas, A., & Iqtidar, H. (2014). Urbanization, gender & violence in millennial Karachi: a scoping study.
- Asian Development Bank. (2015). Economic and Financial Analysis: 18-May-20. <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/linked-documents/46538-002-efa.pdf>
- Cheema, A. R. (2015). High-rise buildings worsened heatwave. *Nature*, 524(7563), 35-35.
- Effendi, M. S., & Hussain, N. (2018). Ethnic Conflict in Karachi: Diagnosing and Conflict Resolution. *J. Pol. Stud.*, 25, 311.
- Fida, M., Hussain, I., Rashid, A., Shah, S. A. A., & Khan, S. (2021). Change detection in land use and land cover of District Charsadda Pakistan along River Kabul (2010 flood): taking advantage of geographic information system and remote sensing. *Geol Behav (GBR)*, 5(2), 35-41.
- Gayer, L. (2014). *Karachi: Ordered disorder and the struggle for the city*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Gazdar, H., & Mallah, H. B. (2013). Informality and political violence in Karachi. *Urban Studies*, 50(15), 3099-3115.
- Government of Pakistan, M. of C. C. (2015). *National Report of Pakistan For HABITAT III Government of Pakistan Ministry of Climate Change. April*, 69.
- Hasan, A. (2015). Value extraction from land and real estate in Karachi. In *Global Gentrifications* (pp. 181-198). Policy Press.
- Hasan, A. (2016). Emerging urbanisation trends: The case of Karachi. *ref. number C-37319-PAK-1, working paper for the International Growth Center, London School of Economics, London UK*.
- Hasan, A., & Arif, H. (2018). The Crisis of Urban Housing ; Daily Dawn Karachi, 18 August 2018
- Hasan, A., & Centre, W. T. (2017). *Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) concerns Urban Resource Centre KCR concerns. February*.
- Hasan, A., & Mohib, M. (2003). Karachi, Pakistan. *Urban Slums Report, Karachi*.
- Hasan, A., Ahmed, N., Raza, M., Sadiq, A., Ahmed, S. U., & Sarwar, M. B. (2015). *Karachi: the land issue*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- Hasan, Arif (2012); Anti-Poor Bias in Policy; Daily Dawn Karachi, 27 November 2012
- Hussain, A. (2016). Urbanization and Governance of Institutions in Karachi. *Journal of Independent Studies & Research: Management & Social Sciences & Economics*, 14(2), 96-105.
- Hussain, i. (2014) Urbanization in Pakistan., Keynote address delivered at South Asia Cities Conference and Pakistan Urban Forum held at Karachi on January 9, 2014.
- Hussain, N., & Xi, W. (2023). Islam and International Standards of Human Rights: An Analysis of Domestic Implementation of International Human Rights in Islamic Culture. *Assyfa Journal of Islamic Studies*, 1(1), 1-12.
- Hussain, S., Nadeem, M. A., Ikram, K., & Zafar, M. U. (2023). Peer Group and Neighborhood Violence Among the Youth: A Case Study of Slum Areas in Islamabad (Pakistan). *Journal of Asian Development Studies*, 12(3), 708-722.
- Khan, M. A. A., Hamid, S., Khan, S. A., Sarfraz, M., & Babar, Z. U. D. (2022). A qualitative study of stakeholders' views on pharmacovigilance system, policy, and coordination in Pakistan. *Frontiers in Pharmacology*, 13, 891954.
- Khawaja, A. W., & Shah, N. A. (2018). An Analytical Study On Socio-Economic Conditions Of Squatter Settlements In Karachi. *Pakistan Journal of Applied Social Sciences*, 8(1), 1-23.

- Lasswell, H. D. (1970). The emerging conception of the policy sciences. *Policy Sciences*, 1(1), 3-14.
- Maher, M. (2014). Govt Hypocrisy: The Plot Thickens with Karachi's Evil New High-Rise Building Law. *The Express Tribune*, 8.
- Malik, S., & Wahid, J. (2014). Rapid urbanization: Problems and challenges for adequate housing in Pakistan.
- Masoor, H. (2013); 221 Illegal aliens registered in two month drive; Daily Dawn Karachi, 17 December 2013
- Mbogo, P. N. (2015). *Influence of Management factors on performance of Business operated by groups in Pumwani informal settlements in Nairobi county Kenya* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi).
- McCartney, S., & Krishnamurthy, S. (2018). Neglected? Strengthening the morphological study of informal settlements. *Sage Open*, 8(1), 2158244018760375.
- Mehmood, A. S. I. F. (2014). Urban Pakistan. *State of Pakistani Cities Report, 2015*.
- Narain, V. (2018). What is public policy? Concepts, trends and issues. In *Public Policy: A View from the South* (pp. 1-64). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/9781108581615.001
- Nations, U. (2018). World Urbanization Prospects. In *Demographic Research* (Vol. 12). <https://doi.org/10.4054/demres.2005.12.9>
- Osman, A. A., & Abebe, G. K. (2023). Rural Displacement and Its Implications on Livelihoods and Food Insecurity: The Case of Inter-Riverine Communities in Somalia. *Agriculture*, 13(7), 1444.
- Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. (2017). *Population Census 2017*. <http://www.pbscensus.gov.pk/>
- Pakistan. (2018). Economic survey. Islamabad: Economic Advisor's Wing, Ministry of Finance.
- Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., & Ormston, C. M. N. R. (2003). A guide for social science students and researchers. *SPE Proceedings - Gas Technology Symposium*, 291-297.
- Saqib, S., Gupta, A., & Joshi, A. (2022). Emerging water crisis: Impact of urbanization on water resources and constructed wetlands as a nature-based solution (NbS). In *Current Directions in Water Scarcity Research* (Vol. 6, pp. 447-468). Elsevier.
- Sayeed, A., Husain, K., & Raza, S. S. (2016). *Informality in Karachi's Land, Manufacturing, and Transport Sectors*. United States Institute of Peace.
- Szerb, L., Komlosi, E. S., Acs, Z. J., Lafuente, E., & Song, A. K. (2022). *The digital platform economy index 2020*. Berlin/Heidelberg, Germany: Springer.
- The Express Tribune (2019) Climate change triggers widespread migration in Pakistan . <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2113842/1-climate-change-triggers-widespread-migration-pakistan/?amp=1> Accessed on 21-05-2020
- The Sindh Katchi Abadis Act*. (1987) <https://skaa.sindh.gov.pk/criteria-for-regularization-of-katchi-abadis>
- UN Women, & UN DESA. (2019). *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The gender snapshot 2019*. <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2019/progress-on-the-sdgs-the-gender-snapshot-2019-single-pages-en.pdf?la=en&vs=5813>
- Vaňová, A., Vitálišová, K., & Rojíková, D. (2023). Prospects of Systems of Megacities and Individual Megacities with Respect to Regional Economy. In *Indo-Pacific Smart Megacity System: Emerging Architecture and Megacity Studies* (pp. 163-206). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.
- Vinke, K. (2020). *Unsettling settlements-cities, migrants, climate change: Rural-urban climate migration as effective adaptation?* (Vol. 18). LIT Verlag Münster.
- World Economic Forum. (2018). The Global Gender Gap Report. In World Economic Forum. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X04267098>
- Zulfiqar, F., & Thapa, G. B. (2017). Agricultural sustainability assessment at provincial level in Pakistan. *Land Use Policy*, 68(1), 492-502.