

Commentary

An Evaluation of Planning Education in Karachi, Pakistan: Learning from the Past to Tread into the Future.

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Abstract

Unlike the typical British and North American contexts where the city and regional planning education is firmly embedded in the educational framework, this discipline has not been able to evolve as an attractive academic option in Pakistan, particularly Karachi. A review of the situation has revealed that despite the expanding professional opportunities, very limited initiatives were undertaken to train and develop a corresponding body of planning professionals.

This author had been involved with planning and urban design education in Karachi for the past seventeen years. These years have been linked initially with a Master of Urban Design Programme and later a Master of Urban and Regional Planning Programme. Whereas each of the two programs aimed to address the local need of planning professionals, assessments show that there is a sizable possibility of improvement with respect to structure, contents and pedagogical approaches.

This paper attempts to study the two academic programmes in urban design and planning initiated in Karachi during the past with a quest to explore the performance and prospects in the relevant cases. The paper analyses each of these programmes, draws conclusions and presents recommendations for the future.



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1. Introduction

Fast rate of urbanization and other connected processes generated a need for urban and regional planning education in various contexts in the world. This educational input was packaged in different formats and at various levels. Undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes have been the two widely prescribed options across several contexts including United Kingdom. A review of the recent status of planning education shows that postgraduate programmes in urban and regional planning dominate the scenario (Table-01). This is understandable from several counts. With flexible intake conditions and procedures, students enroll into different undergraduate degrees at the initial stage. They enter into an accredited professional programme at the postgraduate level after reviewing the multiple choices. From the overall respect, the tradition and conduct of planning education appears sound in the UK. However, it shall make a research question for exploration in itself to correlate the available educational opportunities in planning in the UK across the challenges faced by the cities, regions and their inhabitants. An interim conclusion can be drawn that sound planning education is a pre-requisite for establishing an effective planning / planner's cadre for the larger benefit of urban and regional environment.

No.	University	Undergraduate Programmes	Postgraduate Programmes
1.	Anglia Ruskin University	01	01
2.	Birmingham City University	01	05
3.	Cardiff University	01	07
4.	Herriot Watt University	02	01
5.	Kingston University	00	01
6.	Leeds Metropolitan University	00	03
7.	John Morse University	01	02
8.	London South Bank University	01	10
9.	New Castle University	01	03
10.	Oxford Brookes University	01	08
11.	Queens University Belfast	01	03
12.	Sheffield Hallam University	04	03
13.	University of Cambridge	00	01
14.	University College, Cork	00	01
15.	University College Dublin	01	02
16.	University College London	01	06

17.	University of Aberdeen	04	02
18.	University of Birmingham	00	01
19.	University of Dundee	01	06
20.	University of Glasgow	00	03
21.	University of Hong Kong	00	01
22.	University of Liverpool	01	01
23.	University of Manchester	02	03
24.	University of Reading	01	02
25.	University of Sheffield	01	03
26.	University of Strathclyde	00	01
27.	University of Ulster	01	00
28.	University of the West of England	06	04
29.	University of Westminster	00	05
TOTAL		33	90

Source: RTPI (2009)

A similar scenario extends in the USA. According to the recent report of Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning, around 120 programmes exist in the region with greater emphasis on master's degrees (ACSP, 2008). It makes a logical outcome as the students normally opt for a professional planning degree from diverse backgrounds. The flexibility even allows undergraduate degree holders from disciplines such as language or literature to attend a professional course in planning. However the programmes ensure the appropriate combination of theoretical, skill based and method related components. The situation is different in South Asian context. To study in a postgraduate programme in urban and regional planning, one must possess undergraduate qualification in architecture, civil engineering or planning itself (ITPI, 1996). The same pre-requisite applies to Pakistani situation as well.

From the very onset of its creation in 1947, Pakistan required the services of planners. The country experienced the outcomes of one of the largest social dislocation. The cities were made to absorb large population loads for which they were neither planned nor prepared. After some time, the government of the time announced the development of Islamabad – a new capital city which was an ambitious undertaking. Advancement of technology, growing social mobility and realization of development schemes became the demand factors for a competent breed of planners. Large cities such as Karachi felt the need to the utmost. The metropolis was consolidating in its shape with reference to commercial, industrial and financial functions (KDP, 1973). However the local choices of trained professionals were virtually non-existing.

There was no educational institution in the country where qualified planners could be produced. At best, surveyors trained in preparing physical survey maps and architectural

draftsmen capable of generating basic house plans were the only two relevant types of technical hands available at that time. The situation in Karachi was no different (KDP, 1990). Despite the fact that the opportunities of employment were relatively better, the availability of qualified personnel was severely constrained. In the absence of proper education or training pertinent to planning, the individuals possessing any or combination of related skills were appointed as planners to undertake the jobs. Technicians who were well versed in surveying, estimations, land subdivisions and plotting were normally hired to manage the various schemes and assignments launched by the government agencies. Most of these job vacancies were filled by the personnel that had come from various parts of India after receiving some basic training or technical education from the polytechnics in the relevant field. Polytechnics, as per Indo-Pakistan sub-continental tradition, were vocational schools setup by the government to train technicians in trades such as surveying, leveling, and estimation, mechanical and electrical technologies. Usually matriculates (students who had successfully completed ten grades of schooling) were inducted in polytechnics. It may be useful to note that while City and Regional Planning Departments were initiated in University of Engineering and Technology, Lahore and Mehran University of Engineering and Technology, Jamshoro during 1970s and 1990s respectively, professional institutions in Karachi could not sustain any planning programme. University of Engineering and Technology, Lahore was founded in 1962. Eight years later it started a City Planning Programme leading to a Bachelors Degree. One of the key objectives was to provide planning professionals for various jobs in the government departments in Northern provinces of Pakistan. Mehran University of Engineering and Technology, Jamshoro (a university town 130 km away from Karachi) was founded in 1977. It began an undergraduate programme in City Planning to provide trained professionals for planning related jobs created in government departments in the southern part of the country (Ahmed, 1996).

A review of the professional assignments generated in the domain of planning in Pakistan show that there has been considerable measure of diversity (Show Figure 01-04 an examples). Preparation of feasibility studies of new town developments, development strategies for disaster affected areas, upliftment plans for run down urban locations, amelioration plans of squatter settlements, preparation of monitoring and evaluation reports of large / medium scale development projects, conventional physical master plans, data base development on Geographical Information System (GIS) formats and a range of similar tasks are undertaken on a routine basis. Baseline capacities required in a professional planner include observation skills with ability to communicate in various graphical and written formats, understanding of design and implementation of development process, abilities to liaise with other stakeholders and essential creativity to generate planning options. Emoluments in planning jobs in public sector are normally commensurate with other professionals such as architects and engineers. However, remunerations in the consulting and

private practice depend upon the cumulative range of abilities possessed by an incumbent. Sound professional education is one vital ingredient to build up these abilities.



Figure-01: A squatter settlement in Western Karachi now bifurcated through Lyari Expressway – a highway scheme.

(Photograph by the author)



Figure-02: View of Lyari Expressway dividing a low income settlement.

(Photograph by the author)



Figure-03: Edges of Lyari Expressway with informal activities.

(Photograph by the author)



Figure-04: Goats and sheep traded at the threshold of Lyari Expressway.

(Photograph by the author)

2. First Attempt – An Undergraduate Programme

Educational opportunities at undergraduate and postgraduate programmes existed in the allied disciplines. The University of Karachi, which has been the largest public institution of higher learning in the city, offered undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in geography, sociology, social work, economics and applied economics. Graduates from these programmes could not fill the void of qualified planners due to several reasons. Intake for these programmes came from such students who had only studied arts and humanities at the level of higher secondary school (HSC). Alternatively the students with relatively lower scores in science at HSC level were inducted in these programmes. Students with higher merit and better prospects opted for professional degrees in engineering, architecture, medicine and other similar fields. Thus the quality of output was not able to make an outstanding impact in the job market. In the public sector, employment against the few available positions of planners was randomly granted. Geographers, sociologists, cartographers and even public administrators filled the jobs. Alternatively, architects and civil engineers were inducted to carry out the usual work designated for planners. They would acquire competence on the job. The employing institution would also send them to some short term training and educational courses in different countries abroad.

The first attempt towards the city and regional planning studies was introduced in 1987 (Ahmed, 1996). It was done at the Dawood College of Engineering and Technology (DCET) which was also the only institution imparting architectural education at undergraduate level. Much potential were considered for launching an undergraduate degree course. The college realized the need especially in the wake of total absence of such a programme in a large city such as Karachi. It was also the time that a comprehensive development plan for the city was being prepared by the city authorities under assistance from UNCHS – HABITAT and UNDP. International consultants were Planning and Development Collaborative (PADCO) – a Washington based firm (KDP, 1973). There were other sectoral assignments being done by a wide variety of consortia and collaborators. There were many NGOs and development

consultancy groups that were working in different sectors. Thus a planning graduate had bright prospects of obtaining employment.

After preparations for about one year in terms of curriculum development, faculty search, resource mobilization and statutory approvals from the university bodies, the undergraduate planning programme was launched in 1988 (Ahmed, 1996). Initially 15 students were inducted for the foundation class which was aimed to increase progressively over the following years. The teaching continued for a little less than a year. No second time admissions were announced and the programme was held in abeyance for an indefinite period.

There were several reasons behind the abortive failure of this attempt. Qualified teachers to teach the various specialized subjects in planning were not available for full time hiring. The physical planning, urban modeling, statistical applications in planning and related subjects were impossible to be taught without the availability of qualified and well versed planners. Dawood College had launched the planning programme with anticipation that corresponding funds would be released by the federal government to support the new initiative. It never happened. There was only one qualified urban planner in the faculty members. He also left after a few months, making it entirely impossible for the department to sustain the programme.

3. Urban design graduate programme at Dawood College

In 1989, the Department of Architecture and Planning at Dawood College became a regional partner of Aga Khan Programme for Islamic Architecture at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.) and Harvard University. As a consequence of this relationship, a chair of a visiting professor was created with a research and development grant. An academic from Istanbul was appointed as Aga Khan Visiting Professor after an international search. Among the various responsibilities, the professor was assigned to develop a post graduate programme to be offered by the college.

After extensive consultation with the college faculty members, students, working professionals and review of the prevailing situation pertinent to the domains of architecture and planning, it was decided to launch the programme in the field of urban design. Besides, the programme was planned to offer focused course and studio work in the areas of urban housing, landscape, transportation & infrastructure and conservation & renewal. In order to obtain further feedback, two colloquia were organized on urban housing and urban landscape in 1990 and 1991 respectively. About 100 participants took part in these two events each of which was spread to over two weeks of studio and lecture/presentation work. Two edited

volumes were published based on these two events. These books were to serve as the baseline material for urban design programme (Gurel et. al., 1991; Gurel et. al., 1993).

After passing through this preparatory process, the programme document was compiled and presented to the various statutory bodies of the university. The programme was finally accorded approval in 1992 (UDGP, 1991).

The programme laid down fairly comprehensive objectives which are presented as under:

“Objective of Urban Design Graduate Programme urban design can be broadly described as to train professionals for further specialization by equipping them with necessary knowledge and skill which will help them in tackling with, as well as solving the problems of urban centers in the country (UDGP, 1995:5).

In fact being the first example of its kind in Pakistan, urban design as a discipline represents a sort of transition from architecture to town planning and vice versa. This means the future experts of this discipline will be able to deal with each and every level of design process, namely architecture, urban design and town planning. However, the urban design is to deal with comprehensive issues of our built-environment of large and smaller cities and towns all over the country” (UDGP, 1995:3).

The programme comprised four semesters of full time study. However to accommodate working professionals, the timings were modified. Studies used to begin in the afternoon and continued till late in the evening. It was open for architects, civil engineers and planners with undergraduate qualification. A concise description of the courses offered in this programme is summarized in Table-02. The programme ran from 1992 to 1998 after which it was suspended due to administrative reasons. Four batches were inducted in the programme. The total number of students enrolled in the programme was 37. However only 17 were able to complete the courses and pass the final qualification examination.

TABLE-02: MASTER OF URBAN DESIGN PROGRAMME AT DAWOOD COLLEGE, KARACHI	
First Semester – Compulsory Courses	Third Semester
UD-601: Urban Design Studio-1	(A) Compulsory
UD-611: Theory and Practice in Urban Design	UD-701: Urban Design Studio-3

UD-612: Urban Transportation and Infrastructure	(B) Elective (any three)
UD-613: Urban Housing	UD ELC-711: Urban Ecology and Design Analysis
UD-614: Urban Planning Process in Pakistan	UD ELC-712: Site Planning in Housing
Second Semester – Compulsory Courses	UD ELC-713: Socio-economic Aspects of Urban Conservation and Renewal
UD-602: Urban Design Studio-2	UD ELC-714: Case Studies in Urban Conservation and Renewal
UD-621: Case Studies and Seminars in Urban Design	UD-ELC-715: Technical Aspects of Land and Townscaping
UD-622: History of Urban Form	UD-ELC-716: Transportation and Land use Issues in Karachi
UD-623: Urban Conservation and Renewal Or	UD-ELC-717: Case Studies in Transportation
UD-624: Urban Landscape	UD-ELC-718: Coastal Area Development
UD-625: Real Estate and Land Management in Urban Design	UD-ELC-719: Applied Statistics
	Fourth Semester – Compulsory Courses
	UD-702: Urban Design Final Research Project

Source: UDGP (1995)

Two evaluation studies were conducted by this author (Ahmed, 1996 and 1998). The first evaluation was focused to evolve an improvement agenda for the programme. The second evaluation aimed to draw specific lessons for applying to a future postgraduate course in the realm of urban design or planning. Salient findings from these exercises are presented in this paper as under:

3.1 Planning, Inception and Initial Development

Despite a well thought out preparatory strategy, some vital aspects were not adequately addressed during the formative phases. Assessment of potential intake was one such factor. The total number of registered architects in Pakistan was 1500 (at that time) (PCATP, 2009). Of them, forty percent resided in Karachi. Of this small number, many were not eligible to even apply for the course due to their low academic standing (aggregate marks). Those left

were mostly in private practice or gainfully employed elsewhere. The likelihood of them seeking admission was constrained due to their pre-occupations.

A general lack of awareness about urban design was another hindrance. Large number of young and even mid career professionals was found not to be aware about the basics of urban design. For a professional to enter into a graduate level study without having a basic comprehension of that field was not a desirable situation. Besides, there was no internal or external channel of providing this much needed comprehension in the college or elsewhere in the city.

Although urban design was conceived as a multi-disciplinary field of study drawing its intake from architects, engineers and planners, it was expected that architects would be the traditional denomination of the programme. Their participation became constrained due to their limited numerical strength. Lack of scholarship opportunities also discouraged many promising candidates from joining the programme.

These facts became evident in the four cycles of admissions that were conducted for the programme. With the exception of the first batch inducted in 1993-94, there were very few candidates of requisite backgrounds in the other three batches who could properly qualify to be inducted in the urban design programme or any other graduate study.

3.2 Admissions and Intake

The process of admissions had been adequately managed. Entrance examination and interview process added credibility to the admission procedure. However, due to weak target group that applied for admission, this process could not help yield any sizable positive result.

3.3 Administration and Staff

The college administration had agreed to provide only skeleton staff to run the programme. An overall paucity of funds continued to pose hindrance in smooth functioning of programme. Thus the performance of the administration could not be extra-ordinary. Due to lack of support from mainstream college administration, the academic staff was burdened with administrative and managerial assignments of very routine nature.

3.4 Courses and Contents

Generally referring, the courses and their contents were satisfactory and comparable to the teaching of urban design elsewhere in the world. However local understanding could not be embodied in the core courses including Theory and Practice in Urban Design, History of Urban Form, Urban Landscape and Urban Conservation/Renewal. Teaching in these courses was confined to the classical, modern and post modern dimensions with references to the west without addressing the broader social and physical realities of local built environment. The programme required input of sponsored research to build up its own relevant course material and literature support. Due to scarcity of resources and shortage of full time faculty members, it could not be undertaken.

Another worth reviewing aspect was the format of studio exercise. The linkup of fact finding, analysis and proposal formulation was weak and incongruent. Usually the exercises lacked the strength in graphical/visual presentation of the studies undertaken which was undoubtedly a vital aspect in the teaching of urban design. Students, who developed a part time mentality towards the programme due to their employment pre-occupations, did not put up efforts in generating proper outputs.

3.5 Students' Response

With the exception of few students during the batches 1993-94 and 1994-95, the response of the students had been generally positive. They were enthusiastic, eager to learn and had a tendency to improve their performance. However several discrepancies were identified due to various reasons. The skill based or intellectual deficiencies that were inherited from the under graduate programmes could not be overcome. These deficiencies included weaknesses in spatial analysis, lack of reading habits, a relatively low level of general knowledge (in many students) and weak presentation skills. Students possessing undergraduate background in city planning or civil engineering mostly faced this handicap.

3.6 Faculty Performance

The overall performance of the faculty had been satisfactory. Despite the handicaps such as unavailability of appropriate course material and library/literature support, the faculty had been able to deliver a fairly reasonable input in all the different courses. However, there were some persistent short comings in this respect. Subject specialists, who are a vital ingredient of any graduate programme, could not be found. Thus the resident faculty had to virtually act as substitute in all such courses where an outside teacher was not available.

3.7 Field Research

As far as the field research within the academic process of the programme is concerned, there was a reasonable amount of work achieved. For example the students did sufficient field work and analysis during their studio exercises on informal/public sector housing, Karachi's coastline, Lyari Expressway (an elevated highway project which was built those days), Saddar/Empress Market and PECHS (Pakistan Employees Cooperative Housing Society – an upper middle income locality in Karachi). Special mention must be made about the fact finding work on Saddar/Empress Market by the batch 1993-94 in their Urban Design Studio in third semester.

A sizable amount of field and research work was done by some faculty members with assistance from the students. Field research and analysis was also undertaken during the thesis/final research projects of individual students. This research altogether formulates a very valuable asset and can be processed towards further refinements. Some useful publications may also come out of this research and documentation work.

3.8 Quality of Outputs

This refers to the graphical presentations and written reports produced at the conclusion of courses and studio work. Despite the unabated input of the resident faculty on the vital aspects such as bibliographical referencing and the report writing/producing techniques, the quality of outputs was at a fairly low level. In most cases, the reports were devoid of a commensurate intellectual substance and original contribution in the form of analysis and recommendations.

3.9 Library Resources

By any standards, the available library resources were not compatible to the basic requirements of a master's degree course. At certain ends, this short coming was not apparent in the non-availability of literature but the absence of proper cataloguing facilities.

3.10 Linkages with Other Institutions

In its short history, the programme had been successful in establishing some very useful linkages, the foremost being the link with Sindh *Katchi Abadis* (Squatter Settlements) Authority (SKAA) on shelter strategies for low income groups. This linkage, which was established with the collaboration of the Free University Amsterdam and the Sindh Shelter Community Project (a World Bank subsidiary), had been instrumental in raising the level of awareness and understanding about key theoretical issues of urban housing. The invaluable

contribution of late Prof. Jan van der Linden, a Dutch sociologist, and the support of a former Director General SKAA and his able staff members helped in strengthening the linkage. Two useful approaches became well established. The incremental housing scheme (IHS) was developed as a pilot project for promoting access to housing for low income groups. By devising a simplified approach compatible to the sociology and economics of urban poor, an effective option was worked out. The leasing and regularization of squatter settlements was another pro-poor strategy developed by local planners and administrators. The model was replicated in few other cities of Pakistan.

Some international linkages were also initiated between the programme and foreign institutions. The graduate level association of programme with Mimar Sinan University, Istanbul is an important mention. However the linkage was only confined to the exchange visits of faculty members.

4. Master of Urban and Regional Planning programme at NED University

The NED University setup a Department of Architecture and Planning in the year 2000. Based on the previous experiences, the core faculty members of the department adopted a consultative approach to develop the Master of Urban and Regional Planning programme. The considerations that led to the development of this programme are vital to be reviewed.

4.1 Considerations

a) Changes in Local Government

During the course of preparation of this programme, a drastic change in the local government institutions was instituted by the government. In the province of Sindh where Karachi is located, the enforcement of Sindh Local Government Ordinance 2001 created the main legal premise under which far reaching institutional changes were brought about. Karachi was accorded a special status as a city district with all the civilian local institutions merge into a City District Government (CDGK).

According to this change, the city of Karachi was administratively restructured into 18 towns which comprise a total of 178 Union Councils. While this change translated into a demand within the local government of 18 senior planners and 178 junior planners, the recruitment of professionals inducted at the various administrative levels is yet to be finalized. Under the framework of this plan, the need for professionals related to urban planning has been redeemed to a considerable extent.

(b) Limited Strength of Planners

An overall dearth of qualified planners was found to exist in the city. In the defunct Karachi Development Authority (KDA), only 12 posts were occupied by individuals possessing appropriate qualifications out of a total of 74 vacancies.

Besides the physical planning and economic development planning which is undertaken by government agencies and some major private sector firms, tremendous scope and market for planning related work in other areas was found. There are numerous NGOs and consultants engaged in development planning and management at the micro level. New employment opportunities for planners are expected to come about in the NGO and community sector.

(c) Conceptual Bearing of the Programme

Review of the planning curricula and syllabi of other institutions in Pakistan revealed that they imparted very conventional understanding about the field of urban planning. A need for a sound philosophical base and concurrent teaching methodology was found to enhance the vision and skill level of professionals. It also required the capacity among the professionals to deduct truths and realities through an unbiased approach. During the development phase of MURP programme, it was found imperative to have a sound philosophical standing of the curriculum structure.

(d) Local Challenges

The main challenge for the students / professionals was to learn to relate to contextual problems to the larger reality and to establish the context at various levels of analysis and planning. The roles of all major actors including government agencies, activists, donor agencies and financial institutions, in the specific context of Pakistani cities and villages needed to be established and defined at various levels. When it came to development, planning and governance in Pakistan, there was a significant gap between the government's point of view and the reality. This gap was to be identified and understood. To ensure exposure to and subsequent understanding of the actors and the processes/ interactions within their community, both the teaching faculty and students of planning are required to undertake the documentation of prevalent processes, procedure and attitudes – and then to establish their relationship with the formal sector policies and points of view. This would not only provide the basis for developing appropriate and indigenous social research methods, but could also generate appropriate literature and content for the syllabus of the proposed programme.

(e) Range of Skills

A course in planning was deemed attend to the development of a range of technical skills and capacities such as physical planning, plan design, layout planning, research and analysis, technical report writing, social organization, interpersonal skills, computer applications and Geographic Information Systems (Khan, 2001).

4.2 Guidelines

The following were the specific guidelines prepared towards the launching of the programme.

(a) Academic Modules

In order to maximize flexibility and choice for the student, it was suggested that the Masters course in Urban and Regional Planning should comprise a series of modules (DAP-NED, 2002). These modules were to be carefully defined and crafted so that they could be free-standing units of study, which is they should be complete in themselves, while they may also work in conjunction with other modules. The essence was to avoid duplication as well as gaps while striving for complementarities and interaction among the modules. Structure of courses was thus worked out keeping this suggestion.

(b) Multi-disciplinary Approach

A multi-disciplinary focus for the proposed programme could help in attracting both teaching staff as well as students into the programme.

(c) Linkage with Institutions

The master's programme was envisaged to benefit from developing links with other institutions. These links could be developed both at the international and local levels and in both formal and informal sectors. Overseas universities with progressive schools of planning were targeted to be identified and approached to develop formal relations that could lead to an interface of ideas and specific outcomes such as exchange programmes. These programmes could result in input from scholars from overseas universities as visiting

professors as well as teaching assistance and research input from their doctoral candidates stationed at NED's Department of Architecture and Planning for relatively longer periods of time. Teachers from the Department could reciprocally be sent to these universities for further training.

(d) Qualified Teacher with Sound Planning Background

It has been found search imperative to suitably qualified planners to teach Planning subjects for the proposed course to be successfully run. This was thought to be undoubtedly the most crucial task in the whole process. The experience with Master of Urban Design Programme at Dawood College highlighted the difficulty in finding qualified/ appropriate persons to teach at the Masters level in Karachi. It was also cautioned that planning studies must not be considered as an extension of architecture. Similarly the need of resident faculty was found to be paramount.

(e) Interface with Computer Applications

While planners in the field are generally reluctant to employ Information Technology (IT) at work except for basic functions, people seem to be rushing into IT at cost to other professions.

The master's programme in planning should capitalize upon the situation using Information Technology in attracting students. IT needs to be built into the curriculum as a tool for learning (web-based teaching components) and as planning and design tools such as Geographical Information System (Ahmed, 2002).

(f) Awareness about Planning Profession

There is a strong need to create an awareness of the Planning profession and the value of the professional Planner in this society. For Planners to get the required support as professionals, we need to explain their role and utility in the society. While this task lies essentially in the domain of responsibility of the statutory body, the Pakistan Council of Architects and Town Planners, the programme should also avail any opportunity to promote the profession among the masses. While PCATP is mandated to promote the profession of planning, its role has been limited to registering planners only. The council also accredits planners however it only considers undergraduate qualifications from the country for this purpose. The structure of the programme is outlined as Table-03.

TABLE-03: MASTERS OF URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING PROGRAMME AT NED UNIVERSITY, KARACHI	
Pre-Requisite Courses	Elective Courses
AR-511: Introduction to Urban Design	AR-616: Urbanism: Theory and Practice
AR-512: Introduction to Urban Sociology	AR-617: Advanced Studies in Urban Design
AR-513: Methods in Physical Planning	AR-618: Urban Area Conservation
AR-514: Introduction to Urban Economics	CE-561: Urban Transportation Planning
AR-515: Introduction to Transportation and Infrastructure	AR-619: Legal and Regulatory Aspects in Planning
AR-516: Basic Communication Techniques in Planning	AR-620: Planning Implementation Methods
	AR-621: Advanced Urban Economics
Compulsory Courses	
AR-611: Planning Theory	AR-622: Seminar in Planning, Economics and Development
AR-612: Methods in Urban Planning Research	AR-623: Computer Applications in Planning
AR-613: Land use Planning and Analysis	AR-624: Real Estate Analysis
AR-614: Infrastructure Planning	AR-625: Statistical Methods in Planning
AR-615: Economic Development and Regional Planning	AR-626: Remote Sensing
	AR-627: Advanced Studies in Housing
	AR-628: Urban Management and Administration
	AR-629: Advanced Urban Sociology
	AR-630: Project Planning and Management
	AR-631: Development Planning in Pakistan
	AR-632: Seminar in Urban Management in Pakistan
	AR-634: Planning for Sustainable Development

Source: Khan, (2001); DAP-NED, (2002); Ahmed, (2002).

5. Programme Performance

Keeping into view the findings and recommendations of the study team and the statutory and academic outlook of the university, the MURP programme was finally structured and launched in 2003. It may be useful to note that the postgraduate level programmes of planning offered elsewhere were also reviewed. In the present form the MURP programme is composed of 30 taught credits. There are five compulsory and five elective courses offered in the programme. Minimum duration of the completion is five semesters. Planning theory, methods in planning research, land use, infrastructure planning, economic development and regional planning constitute the core courses. A wide range of options have been available for electives.

According to the current status, 55 students enrolled. 14 have been able to pass after fulfilling all the requirements (Table-04). Not a single candidate from the undergraduate qualifications in urban planning has been able to succeed. Whereas the programme has been working according to its schedule, there were several issues identified during a focused group meeting of faculty and students held in April 2009. They are summarized in Table-05 as under:

Year	Architects		Civil/Urban Engineers		Planners	
	Enrolled	Passed	Enrolled	Passed	Enrolled	Passed
2003	0	0	6	0	0	0
2004	2	0	1	0	1	0
2005	1	0	0	1	0	0
2006	4	0	0	5	1	0
2007	12	2	3	0	1	0
2008	5	3	2	0	0	0
2009	5	3	7	0	4	0
Total	29	8	19	6	7	0

Faculty Responses	Student Responses
Weak comprehension of maps and graphical details about towns and settlements.	Subjects taught are tough. At times, detailed background is not present for comprehending the lecture.
Limited understanding about technicalities of space and its physical characteristics.	Limited opportunities of group work.
A tired group after a full day's work in	Subject teachers / specialists are low in

respective offices.	numbers.
Handicaps in political and administrative awareness and knowledge about dominant political ideologies, concept and movements.	Practical assignments must be introduced to enable the students apply their knowledge on practical issues.
Relatively casual attitude of students.	Greater emphasis must be laid on computer application packages. They are instrumental in improving the employability of graduates.
Possibilities of conducting studio work limited.	

Conclusions

From the experiences gained in the city context, it is obvious that urban and regional planning can be taught in a post graduate programme only, at least in contexts like Pakistan. Limited awareness, the changing status of physical planning as a separate discipline, and the overriding dominance of market forces on urban development, does not favour planning education at undergraduate level.

Scarcity of appropriate resource material based on local issues was found as a key factor in the assessment of urban design and planning education. There is a genuine need to generate local knowledge in order to enrich the contents of the programme in an appropriate manner. Weaknesses in general knowledge and spatial understanding also poses a handicap in the smooth running of the programme.

Due to restrictive intake from three rather limited disciplines, the intake is below the desired level even in the present situation. Bright students are only accidentally discovered. To keep the emphasis on multidisciplinary flavour of the programme, consideration of other disciplines in intake is imperative.

Experiences have revealed that taught courses are a better means to deliver the contents in the presently existing evening programme. Since the entire intake is employed somewhere, it does not have the capacity to engage into any long stretched field work or studies.

Recommendations

The academic framework for urban and regional planning must be made flexible to broaden the scope of intake in contexts like Karachi. Suitable candidates from the allied disciplines of

sociology, geography, economics and public administration may be inducted in the planning programme. They shall require adequate training in the spatial understanding pertinent to planning.

Attempts must be made to appoint separate faculty members focusing on the planning programme. Collaborative links with foreign universities can help in obtaining visiting faculty members at least on a short term basis. To create incentives and attraction, sponsored research and consultancies may be encouraged to utilize the time and presence of these faculty members. An active resource centre must be created to facilitate planning education. At present, sizable information is available with different institutions. To access it, a working network may be created to acquire maximum benefits in terms of access and support.

Teaching methodologies should be geared to help eradicate the short comings among the students. That is to say if the student body is found deficient in a specific area of study, the teaching input may try to help improve its status.

Communication skills, presentation techniques and organization methods are some common areas where concentrated input is vitally needed in planning studies in places like Pakistan where a feeble background of the discipline exists.

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