The Gentrification Of Karachi's Coastline

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Karachi's Coastline

Karachi has a 27 kilometre long coastline in addition to numerous creeks and mangrove forests. Most of this coastline is dotted with ancient fishing villages. More than half of it is visited by hundreds of thousands of Karachiites every week for recreation and entertainment. After 1999, attempts at its gentrification through global capital and Dubai and Malaysia based real estate companies have been made.



Background

- In 1999, through a military coup, General Musharraf dismissed the democratically elected government in Pakistan and became the country's Chief Executive.
- He appointed a Chief Vice Executive of the Citibank as Finance Minister who in 2004 was appointed Prime Minister. He also appointed a very senior economist of the World Bank as the Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan whose additional job was that of chairperson of the National Commission for Government Reforms.
- Another important World Bank person was appointed as the Minister for Finance, Planning and Development in Sindh province. In 2002, he was made federal minister for Privatisation and Investment.

- Devolution was carried out in 2001 and indirectly elected mayors replaced the old colonial bureaucracy.
- Karachi became an autonomous city district.
- International companies and IFIs flooded Karachi.
- New vocabulary, such as world class city, investment friendly infrastructure, direct foreign investment, cities as engines of growth, golden hand-shack, public-private partnership, BOT, etc enter the development and planning vocabulary. Projects replace planning.
- Major road building and gentrification projects are implemented dislocating over 300,000 people. They were opposed by the city government planners.
- 2003 2004 beach gentrification is promoted.





The Gentrification Actors

- The president of Pakistan personally approved the projects
- The prime minister in 2006 signed MoUs with Dubai based developers and ordered state land owning agencies to provide land to the developers by transferring state land to them and by cancelling existing leases of non-state entities
- Dubai based companies having multi-billion US dollar portfolios. They were Dubai World, Emmar, Limitless and Nakheel.
- The Defence Housing Authority (originally Pakistan Defence Officer's Housing Society). This is on 3530 hectares and is the most elite area of Karachi consisting of posh residential and commercial areas and five and six star hotels, clubs and marinas. It contains 14 kilometres of Karachi coastline.
- Architects, contractors and the Association of Builders and Developers (ABAD)

Opponents

- Civil society organisations backed by prominent Karachi citizens
- WWF Pakistan
- National, Sindh and Karachi based fishermen's organisations
- Trade unions, through the Pakistan Institute of Labour Education on Research (PILER)
- Low income schools and CBOs from all over Sindh
- Academia
- Concerns voiced by some corporate sector heads, planners from within the city government, senior Sindh bureaucrats
- The role of media





















Box: A comparison of Rates: Survey of Clifton and Sea View (DHA Occupied) Beach

5. No.	hem	Rate at Clifton Beach	Rate at Sea View
1.	Local cold drink	Rs 2	None
2	Branded cold drink	Rs 12	Rs 12
3	Tea	Normal Rs 6 Doodh patti Rs 10	Rs 10
4.	Juice	Rs 10	Rs 12
5.	Biryani	Small plate Rs 5 Large plate Rs 10	Not available (NA)
6.	Polka/Walls Ice Cream	Kutta Rs 5 Cup Rs 10 Corentto Rs 20	Chock bar Rs 15 Feast Rs 25 Cornetto Rs 25
7.	Papper	Rs 5	NA
0.	Kita	Small size Rs 10 Large size Rs 15	Rs 15 Rs 20
9.	Burger	Round Rs 10 Large Rs 15	Chicken Burger Rs 35 Beef Burger Rs 25
10.	Sandwich	NA:	Rs 15
11.	Coffee	NA.	Rs 20
12.	Roll	NA.	Chicken Rs 25 Beef Rs 15
13.	Showarma	NA.	Rs 40
14.	Broast quarter	NA.	Half Rs 60 Full Rs 120
15.	Head massage	Rs 10	NA.
16.	Samossa	Rs 2.50	NA.
17.	Doorbeen (binoculars) (5-10 minutes)	Rs 5	NA .
18.	Chaet	Small Rs 10 Large Rs 15	NA

Source: Urban Resource Centre Survey.







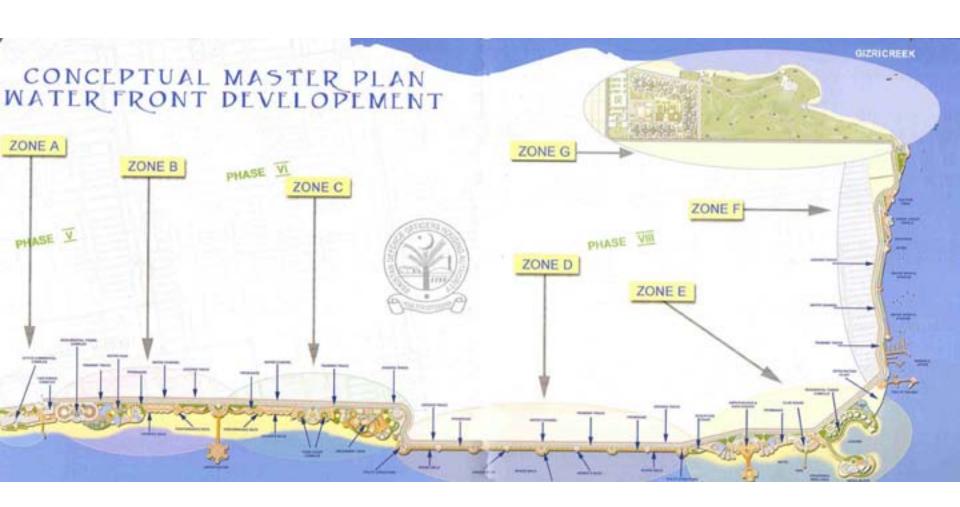




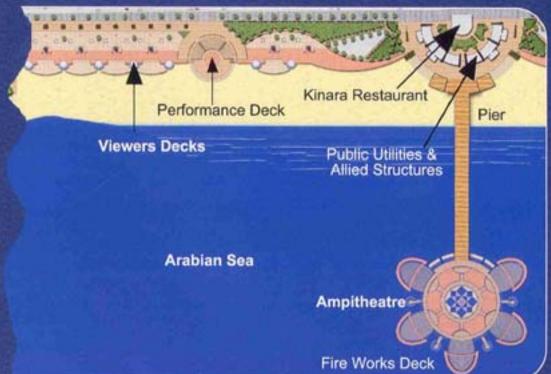
Development of DHA Coastline

- Initiated in 2004, its promotional literature described the project as "In Karachi, DHA has a virgin, unspoiled waterfront of nearly 14 kilometres ready with full potential for development... The residents of Karachi will soon see a qualitative change in their lives and their concept of relaxation, style and fun. Fire of creativity and imagination is promising to make Karachi beachfront a much sought-after tourist destination in the foreseeable future. Entirely practical and wholly realizable projects will have a deep impact on the lifestyle of the people of Karachi whose perception of enjoying the sea at present consists of riding a camel or a horse or just taking a walk on the wet sand and watching the waves crash on the shore. They will soon have access to multiple recreational activities within their reach."
- Project included "reclamation of 29.8 hectares of land, a high end hotel complex", "five star hotels owning private segments of the beach", and a "private beach with lagoon for hotel and residential blocks".























Objections

- The DHA project was a violation of the Doctrine of Public Trust principle which guarantees public access to beaches
- Violation of Section 12 of the Environment Projection Act 1997 and also of the Pakistan Environmental Protection Regulations 2002
- Violation of the Sindh Government Notification of May 1975 which prohibits the leasing of land within the area of ports or sea shore limits
- Violation of Article 9 of the Constitution which promotes the concept of equity for all citizens
- Effect on fishing communities will be deprived of livelihood
- Low and lower middle income residents will be denied a recreation and entertainment space
- Persons such as hawkers/jugglers etc who offer services to visitors to the beach will be denied livelihood

Sugarland City

- Initiated in 2006, it involved the development of the city's public beaches
- It was to occupy 26,000 hectares of land (including 112 villages)
- Total investment of US\$ 68 billion
- It was decided that a premature cancellation of leases was to be effected to make land available to Limitless, a Dubai based company launched by Dubai World







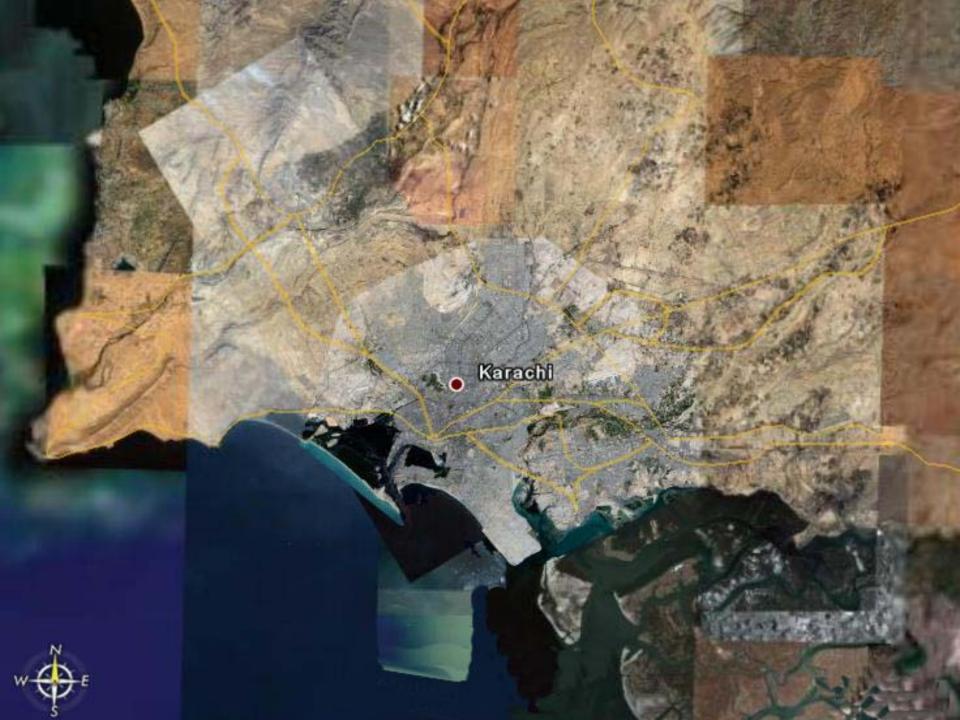


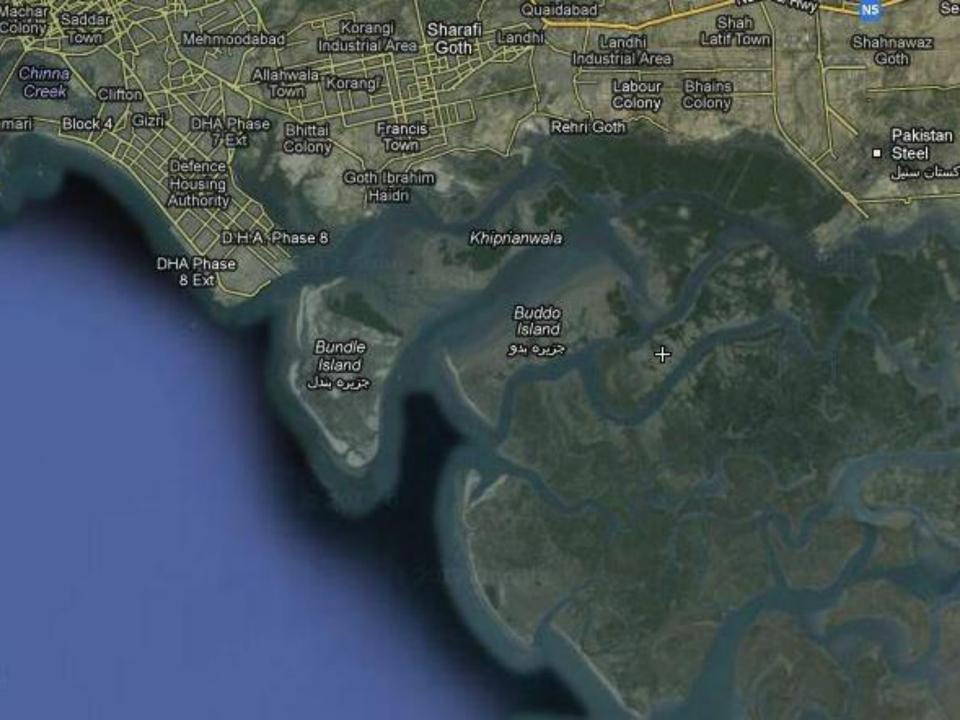
OBJECTIONS

- ☐ The Pakistan Mahigeer Tahreek (also known as the Pakistan Fisher-folk Forum, is the movement of the indigenous coastal fisher-folk communities of the country) produced a position paper after consultation with various stakeholders. The paper stated:
- That the project was "development to destroy nature and displace people
- It posed a threat to the eco-system and was being built over a major breeding point of the green turtle.
- It was destroying mangroves which are the resting place to migratory birds and fish species and are also use for fodder and fuel by local fishing communities
- More than a hundred villages were coming within the project and by loosing access to the sea they would lose their livelihoods
- No mention of alternative livelihoods or land was present in the present document
- ☐ Karachi civil society supported the PMT and also voiced concerns regarding the loss of public entertainment and recreational space

Sale of Islands for Development of Diamond Bar City

- Islands measure 4,800 hectares
- Were to be sold to Emaar for US\$ 42 billion
- Emaar undertook to build 15,000 housing units, commercial facilities, leisure real estate projects, industrial parks, trade zones and port terminals within 13 years at a cost of US\$ 43 billion



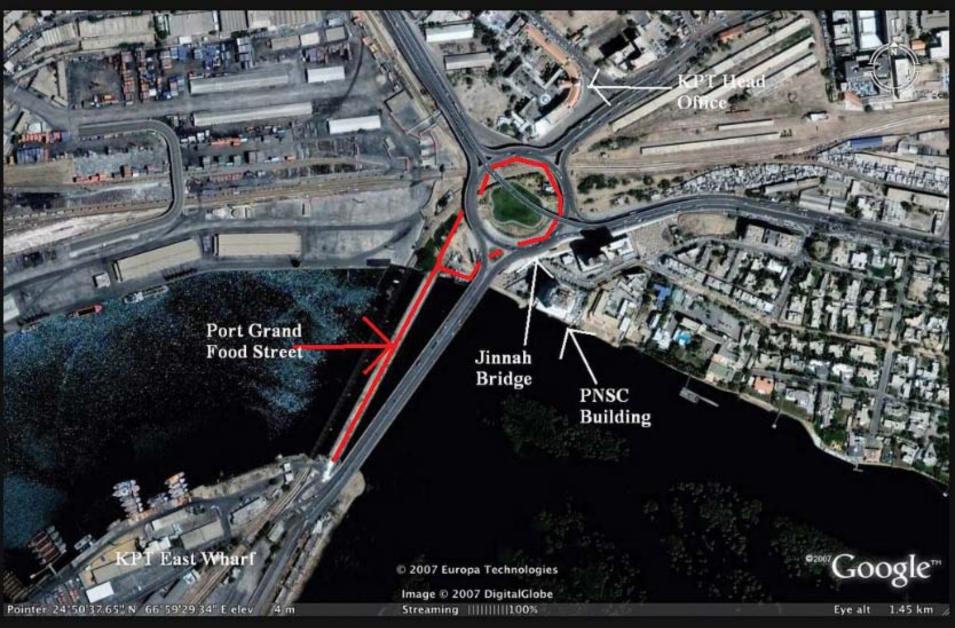


Objections

- The WWF pointed out that the islands are protected under international commitment as Pakistan since 1976 has been a signatory to the Ramsar Convention
- Any development on the islands has to be subject to assessments under the Pakistan Environmental Protection Act 1997
- The islands are used by the fishing villages upstream of the creek for drying fish and for camping during the fish season. Thousands of fishermen dry their catch and clean their nets on these islands
- The passage to the open sea would be denied to the fishing villages once the bridges linking the villages to the main land were constructed
- The Pakistan Fisher-folk Forum stated that "the project would result in poverty and hunger among 8 million fisher folk who have been the historic inhabitants of the coast"
- One of the islands also contains the 10th century tomb of Yousuf Shah, the patron saint of the fishermen of Sindh. Thousands of fishermen, with their boats from all over the province gather to celebrate his birthday every year with music and dance

Port Grand Karachi

- "The project is a food, shopping and entertainment complex which has been built with over Rs 1 billion investment by Grand Leisure Corporation. Port Grand project is a 13-acre world-class facility that has been designed and built in collaboration with top international architects/designers who employed the latest technology and building techniques to deliver a state of the art facility. About 40 outlets are being made operational at this stage while more outlets would be opened soon."
- "The native jetty bridge has been entirely rebuilt to ensure a world-class tourist destination and a source of pride for Karachites that would ultimately attract millions of people from all over the country and beyond. Visitors would come to Port Grand not only for food and entertainment but for over a hundred different concepts at port grand that includes free wifi, port bazaar, bookstore, florist, Art lane, gift and antiques etc. Parking for over eight hundred cars with complimentary valet service."



Port Grand shopping mall in Karachi





















The Nature of the Struggle against the Projects

- The objections were articulated by civil society organisations in the media after careful study and the development of irrefutable statistics
- Forums in which various stakeholders, including government functionaries and groups were invited were held and reported in the press
- Prominent citizens and corporate sector heads were contacted and they were informed of the repercussions of the projects
- The OPP and URC carried out a signature campaign. 5,000 signatures from CBO representatives, school teachers and individuals from all over Sindh were acquired and used for the lobbying process
- The PFF convened a number of meetings and invited media, prominent citizens, academia and NGOs to them. It observed hunger strikes and convened an All (Political) Parties Conference and presented its findings to them
- It observed a shutter down strike throughout Sindh in collaboration with political parties and civil society organisations
- The Chief Secretary Sindh convened meetings to discuss these issues.















Karachi Strategic Development Plan 2020

- While the opposition to the projects was being raised the KSDP 2020 was being framed.
- The issues were discussed in the KSDP meetings and decisions were taken after consultations with the opponents of the projects
- The flora and fauna of the area, fishing communities, lower and lower income Karachiites who flocked to the beaches and the persons who serve them, and land owning agencies and people were accepted as stakeholders
- Under the KSDP 2020 no reclamation from the sea, mangrove marshes, mud flats which are fish and turtle nurseries and the land they require for survival, is permitted. Also, all beaches should be accessible to the fishing communities and to the public. No development between the high water mark and 150 metres beyond it, or on the sea ward side of the coastal roads, is permissible

FOUR PRINCIPLES FOR EVALUATING PROJECTS SINCE PLANNING IS OUT

- 1. Projects have to respect the ecology and the natural environment of the area in which the city is located.
- 2. Land use has to be determined on the basis of social and environmental considerations and not on the basis of l and value (or potential land value) alone.
- 3. Projects must give priority to the needs of the majority population which in the case of Pakistan belongs to the l owner income or lower middle income classes.
- 4. Projects have to respect the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of human settlements and of the communities living in them.

The Role of Architects

Architects and planners have played an important role in developing a very large number of anti-poor projects. I have advocated (without success) an oath for architects and planners, something similar to the Hippocratic oath for the medical profession. The theory being that the Council of Architects should be deregister anyone that violates this oath. In 1983, I took such an oath.

"I will not do projects that will irreparably damage the ecology and environment of the area in which they are located; I will not do projects that increase poverty, dislocate people and destroy the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of communities that live in the city; I will not do projects that destroy multi-class public space and violate building byelaws and zoning regulations; and I will always object to insensitive projects that do all this, provided I can offer viable alternatives."