

GROWING NEEDS OF PLANNERS IN PAKISTAN: A CASE STUDY OF PUNJAB PROVINCE

I. Ahmad, S. M. Mayo, A. Aziz, M. B. Sharif and A. Rahman

Department of City and Regional Planning and Department of Civil Engineering, University of Engineering and Technology, Lahore
Department of City and Regional Planning, Lahore College for Women University, Lahore

ABSTRACT: In Pakistan, the human settlements are expanding mainly because of urbanization. Due to this population growth, rapid haphazard urban sprawl is occurring and thus created the demand of professionals working for the planning of small and large settlements. As a result, the planners are assigned tasks to plan both urban as well as rural settlements. These planners are given powers by Punjab Local Government Ordinance (PLGO) 2001. Under this devolution plan (2001 PLGO ordinance) posts of town planners are created at district and *Tehsil* (Sub District) levels. Apart from this Local Government Department, planners are placed in development authorities as well as in various government departments. The major responsibility of these planners is to monitor the pace of development and then streamline the same in coordinated and controlled way. But it is observed that many seats in local government and other departments are lying vacant due to non-availability of qualified planners in the market. This situation is reducing the efficiency of government departments mainly because of absence of planners. This paper mainly explores the growing needs of planners particularly in the province of Punjab.

Key words: Urbanization, Haphazard City Growth, Need of Planners

INTRODUCTION

Human settlements whether located in urban or rural areas are continuously changing its shapes. This phenomenon is more prominent in urban areas. Resultantly, the cities especially in developing countries are facing the haphazard urban sprawl. This is happening mainly because of urbanization. Large numbers of people are moving towards the cities for improvement in their livelihoods. The cities are facing lot of stress due to this increased population pressure. World Bank (2004) forecasted that the world population could be 9 billion, up from 6 billion today. Bank further alarmed that almost all this increase will show up in the cities and towns of developing countries. Pakistan, a country of more than 140million people is a developing country and facing this problem of urbanization with its severity. Murtaza (2006), on the situation described that urbanization in Pakistan is likely to pose new challenge in governance and urban service delivery. The results are appearing in form of shortage of services and related infrastructure. Efforts are made at different levels in form of establishments of various government departments, hiring services of skilled professionals, preparation of various types of development plans, etc. etc. to cope with the situation. The plans are prepared by professionals with the objective to control the uneven spatial growth of human settlements. But apart from all such efforts, these beautiful plans seem failed to achieve the desired

objectives and situation is becoming worse day by day. Now the questions arise:

1. Are these professionals equipped with requisite skill and training to solve the major problems arising in such settlements?
2. Are these professionals sufficient in number to cover the nature and extent of responsibilities?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to explore the answers of the research questions, it is necessary to understand the system from where the planners are coming and working. Universities are the main source of producing town planners in the country. For this purpose, the educational institutions where planning education is given are explored. Moreover, annual supply is compared with the demand. In this regard, it is disclosed that the recognized City and Regional Planning Education is given in University of Engineering and Technology, Lahore (UETL), Mehran University of Engineering and Technology (MUET), Jamshoro, NED University of Engineering and Technology, Karachi, and University of Peshawar. The more recent is Lahore College for Women University, Lahore (LCWU). To start career as professional planner, there is a need to take license from the Pakistan Council of Architects and Town Planners (PCATP). Without this no one can get a job in the government sector and PCATP only issue license to those graduates who have basic four years B.Sc. education in the City and Regional

Planning. When this criteria is applied on the above planning institutions, it is revealed that PCATP is giving license to only planning graduates of UETL, whereas the other are not getting the same. The University of Peshawar and NED are offering master programs in City and Regional Planning whereas LCWU have just started their program and not yet produce any graduate. Hence, UETL is the only institution that is producing graduates in City and Regional Planning and getting professional license from the PCATP. Thus, UETL graduates are eligible to get jobs in the government sector. As far as the strength is concerned, there are 50 seats of students reserved for this department in the UETL. But this number is changing and there is seldomly a time when it produced 50 graduates. Previous record shows that on the average it is producing 25-30 graduates annually who have requisite skill and education for employment in planning departments (government sector).

Similarly, the work places where planners are performing their jobs are identified. It is found out that the planners are working in Local Government Offices (LGO), viz-a-viz; District, Tehsil/ Town, Development Authorities (DAs) and Punjab Housing and Town Planning Agency (PHATA). DAs are not present in all the districts of Punjab Province. If a DA is present, then the planners are placed in town planning and

metropolitan directorates. In PHATA offices, mostly professionals from other field are working on the seats of planners and this is mainly because of non-availability of qualified planners in the market. As far as the LGO is concerned, the planners are positioned at two tiers, i.e. District and Tehsil/Town levels.

District Level Set Up in Punjab Province: Pakistan comprised of four (04) provinces. The administrative set up comprise of provinces, districts, *tehsils* (sub districts) and union councils. District, *Tehsil* and Union Council form the Local Government System. According to Abid (2001), the District Administration comprises of district offices, including sub-offices of the Departments of the Provincial Government decentralized to the District Government and grouped under the Executive District Officers (EDOs) and coordinated by the District Coordination Officer (DCO). The political system at the district level forms the district council and members are elected from the public. In executive level district set up, planners are placed under the EDO Works and Services (figure-1). A seat of District Officer Housing & Physical Planning is created at each district. A planner is supposed to be posted against this seat. Likewise, based on functions, a planner can also be placed against seat of District Officer Transport.

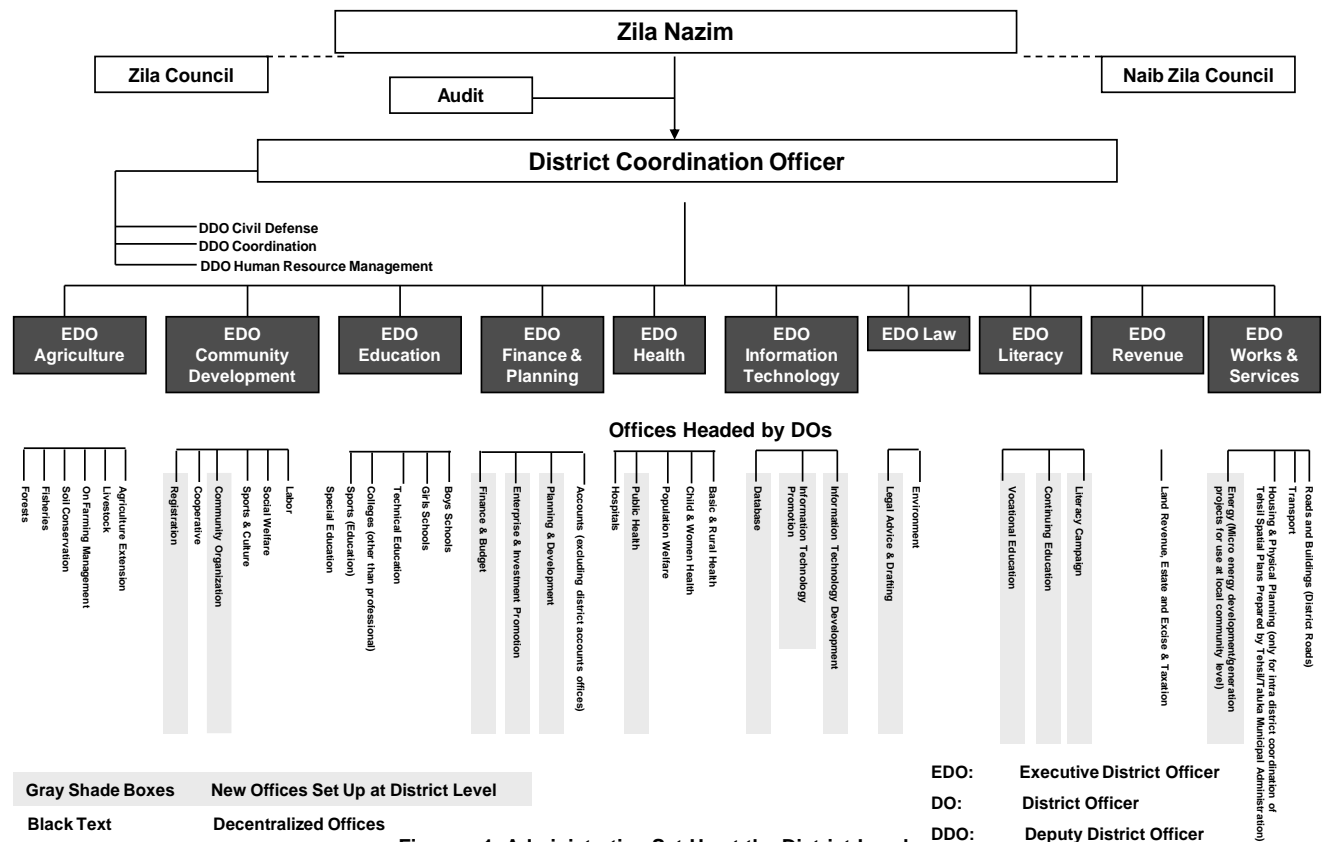


Figure – 1: Administrative Set Up at the District Level

Source: http://www.nrb.gov.pk/local_government/figure_2.gif?NOCACHE=1

Tehsil/ Taluka(Sub District) Level: At this level, same type of administrative set up exist as that of district level. In political set up, representatives are selected from people. *Tehsil* Council comprises of *Naib Nazims* of all the union councils and all the union council *Nazims* of the

Tehsil. Likewise, in executive system (Administrative setup), under the *Tehsil Nazim* there is a *Tehsil Municipal Officer* (TMO). ToPC is working with the TMO in *Tehsil/Town*. The detailed structure of this setup can be seen in figure-2 below:

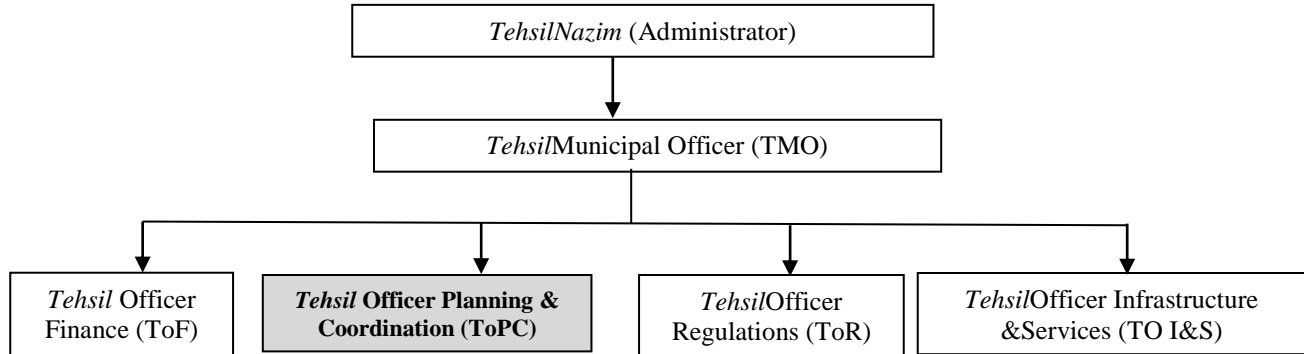


Figure – 2: *Tehsil* Level Executive Set Up

Union Council Level: According to SBNP Local Government Ordinance 2001, there shall be a Union Council in each Union comprising twenty one members elected directly in accordance with section 148: Twelve Muslims members, elected to general seats, including four reserved for women; Six members, elected to seats reserved for peasants and workers, including two reserved for women; One member elected to a seat reserved for minority communities; and Union *Nazim* and *Naib Union Nazim* elected as joint candidates. The Union Council *Nazim* is head of the union and assisted by *Naib Union Council Nazim*. Both *Nazim* and *Naib Nazim* are elected from the public as joint candidates. In Executive system there exist three secretaries. All these secretaries and other machinery work under the headship of *Nazim*.

In PHATA, DAs and LGOs planners are appointed. These planners are placed due to their ability and professional skills, which they acquired while studying 04 years professional degree course namely City and Regional Planning. These planners are well equipped to cope with the planning problems in an area.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Punjab Province, the land of five rivers has a population of more than 90 millions. According to Election Commission of Pakistan (2013), the province comprised of 36 districts (district=31, city districts=05), 38 Towns (tehsils in city districts are called as towns) and 106 *Tehsils*. Number of *Tehsils* and towns in each district and city district is varying. Likewise, population of each district is not constant and changing. The only similar thing is the local government ordinance 2001 which was introduced in all the districts with the same letter and spirit.

(i) **Statistics of Planners in Local Government Set Up, viz-a-viz; District, *Tehsil* and Union Council:** Under the PLGO 2001 there is a seat of planners at the District level namely District Officer Housing and Physical Planning (figure-1). In Punjab province, need of 36 planners is generated at the district level. But presently planners are working only in city districts Lahore & Gujranwala and still there is a need of 34 more planners (table-1) in the district set up.

Tehsil/ Town Level; At each *Tehsil/town* (in city district) one seat with the name *Tehsil Officer Planning & Coordination* (ToPC) exists. At present there are 106 *Tehsils* and 38 Towns in the Punjab Province. The data collected from Local Government Department show that against these 144 posts, 65 planners are working whereas 79 positions are vacant (table-1).

Union Council Level; At union council level there exist no seat for planners. There are secretaries and supporting staff those are performing varied nature jobs.

At *Tehsil/ town* level One Hundred and Forty Four (144) seats of planners exist but so far only sixty five are working that show shortage of Seventy Nine. On the other hand, if supply side is seen then it is 25-30 planners per year. Thus, in order to fill all the seats in local government, at least 04 more years are required to overcome the shortage of town planners. At union council level no post of planner is placed but with respect to functions of planners one planner can be posted on appropriate clusters of union councils.

ii. **Position of Planners in Development Authorities and Improvement Trusts:** Apart from Local Government Department, there exist Development Authorities in big and Improvement Trusts in middle sized cities of Punjab. In these development authorities

there are different directorates/wings and among these few are particularly assigned to perform planning functions. In Punjab Province, a total of eight development authorities and two Improvement trusts are present. Except in Lahore and Capital Development

Authorities, few planners are working and there is a need of many more planners to be appointed in these development authorities as well as improvement trusts to keep an eye on the haphazard spatial urban growth.

Table – 1: Position of Planners in Local Government Department, Punjab Province

Category	Total Number of Seats	Number of Planners Working	Need of Planners
District			
District Officer Housing and Physical Planning	36	02	34
Tehsil			
Tehsil / Town Officer Planning & Coordination	144	65	79
Union Council Level			
At this level no post of planner exist but planners can be appointed on clusters of union councils present in Province of Punjab			
		Total	113

Source: Field Visit, Punjab Local Government Board, Lahore-Punjab, 2012

iii. **Position of Planners in Punjab Housing and Town Planning Agency:** At the province level, an independent autonomous body with the name Punjab Housing and Town Planning Agency (PHATA) is established. The administrative structure of the agency is such that 06 regions and 17 sub regions are created at the Provincial level. At each region eight posts of planners are proposed and in the sub regional level Seventeen posts have been created (One post of planner in each sub region). Additionally, in the provincial headquarter; Lahore, Seven posts of planners is made. Thus, in this agency, a total of Seventy Two (72) planners are needed.

Conclusions: Following conclusions are drawn:

1. World Bank and researchers have grave concerns about the ongoing urbanization affects on the human settlements and are emphasizing on the planning and managing of this massive population growth. They are also considering this urbanization as a root cause for shortage of urban services and ill planning. Pakistan is a developing country and its settlements are also facing severe problems and demand for professionals having capabilities to manage and plan both urban as well as rural settlements.
2. It is observed that in the three tier system of current local government system 2001, the planners are practically working mainly at one tier; i.e. middle (Tehsil Level). Whereas the functions of the District and Union Councils also demand to hire the services of planners. At Tehsil/ Town level there is shortage of Seventy Nine (79) planners against One Hundred and Forty Four (144) seats. Likewise, at Union Council Level there is a demand of more than One Thousand Planners.

3. Keeping in view of the trend of Decentralization in the country, the need of planning professionals is quite obvious. In this context, local planners, who are trained in decentralized planning approach, are very crucial elements to promote the local planning and management system effectively. The new Devolution Plan of the country is more oriented towards Decentralization and Planners are the persons who are able to formulate the policies of development at all three levels, vis-à-vis; District, Tehsil, Union Council.
4. Apart from Local Government System there are PHATA, DAs, Improvement Trusts and Cantonment Boards. These institutions are performing the planning functions and data reveals that there exists lot of space for planners.
5. The results show severe shortage of planners in local government, development authorities and PHATA. Thus, there is more demand of planners in all districts of not only in Punjab province but also in other provinces of Pakistan.
6. UETL is the only educational institution in Punjab producing town planners those have requisite skills and qualification. Looking towards the present scenario, it seems not possible for the UETL to fulfill all the needs of planners alone.
7. PCATP unfortunately could not concentrate on the quantity of planners produced. It must have a facilitative role in establishing and accrediting new planning institution all over the country to overcome the growing demands of planners in the country.

REFERENCES

- Abid, S. A. and Haider, S. A., "The Punjab Local Government Ordinance (XIII of 2001); A Compendium of Laws Punjab Local Government", Kausar Law Publishers, Muttaqi Printer, 1 Turner Road, Behind High Court, Lahore, (2001).
- Election Commission of Pakistan, <http://www.ecp.gov.pk/LG/LG2005/ZCDC/Punjab.aspx> assessed on 05.04.2013, (2013).
- Murtaza Haider, Urbanization Challenges in Pakistan; Developing Vision 2030, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, (2006).
- National Reconstruction Bureau, http://www.nrb.gov.pk/local_government/figure_2.gif?NOCACHE=1 assessed on 25.10.2010
- World Bank, Growth for the New Millennium; Integrating Society, Ecology, and the Economy, The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / the World Bank, 1818 H Street, NW, Washington, DC 20433, (2004).