
**ABSTRACT**

*Understanding Karachi: Planning and Reform for the Future*

*Understanding Karachi*, by Arif Hasan, an architect by profession, is about the physical planning of Karachi and the relationships of the various factors involved in it.

Using a number of researches, but mainly those undertaken by the Orangi Pilot Project, the Urban Resource Centre and the Department of Architecture and Planning of the Dawood College of Karachi, the author has brought to the fore, critical issues such as that of land-grabbing. This is a delicate topic; which people have generally avoided discussing lest they be targeted. Here the mafia forcibly evacuates lands by destroying the tent-houses of the poor, most often through arson.

The strength of this work is that even after depicting the bleak picture of the demand and supply imbalance of the basic amenities, poor governance, and the stranglehold of the interest groups on resources, it gives hope. It does so through citing examples of the successes of some private sector organisations which together with the communities, have provided relief to the lower and lower-middle income group. The author suggests that if supported by the state, these can be used to lessen the burden on the government and bring some comfort to the miserable life of the poor.
Also provided is a comprehensive list of the welfare organisations operating in the city. However, since it was published well over a decade ago (1999), some of the facts and figures and the list of the NGOs need to be updated.

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