MEASURING SOCIAL CAPITAL IN PLANNED AND UNPLANNED NEIGHBORHOODS OF LAHORE: A CASE STUDY OF JOHAR TOWN AND SINGHPURA

Abstract:

Social capital is an asset and is defined as the social networks and interactions that inspire trust and reciprocity among citizens necessary for the community development. The fundamental premise is that some neighborhood designs enable or encourage social ties or community connections, whereas others do not. Two case studies were selected which are SinghPura (traditional) and Johar Town (modern) to measure the social capital in Lahore. Questionnaire was designed to conduct surveys at household level to measure social capital. Surveys were conducted among 154 respondents belonging to both areas. Statistical analysis was done on the data collected from questionnaire using the software SPSS.

It was concluded that over the past few years, social capital in the neighborhoods of Lahore and different areas of Pakistan has decreased to a great extent. The design of neighborhoods promotes dependency on the private vehicles. Walkability decreases in planned areas but it is still available in unplanned old developed areas because of mixed land uses. Due to high level of walkability in these areas, social interaction is high as compared to planned areas and high income societies where people have no value of social interaction and are busies in their personal work. In developed countries due to high social capital people participate in community level development projects but in the case of Pakistan due to low level of social capital there is no concept of participatory development.

It has been recommended here that new developments should follow the traditional urban forms where traditional neighborhood developments should be based on new urbanism principles which encourage the use of undulating and straight streets that maximize pedestrian connectivity. These new developments should be a mix of compatible land uses and should work to incorporate elements such as architectural details and street furniture encouraging human interaction on an urban scale.