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BARRIERS TO SOCIALLY SUSTAINABLE RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS PLANNING PRACTICE OF A GROWING CITY - A CASE STUDY OF QASIMABAD TALUKA HYDERABAD

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ABSTRACT

Geographically and historically, Hyderabad city has long been a draw for immigrants coming from other multiple settlements. The city's neighborhood has, however, been subjected to hinged ribbon development during the past few years, this problem is visible along with the key Qasimabad Taluka, thoroughfares. This phenomenon continues without considering any basic regard for making the city more habitable, interactions between various societal groupings, and their level of social ties. Unnecessary city fragmentation is a growing issue that has adverse effects on urban tissue in many ways. Rapid urbanization in a city may produce extreme characteristics and a severe lack of facilities, driving it swiftly toward unsustainable scenarios. Hence, this study focuses on the attributes of socially sustainable residential neighborhood conditions as it is important to consider all possible choices for connecting the neighborhood. Based on the aforementioned assertions of the literature review, the main objective of the research is to identify the sustainable neighborhood indicators and the fundamental characteristics of socially sustainable residential neighborhoods that may directly affect social sustainability. To formulate a relevant supplement and support sustainable neighborhood planning, nine impediments to the development of sustainable neighborhoods have been identified through thorough literature research. By using the quota sampling method, structured interviews have been conducted with the inhabitants of selected study areas, to investigate the barriers to socially Sustainable existing residential neighborhoods. The study found the sense of community, accessibility, safety and security, green spaces, and aesthetic appeal as attributes that contribute to social sustainability and resident satisfaction.

Keywords: Social Sustainability, Urbanization, Urban Fragmentation, Residential Neighborhoods, Qasimabad Taluka, Hyderabad City, Developing Countries.

INTRODUCTION

Urban design shapes and develops cities beyond just arranging buildings and streets. It involves creating public spaces, transportation systems, and amenities, defining a city's form and character. Architects, landscape designers, and urban planners collaborate to integrate streets, squares, and blocks into functional and aesthetically appealing environments (Abhijat & Pathak, 2023). While urban design focuses on the physical enhancement of public spaces (Aziz & Anwar, 2024), urban planning emphasizes managing private development through legal frameworks and sustainable practices (Marvi, et al., 2023).

In Pakistan, urban land is categorized into public, private, and land under conventional law (Zahir & Abdul, 2014). Despite significant government-owned land, neighborhood planning faces challenges due to inadequate facilities for residents (Korai, et. al., 2014). These challenges are particularly evident in Qasimabad, Hyderabad, where rapid urbanization has outpaced the provision of essential social infrastructure. Developing countries like Pakistan often lack critical social sustainability traits, resulting in lower living standards compared to developed nations (Aziz & Anwar, 2024). Deficiencies in healthcare, education, and public services hinder overall quality of life (Abbas & Hyowon, 2015; Joan & Ester, 2018), while poor infrastructure, inadequate clean water supply, and insufficient waste management systems contribute to substandard living conditions (Ahmed & Ali, 2017). The unchecked growth of informal settlements and urban sprawl further exacerbates social inequalities and environmental concerns.

Given these pressing issues, this study focuses on evaluating the social sustainability of residential neighborhood development in Qasimabad, Hyderabad, examining how current planning practices impact the quality of life and community well-being (Khan, 2020).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of the neighborhood has captured the interest of urban planners, architects, and designers. It remains a compelling notion among both theorists and practitioners, perceived as a potential remedy for urban social challenges and as a means to address deficiencies in urban environments. Neighborhoods can be understood as structured local entities and collective activity patterns (Rachel & Hubert, 2000).

Neighborhood Communities and Social Sustainability

Neighborhood communities, defined by their social interactions, communal spaces, and collective ethos, play a pivotal role in everyday life by nurturing social connections and providing access to essential resources (Johnson, 2002). The design of residential areas significantly shapes these dynamics (Mohammad, et. al., 2020). As urban populations burgeon and the demand for infrastructural development increases to cater to social needs, the concept of sustainable development emerges prominently. This complexity has been extensively examined in contemporary research on social sustainability (Farr, 2011).

In developing nations as Pakistan, strategic neighborhood planning is vital for multiple reasons. Primarily, swift urbanization and population surges frequently result in the emergence of informal settlements, which often lack essential amenities and infrastructure, leading to substandard living conditions (Marvi, et al., 2022; Okot-Okumu & Luwaga, 2016). Secondly, sustainability plays a crucial role in holistic sustainable development, fostering equity and social inclusion, which are pivotal for cultivating resilient communities (UN-Habitat., 2016). Additionally, sustainable neighborhoods can enhance community cohesion and social capital, mitigating the adverse effects of poverty and inequality (Marvi, et al., 2024). Modern neighborhoods face growing fragmentation due to increasing obstacles, potentially causing a range of issues (Sharifi, 2016; Sas-Bojarska, 2016). The key challenges include:

- Reduction in urban fabric complexity
- Functional deficiencies
- Environmental threats

These barriers, categorized into various groups, can provoke diverse conflicts within urban settings. Research indicates that the most significant hurdles include unsustainable urbanization trends, lack of enabling legislation, ineffective planning, and the absence of national standards assessment tools (Rabia, et al., 2022). Cities in Pakistan are expanding rapidly, often without proper planning, and they will not naturally evolve into attractive, innovative, well-organized, and functional entities on their own (Planning Commission, 2011; Marvi, et al., 2021)

Sustainable Development

The past few decades have witnessed significant global shifts characterized by rapid migration from rural to urban centers, driven by economic growth and industrial expansion (Newman & Kenworthy, 1999). Sustainable development introduces new urban lifestyles and guiding principles on a global scale. Sustainability is not a fixed achievement but an evolving process requiring continuous adaptation (Armin et al., 2021).

Urban neighborhoods hold a robust physical presence with diverse social and economic attributes, transforming them into essential components of the city's fabric (Joan & Ester, 2018). The aspiration for sustainable urban development has gained prominence, becoming a critical aspect of urban growth. Sustainable cities aim to improve living standards and promote a higher quality of life (Abbas & Hyowon, 2015). Giancarlo di Carlo, an Italian architect, famously stated, "Once we produced to consume, now we consume to produce" (Theodoridou, 2012). The concept of sustainable development arose as a response to urban environmental degradation in the twentieth century. The 1972 United Nations Conference in Stockholm underscored the importance

of human settlement and urban management issues (Saha & R, 2008).

Socially Sustainable Residential Neighborhood

Socially sustainable residential areas are essential for nurturing equity, well-being, and social cohesion in urban environments. In developing countries, these communities can enhance economic opportunities, promote civic engagement, and improve overall quality of life (Ancell & Thompson-fawcett, 2008). Bramley and Power 2009 provide a comprehensive framework for social sustainability, emphasizing distributive justice and equitable access to services. Their framework aligns with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11, which advocates for sustainable, inclusive, and resilient cities (Council, 2021).

The development of socially responsible neighborhoods prioritizing accessibility, inclusivity, and community engagement is crucial for achieving SDG 11.7 and 11.7.1, which emphasize the need for safe, inclusive, and accessible public spaces for all, particularly marginalized and vulnerable groups (United Nations, 2015). However, despite growing attention to social sustainability, there is limited research on its practical implementation at the neighborhood level in mid-sized cities like Qasimabad, Hyderabad.

Table 01 illustrates the key characteristics essential for understanding and experiencing social sustainability through public engagement. Founded in 1978, the United Nations Human Settlements Program has advocated social sustainability by prioritizing the enhancement of residents' well-being and security (Saha & R, 2008). This initiative has garnered the attention of urban planners, architects, and designers, fostering trust, confidence, and social cohesion within communities. By investing in social sustainability, we can ensure that communities flourish for future generations (Sadasivam & Alpana , 2011)

An extensive literature review has synthesized a nuanced set of social sustainability characteristics to refine the study's focus. Utilizing these characteristics as a foundational framework, the social sustainability traits have been delineated under the following headings to facilitate a systematic collection of data aimed at assessing social sustainability within the context of Qasimabad, Hyderabad:

- Opportunities for Community/Residents to Engage;
- Inclusivity and Accessibility
- Facilities and Amenities, and;
- Social Cohesion & Safety.

This study primarily emphasizes the social pillar of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a specific focus on Targets 11.7 and 11.7.1, which underscore the significance of safe, inclusive, and accessible public spaces for all residents.

Despite the growing emphasis on sustainable urban planning, limited research examines how social sustainability is implemented in neighborhood planning within Qasimabad, Hyderabad. Existing studies predominantly focus on broader

Table-1: Characteristics of Residential Neighborhoods for Social Sustainability.

Social Sustainability	Characteristic	Abbreviation
	Accessibility & Inclusivity	IA
	Technology & Transportation	TT
	Well-being & Health	HW
	Views & Aesthetics	VA
	Public Spaces	PS
	Social Equity	SE
	Social Cohesion	SC
	Community Engagement	*CE*
	Cultural Diversity	*CD*

Figure-1: Lack of Sustainability in Qasimabad; City Aesthetic Quality.

urban issues or larger cities, leaving a gap in understanding the localized challenges of social sustainability at the neighborhood level. This study aims to address this gap by analyzing the social sustainability of residential neighborhoods in Qasimabad, evaluating key barriers, and identifying planning shortcomings that affect community well-being.

By focusing on the neighborhood size and scale, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how urban policies and planning strategies impact social sustainability in mid-sized cities of developing countries.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Study Area

The city of Hyderabad, Qasimabad Taluka stands out as a unique area within Sindh's important A-category division, where land values are significantly high. Selected as the focus of our research, this neighborhood is facing the constant challenges of urbanization (see Figure 01).

Drawing on the lessons of older cities, it blends national and local rules to achieve fairness, efficiency, and lasting effects (Adams, 2016). However, as the urban vicinities become more crowded, the urgent need for environmental care grows stronger; Qasimabad is working to balance growth with sustainable ideals, adapting to changes while long-term planning appears to be slipping. It is important to make an effort for the well-being of its residents and guide the shared responsibility to the community (Kristina 2016; Korai, et al., 2014).

Balancing the needs of the present and the future is essential for environmental well-being. Therefore, the urban stewards and strategists must focus on innovative technologies that swiftly rescue our cities and provide vital solutions (Gopal, et al., 2022; Abbas & Hyowon, 2015). Recognizing the significance of community planning in achieving social sustainability, this study not only benefits construction and

management experts by enhancing their skills but also supports communities affected by imprecise design (Qian, et al., 2016).

Problem Statement

Qasimabad Taluka, once a hub for migrant workers, is experiencing rapid urbanization that has led to deteriorating neighborhood livability and weakened social cohesion. The unchecked expansion along its main corridors prioritizes commercial development over community well-being, resulting in fragmented urban growth, limited public spaces, and inadequate social amenities. These conditions hinder social sustainability by restricting access to essential services, reducing opportunities for community interaction, and exacerbating spatial and social inequalities.

Despite the growing population—expected to reach 1.85 million in Hyderabad by 2020 and a 269% increase in Qasimabad's population from 1998 to 2017—the area continues to face planning deficiencies, lack of inclusive policies, and ineffective urban governance. This has resulted in unstructured urban expansion, encroachments, and the degradation of residential environments, making socially sustainable neighborhood planning a critical challenge. This study evaluates the social sustainability of Qasimabad's residential neighborhoods by analyzing nine key characteristics derived from literature and assessing their local applicability. Findings from this research aim to provide urban planners and policymakers with insights for fostering socially inclusive and well-connected neighborhoods that enhance livability and quality of life.

Data Collection

During the data collection phase, the study employs quantitative data analysis. The international literature review serves as our guiding tool, illuminating the intricate relationship between sustainability and the built environment. Additionally, the incorporation of local case studies and national literature enriches our understanding of the specific challenges and opportunities within the context of Qasimabad. This residential neighborhood, situated in Hyderabad City, faces a significant challenge: as the availability of approved facilities declines, land values continue to rise, undermining the principles of sustainable living. By examining both global and national perspectives, this research aims to contextualize the findings within local reliability. Through the lens of socially sustainable neighborhood planning, the study seeks to unravel the complexities of existing lacking, uncovering the hidden barriers that hinder progress toward sustainable development. View Figure 02, etched below, Framework of research methodology.

The process of data collection unfolded through a meticulously designed multi-stage sampling approach (University, n.d.). Our focus centered on discerning indicators and characteristics that gauge social sustainability. This

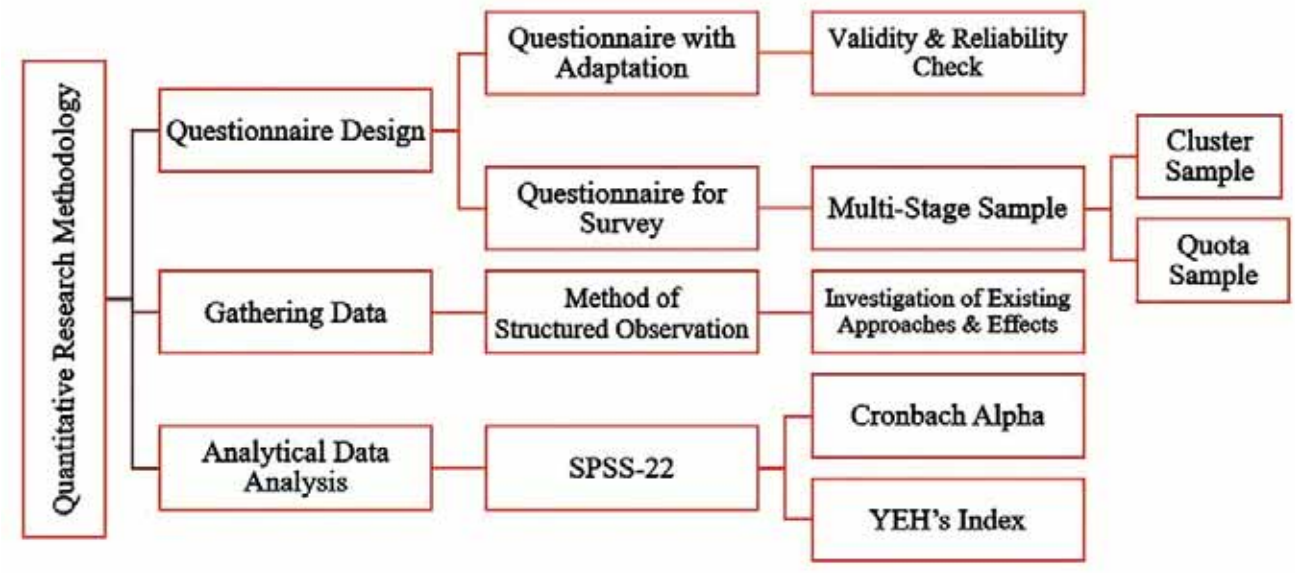

Figure-2: Framework of Research Methodology

encompassed understanding neighboring residents, fostering interactions, and emphasizing accessibility and safety. Opinions from individuals regarding convenience, architectural form, and communal spaces were also considered (Saima, et al., 2022). The dataset, sourced from the Planning and Development Control Department in Hyderabad (Sindh Building Control Authority, 2021), encompasses a total of 226 approved housing schemes up to 2021. Employing Cluster Sampling, we selected a housing scheme from our study area, representing 5% to 7% of the total. Within each chosen scheme, Quota Sampling (10% to 12%) allowed us to collect data comprehensively (John & Miller 2010; Krejcie & Morgan, 2012). Our investigation honed in on socially sustainable attributes, aligning with SDG Goal 11, to foster a harmonious neighborhood. These attributes encompassed Community Engagement, Inclusivity & Accessibility, Social Equity, Health and Well-being, Cultural Diversity, Education, Social Cohesion, Safety, and aesthetics.

Size of Sample

In the year 1979, the Qasimabad taluka within Hyderabad city began its transformation. Spanning 6114 acres (Sindh Building Control Authority, n.d.), this land—over time—has blossomed into a tapestry of urban development. Some portions now stand fully realized; their architectural dreams fulfilled. Our sampling approach, akin to a mosaic, selects housing schemes across different decades. Each slice of time contributes 5-7% to our canvas, capturing the essence of progress. Behold Table 02, revealing the chosen housing schemes within our sample size.

Results and Discussion

The selected housing schemes were analyzed by characteristics of social sustainable development by various researchers. The analysis of the following is discussed below.

Satisfaction and Reliability Index (Cronbach's Alpha; Based on Standardized Items)

Data on satisfaction and reliability indices were analyzed using SPSS-22, examining the frequencies of each variable (Marvi, et al., 2023). The reliability of the chosen variables for social sustainability was assessed, with the reliability index categorized as follows: Good at 0.60, Better at 0.70 - 0.80, and Excellent at 0.90 (Mohamad, et al., 2018). The variables selected for each characteristic yielded a reliability index ranging from 0.6150 to 0.9010, indicating levels from good to excellent. The satisfaction index for each variable spans from -60.7910% to +53.9560%, with a detailed analysis presented in Table 03.

Table-2: Cluster Sampling Responses

Name of Housing Scheme	List	Housing Unit in each Housing Scheme	Quantity	10% Qs Responses	Responses
	Happy Homes		141		14
	Marvi Town		215		22
	Naseem Nagar I & II		109		11
	Al Mustafa Town		113		12
	Al Rehman Cottages		152		15
	Abdullah Town		205		21
	Gulshan e Bakhtawar		129		12
	Citizen Colony		268		27
	Naqash Villas		200		20
	Abdullah Heaven		121		12
	Prince Town I and II		86		9
	Hyderabad Town Phase I		94		9
	Faraz Villas Phase II		190		19
	London Town		421		40
	Mother Village		480		15
	Isra Village		88		9
	Palm Residency		128		12
	Total Responses Collected				**279**

Table-3: Satisfaction and Reliability Index

N-Item	Variables	Satisfaction	Dissatisfaction	Satisfaction Index	Reliability Index
	Opportunities for Community/Residents to Engage				
1	Street Cleanliness	96	145	-17.6200 %	
2	Clean Water Supply	119	76	15.4600 %	
3	Street Lighting	117	125	-2.8770 %	00.7930
4	Community Decision Making	117	124	-2.5710 %	
5	Social Connection	116	59	20.5030 %	
	Inclusivity and Accessibility				
1	Local Transport	100	107	-2.5170 %	
2	Cycling Route	28	197	-60.7910 %	00.6150
3	Pedestrian Passage	53	181	-46.0430 %	
4	Private Vehicle	130	77	19.0640 %	
	Facilities and Amenities				
1	Clean Environment	132	106	9.3520 %	
2	Green Spaces	107	157	-17.9850 %	
3	Street-Side Plantation	82	168	-30.9350 %	
4	Sanitation/Hygiene	67	148	-29.1360 %	
5	Public Spaces	87	147	-21.5820 %	00.9010
6	Health Facilities	94	122	-10.07100 %	
7	Education	162	66	34.5320 %	
8	Parking Facility	53	171	-42.4460 %	
9	Facilities Accessible for all age-groups	75	161	-30.9350 %	
	Social Cohesion & Safety				
1	Cultural and Recreational Activities	116	138	-7.9130 %	
2	Social Gathering	105	142	-13.3090 %	
3	Community Space	106	147	-14.7480 %	00.8920
4	Safety During Day	196	46	53.9560 %	
5	Safety During Evening	158	50	38.8480 %	
6	Safety During Night	113	111	0.7190 %	
7	Safety During Traffic	125	96	10.4310 %	

In evaluating social sustainability within the neighborhood of Qasimabad, Hyderabad, Pakistan, various factors contribute to residents' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their living environment. These traits encompass the opportunities for community engagement, inclusivity, accessibility, available facilities, and the overall sense of social cohesion and safety.

Opportunities for Community/Residents to Engage

Opportunities for residents to actively engage with their surroundings and each other are critical for fostering a socially sustainable community. In Qasimabad, street cleanliness was a major concern, with 145 residents expressing dissatisfaction against 96 who were satisfied, resulting in a negative satisfaction index of -17.62%. This indicates a clear need for improvement in maintaining clean streets. However, the availability of clean water supply received a positive satisfaction index of 15.46%, showing that the majority of the population (119 residents) is content with the water quality and supply. Street lighting, essential for safety and community interaction, had nearly equal satisfaction (117) and dissatisfaction (125), with a slightly negative satisfaction index of -2.88%, indicating the need for more reliable street lighting. In terms of community decision-making, residents exhibited a similar division, with a satisfaction index of -2.57%, suggesting that greater efforts are needed to involve the community in local governance and decision-making processes. On a positive note, social connections among residents were reported to be strong, with a satisfaction index of 20.50%, highlighting a strong sense of community and interpersonal engagement.

Inclusivity and Accessibility

Inclusive infrastructure that ensures accessibility for all is a fundamental element of social sustainability. In Qasimabad, local transport services received a satisfaction index of -2.52%, showing that public transport options need enhancement to meet residents' expectations. Cycling routes, crucial for promoting eco-friendly transportation and accessibility, scored the lowest in this category with a satisfaction index of -60.79%, as only 28 residents were satisfied compared to 197 who were dissatisfied. Pedestrian passages also faced a high dissatisfaction rate, with a negative satisfaction index of -46.04%, indicating that walkability is a serious issue in the area. On the other hand, private vehicle users expressed satisfaction with the availability of vehicle access, reflected in a positive satisfaction index of 19.06%, though this may also point to overreliance on personal vehicles due to inadequate public or non-motorized transport options.

Facilities and Amenities

The availability and quality of essential facilities and amenities significantly influence the overall well-being of residents. In Qasimabad, environmental cleanliness was moderately satisfactory, with a satisfaction index of 9.35%, indicating that 132 residents are pleased with their surroundings, although 106 remain dissatisfied. Green spaces, however, presented a clear issue, with a negative satisfaction index of -17.99%, showing that 157 residents found the available green areas insufficient or poorly maintained. Street-side plantation further exemplified this trend with a -30.94% satisfaction index, highlighting a lack of greenery along streets. Sanitation and hygiene also saw high dissatisfaction, with a -29.14% index, suggesting that waste management and hygiene practices are inadequate. Public spaces, necessary for social interaction and leisure, also fared poorly, with a -21.58% satisfaction index. Health facilities, vital to the community's well-being, showed a negative satisfaction index of -10.07%, indicating that the current health infrastructure does not fully meet the needs of residents. Education services stood out as a positive aspect, with a strong satisfaction index of 34.53%, reflecting the high satisfaction of 162 residents with the educational facilities in the area. Conversely, parking facilities presented a major challenge, with a -42.45% satisfaction index, as many residents found parking to be inadequate. Additionally, facilities that cater to all age groups showed a negative satisfaction index of -30.94%, pointing to gaps in inclusivity for different generations within the community.

Social Cohesion & Safety

A strong sense of social cohesion and safety is critical to the well-being of residents. In Qasimabad, cultural and recreational activities were lacking, as evidenced by a negative satisfaction index of -7.91%. Social gatherings, important for community bonding, had a satisfaction index of -13.31%, indicating insufficient opportunities for communal interaction. Community spaces also faced dissatisfaction, with a -14.75% index, signaling a shortage of designated areas where residents can gather. In contrast, perceptions of safety were quite positive. During the day, residents felt secure, as shown by a strong satisfaction index of 53.96%. Evening safety was also satisfactory, with a satisfaction index of 38.85%, though slightly lower than daytime safety. However, safety during the night presented more mixed results, with a satisfaction index of 0.72%, indicating nearly equal satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Traffic safety, on the other hand, showed a positive satisfaction index of 10.43%, suggesting that most residents feel relatively safe navigating the area's streets.

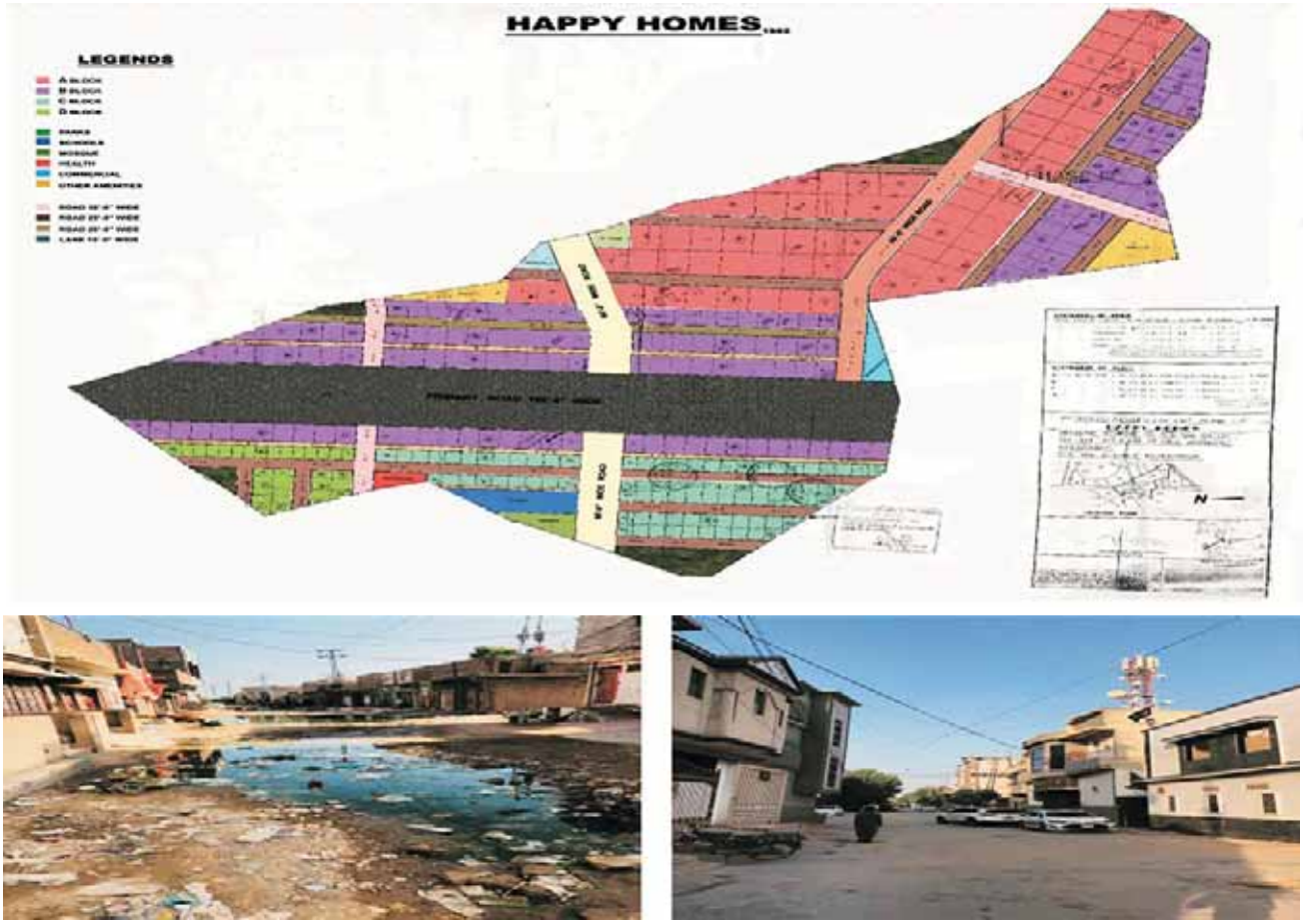

Figure-3: Housing Scheme from 1983 (Happy Homes)

Social Sustainability in Residential Neighborhood Qasimabad (Study Area)

To understand and visualize the barriers to social sustainability in Qasimabad, an analysis of housing schemes, chosen from each decade has been overlooked by examining the approved maps; i-e: collected from the government authority of Hyderabad city (Planning and Developing Control (P&DC), 2021). Three housing schemes approved maps have been taken from the authority i-e: Happy Homes, established in 1983; Gulshan-e-Bakhtawar, approved in 1995; and Isra Village, approved in 2008; to determine the lack . These schemes were evaluated based on their ability to satisfy the social sustainability criteria necessary for the well-being of inhabitants.

Happy Homes, established in 1983, figure 03; initially featured designated green patches intended to serve as communal spaces for residents. However, the current condition of Happy Homes reveals a stark contrast to the original plan. The streets are untidy, and the green patches have been neglected and transformed into garbage dumps, negating their purpose as social interactive spaces.

Similarly, Gulshan-e-Bakhtawar, figure 04, approved in 1995, was planned with green patches at the edges of the scheme, aiming to provide areas for social interaction and leisure. Unfortunately, these areas have also deteriorated over time. The intended green patches have suffered the same fate as those in Happy Homes, now functioning as garbage dumps instead of communal spaces.

To ensure a comprehensive analysis of social sustainability in Qasimabad, Hyderabad, the data collection integrates both quantitative and qualitative approaches, reinforcing the authenticity of findings. Table 02 presents a structured cluster sampling method, selecting diverse housing schemes developed

Figure-4: Housing Scheme from 1995 (Gulshan-e-Bakhtawar)

over different decades to capture a representative understanding of urban growth and social challenges. The satisfaction and reliability indices in Table 03 further validate the study by providing measurable insights into key social sustainability indicators such as accessibility, amenities, community engagement, and safety. These statistical findings are corroborated through Figures 03, 04, and 05, which visually depict the disconnect between the approved planning of housing schemes and their existing conditions. The transformation of designated green spaces into neglected areas or waste dumps, as illustrated in these images, substantiates the survey results highlighting dissatisfaction with public spaces, sanitation, and social interaction opportunities. By aligning empirical evidence from structured sampling, statistical analysis, and on-ground visual documentation, the study presents a well-rounded, verifiable assessment of the barriers to social sustainability in Qasimabad.

Research Findings

Photographic evidence, supported by data obtained from relevant authorities and on-site observations, highlights the deteriorating conditions in Qasimabad's housing schemes. The study area exhibits unpaved streets, irregular waste disposal, and a severe shortage of functional public spaces (see Figures 03, 04, and 05). The lack of regulatory oversight and maintenance has led to the progressive degradation of these spaces. Additionally, the failure to preserve designated green areas over the decades, exacerbated by unchecked encroachments and commercial expansion, has significantly reduced opportunities for social interaction. This ongoing neglect presents a major barrier to achieving social sustainability in Qasimabad. The absence of well-maintained and accessible public spaces deprives residents of essential healthy interactive areas, further weakening community bonds and diminishing the overall quality of urban life.

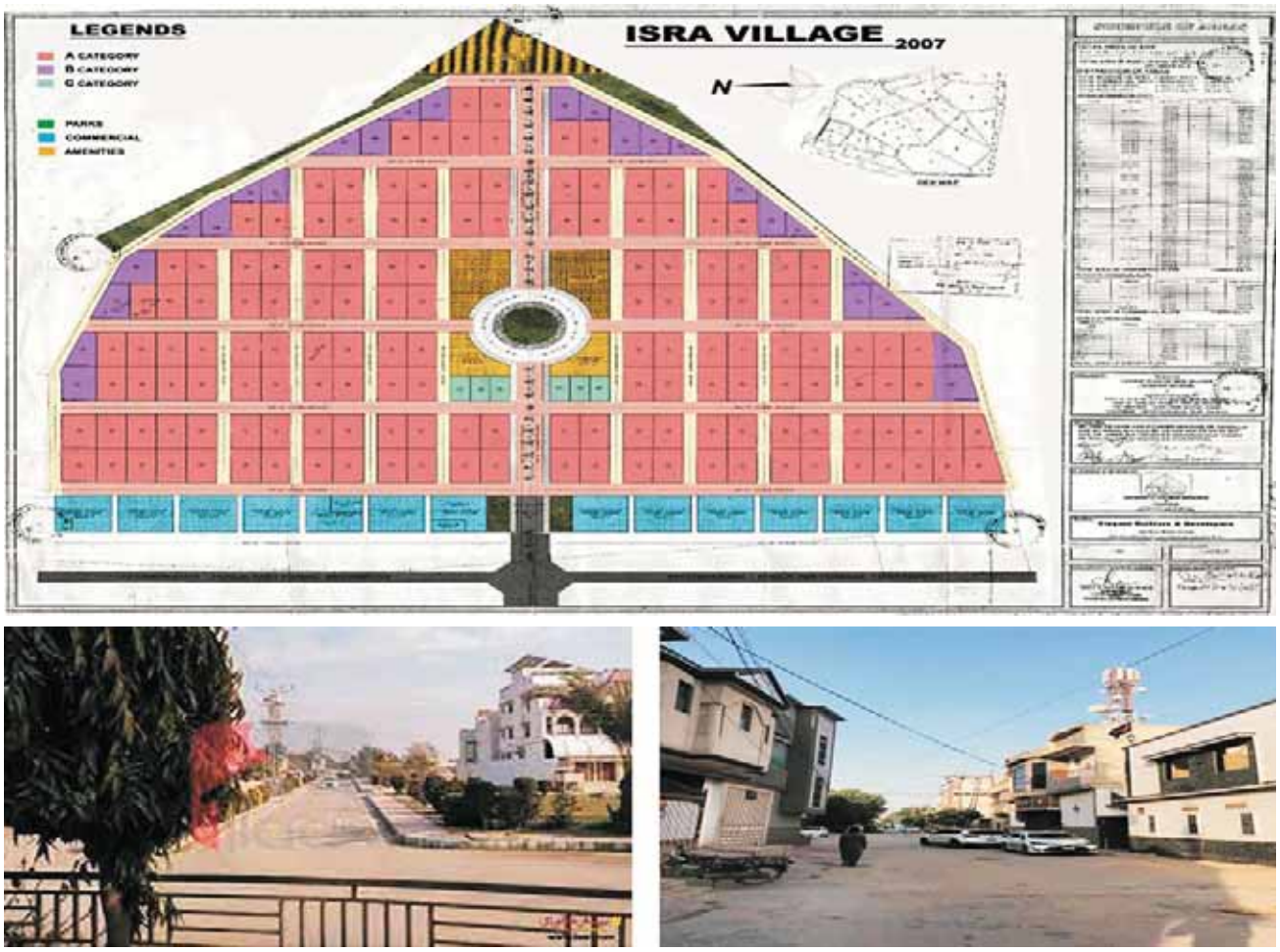

Figure-5: Housing Scheme from 2008 (Isra Village)

Community Engagement (CE)

Opportunities for community interaction in Qasimabad remain limited, with few dedicated spaces for gatherings, cultural events, or social activities. Residents expressed a need for improved public spaces, such as parks and community centers, to enhance social interaction. The absence of structured events and inclusive spaces hinders the development of a strong community identity, reducing overall social cohesion.

Technology & Transportation (TT)

Qasimabad's transportation infrastructure is inadequate, with limited access to efficient public transit and poor road conditions exacerbating daily commuting challenges. The absence of well-planned pedestrian pathways, lack of dedicated cycling tracks, and increasing congestion due to unregulated urban expansion further restrict mobility. Additionally, digital integration in urban planning remains minimal, preventing effective service delivery and infrastructure management.

Inclusivity and Accessibility (IA)

Residents, particularly women, elderly individuals, and lower-income groups, face difficulties accessing essential services such as healthcare, education, and markets. Public transport options are scarce, leading to reliance on expensive private transportation. Moreover, a lack of wheelchair-friendly infrastructure and poor pedestrian facilities further marginalize vulnerable populations, underscoring the need for an inclusive urban development approach.

Health and Well-being (HW)

Qasimabad's sanitation issues, including overflowing garbage dumps, open sewage drains, and inadequate healthcare facilities, contribute to declining public health conditions.

Waterborne diseases and respiratory issues due to poor waste management practices are common concerns among residents. Insufficient medical services and long travel distances to healthcare centers add to the burden, highlighting an urgent need for improved hygiene and accessible healthcare.

Social Equity (SE)

Inequitable access to educational institutions and security concerns are major obstacles in Qasimabad. Lower-income neighborhoods experience a disparity in school quality and availability, limiting upward social mobility. Safety issues, including insufficient street lighting and rising petty crimes, contribute to a sense of insecurity, particularly for women and children. Addressing these challenges through equitable policies and enhanced security measures is crucial for sustainable community development.

Cultural Diversity (CD)

While Qasimabad is home to a diverse population, the lack of platforms for cultural expression and engagement has limited its impact on social integration. Public spaces do not adequately reflect the cultural heritage and traditions of the community, reducing opportunities for fostering inclusivity and mutual respect among residents.

Social Cohesion (SC)

Weak social cohesion is evident due to fragmented neighborhood structures and a lack of shared community spaces. Many neighborhoods remain isolated due to rapid commercialization and poorly planned urban expansions, further diminishing opportunities for social engagement. Creating accessible and interactive community hubs is essential for strengthening neighborhood bonds.

Public Spaces (PS)

Public spaces in Qasimabad are either poorly maintained or repurposed for commercial activities, reducing recreational opportunities for residents. The lack of shaded sitting areas, child-friendly parks, and sports facilities discourages outdoor activities, impacting social interaction and community engagement.

Views and Aesthetics (VA)

The visual and aesthetic quality of Qasimabad has deteriorated due to unchecked construction, encroachments, and poor maintenance of streets and public buildings. Narrow roads, haphazard signage, and neglected green belts contribute to an unappealing urban environment. Implementing urban beautification initiatives, including regulated building facades, public art projects, and well-maintained streetscapes, could significantly enhance the neighborhood's livability and social sustainability.

Thus, improving public spaces, ensuring inclusivity, and enhancing urban management are essential for social sustainability in Qasimabad. Without these measures, deteriorating conditions will continue to weaken community well-being and cohesion. Prioritizing structured community engagement and accessible infrastructure can create a more livable and connected neighborhood.

Actionable Approaches for Social Sustainability in Qasimabad

To achieve social sustainability in Qasimabad, targeted interventions are essential across multiple sectors. Enhancing public spaces, improving mobility, ensuring inclusivity, and strengthening urban management will create a more livable and connected community.

- Restore parks, prevent encroachments, and engage public-private partnerships for upkeep.
- Form local committees, establish community centers, and promote cultural events.
- Expand affordable public transit, develop pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, and integrate digital urban planning tools.
- Ensure wheelchair-friendly infrastructure, subsidized transport, and decentralized service hubs.
- Health & Sanitation: Improve waste management, expand healthcare facilities, and monitor air and water quality.
- Enhance street lighting, increase security, and improve educational access.
- Regulate building facades, support public art, and promote green infrastructure.
- Strengthen regulations, encourage public-private collaboration, use data-driven planning, and secure sustainable funding.

These approaches help to create a more livable, inclusive, and sustainable Qasimabad.

CONCLUSION

This study examines social sustainability in Qasimabad Taluka, Hyderabad, revealing the complex relationship between urban growth, community involvement, and access to essential services. Surveys and spatial analysis indicate that while residents express a strong desire for social connectivity, several systemic barriers—such as inefficient public transport, limited healthcare and educational facilities, and neglected public spaces—impede their ability to establish meaningful community interactions.

The absence of well-planned social infrastructure negatively affects residents' quality of life. Key areas requiring immediate attention include the provision of inclusive public amenities, targeted interventions for underprivileged groups, and policy measures ensuring equitable access to resources. The study identifies a misalignment between current urban planning practices and social sustainability principles. Dissatisfaction was particularly high regarding community engagement and essential services. While some aspects, such as educational institutions, received moderate satisfaction ratings (34.53%), severe deficiencies were noted in street cleanliness (-17.62%) and cycling infrastructure (-60.79%).

Achieving social sustainability in Qasimabad requires decisive action to address systemic deficiencies in urban infrastructure, community engagement, and public services. The proposed strategies—ranging from revitalizing public spaces and improving mobility to ensuring inclusivity and strengthening governance—provide a roadmap for a more connected and equitable urban environment. By implementing these measures, policymakers can bridge gaps in accessibility, enhance public safety, and promote social cohesion

Addressing these deficiencies will enable urban planners and policymakers to align development efforts with Sustainable Development Goal 11, fostering more inclusive, resilient, and vibrant communities. Encouraging community-driven initiatives, implementing equitable policies, and addressing social inequalities are key to transforming Qasimabad into a socially sustainable urban environment. By improving access to social amenities and fostering a sense of belonging, Qasimabad can evolve into a cohesive and livable neighborhood that enhances the well-being of its residents.

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