

Assessment of Public Participation Modalities through Social Media Platforms for Approval of Private Housing Schemes: Case Studies under LDA Lahore, Pakistan

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Public participation through social media networks in Private housing scheme (PHS) projects is essential for fostering a feeling of community and avoiding resistance to the planning of housing scheme initiatives. It might help the private developers and government in identifying potential hurdles to any given landuse, allowing officials to work to eliminate them before making a final decision. This study will look at public participation in private housing scheme projects through online platforms in the metropolitan corporation Lahore. It emphasizes how the Government and Lahore Development Authority (LDA) encourage residents to participate more actively in PHS projects and the requirement of aligning tools with goals to enhance citizen engagement. To get a comparative understanding, the approaches and practices of public engagement in urban planning projects in selected industrialized and developing nations and Pakistan have been critically studied. On the other hand, Social media plays effective role in engaging public in concerned projects. It allows for cost-effective, efficient information sharing among public/stakeholders through various media types, including videos. It allows for the education of a broad audience about issues and encourages engagement. It can be used alongside other communication initiatives for wider public/stakeholder interaction. Moreover, participant's education was greatly aided by public consultation. It is maintained that public engagement in PHS is steadily increasing in Lahore, Pakistan despite some obstacles. Applying a more proactive strategy throughout the PHS clearance process and prior to site selection for development projects is one suggestion made to improve PHS public engagement effectiveness in Pakistan.

Keywords: Public participation, LDA, PHS, Pakistan, Social media networks.



Introduction:

Pakistan is likely to reside in housing projects. This is owing to Pakistani wish to live in a calm environment with all facilities. Some of the salient features that enable housing societies to provide a healthy and comfortable life to people are gated communities, infrastructure/planning, affordable prices, installment plans, approval by concerned authorities, amenities and facilities, location, eco-friendliness, etc.

In a local democracy, public engagement is an essential part of social harmony. It allows the general public to get engaged and pay for improved planning solutions. The population's active participation in planning and decision-making processes is emphasized to ensure our communal values and fundamental living circumstances in a sustainable society. It is critical to ensure that public engagement in planning is well-facilitated to ensure that planning procedures are well-functioning and effective. Without enough input from the impacted groups and interests, starting too soon does not always result in more effective planning procedures[1][2].

The terms "consultation" and "participation" are frequently interchanged since they both refer to people's engagement in policy-making. However, there is a hypothetical distinction between the two conceptions in terms of differing levels of engagement and authority assigned to the community. In most cases, consultation is a two-way process in which the exponent, the related agency, and numerous sponsors share data about an expansion plan's possible advantages and drawbacks. Stakeholders are also given the chance to comment on the plan orally or in writing. Consultations can take place in the process of PHS projects. If the project exponent or responsible agency deems it suitable, stakeholders' opinions/concerns may be included in decision-making[3].

Participation is a procedure through which members of the public/stakeholders may have a say in and share control over development plans that may have an impact on them. In a participation exercise, the public and the exponent usually find a consensus on the major concerns, which allows for collaborative analysis, agenda-building, and decision-making[4]. However, the strategies and processes in which the interested and affected public is involved may differ from one nation to the next. Pakistan has had public consultation and involvement in PHS projects; however, it has been inefficient in fulfilling its goals.

The importance of public engagement in PHS projects and popular strategies is first presented in this article. Following that, a critical examination of public engagement in PHS projects in three ground-breaking industrialized nations and three developing countries with contexts that are comparable to Pakistan and where knowledge is expanding rapidly is presented. The USA, Germany, and Korea are among the developed countries whereas, China, India, and Iran are among the emerging countries[2].

Objectives:

The major objectives of this research include the following:

- The research aims to investigate the cause of the public's involvement in the PHS projects which must be real, doable, and common to all stakeholders.
- To identify the public's demands this must be set by the concerned developers' determination of the appropriate amount or degree of public participation for the particular choice at hand.
- To prepare clear associations and procedures, including clearly stated guidelines for public participation in PHS projects and decision-making.
- To study guidelines on how concerned Authorities and developers must both be dedicated to the process and the activities necessary to make public involvement effective. They must also be prepared to solicit and take into account public input when making decisions.

- To review and compare public participation practices in urban planning projects in developed and developing countries.
- Reaching out to representatives of the complete spectrum of important stakeholder interests, regardless of race, color, origin, sexual orientation, or income class, is a key component of comprehensive and efficient advocacy.

Novelty Statement:

The studies explore public participation in private housing projects in Lahore, Pakistan. The shifting needs of people put enormous pressure on the system to involve the public in decisions. The study examines the connections between these interrelated hurdles and makes recommendations for how concerned developers and authorities can overcome them. Furthermore, the world is changing from a manual to a digital system, and connectivity platforms, such as online forums, play a significant role in shaping our future. Online forums allow users to engage in gradual conversations, submit questions, and interact with multimedia assets. Overall, a public-friendly online forum, "Zoom," is designed to allow people to post, share, ask questions, and engage in various online PHS-related activities organized by concerned officials. Some of the benefits of the computer-based forum for the general public are listed below:

- Unite concerned members based on common interests.
- Members answer queries and produce material, and user-generated content enables quick scaling.
- People tend to group and participate in conversations that pique their attention.
- First-hand experiences and large-scale value information are given through the forum.
- Forms are now more sophisticated and entertaining than ever thanks to software solutions.

Material and Methods:

First, the literature on the theoretical framework, procedures, and strategies of public engagement in PHS projects was studied (including books and research articles published in peer-reviewed journals). Pakistan is a signatory to the UN-Habitat Agenda, which aims to provide housing to all people. Housing is one of the most fundamental needs of every human being, however owing to budgetary limits; the Government of Pakistan is unable to offer housing units to every Pakistani citizen. The scarcity in urban regions is being caused by population increase, migration from rural areas, and the degradation of existing dwellings. Overcrowding or living in unofficial communities with limited access to vital amenities and facilities affects half of all urban families. Due to the government of Pakistan's limited capacity to create housing units, the private sector has been given a major role in providing housing units [5]. Private Housing Schemes are created by private landowners, builders, and developers in this industry. A considerable portion of the general population relies on this sector for their lodging requirements. The development agencies of Punjab oversee Private Housing Schemes. The Housing and Urban Development & Public Health Engineering Department oversees all of these development authorities. Through Tehsil, the Local Government and Community Development Department regulates Private Housing Schemes that are established in areas that do not fall under the authority of any of these development agencies[5].

The private sector develops private housing businesses, and its major goal is to make a profit by supplying housing units to the wealthy (elite class). The Firms Act 1917, the

Companies Ordinance 1984[5], and the Companies Rules 1985 [5] govern the formation and registration of private housing companies.

Public participation has emerged in Western culture over the last thirty years and has been used in developing countries e.g. India, China, and Iran[6]. Furthermore, research on different techniques of public participation in urban planning projects is rising in these nations, and these countries are either neighbors or have socio-political contexts that are comparable to Pakistan's. In Table 1, we'll find the techniques/methods that were derived from the literature and utilized for a critical analysis of public engagement in urban planning projects in the selected developed and developing nations[7][8][9].

Table 1: Indicators/Criteria for studying the international practice of public participation in Urban Planning Projects, **Source:** Author (2023)

- Techniques used to inform/invite the public
- Approachability towards related information
- Providing information related to UP projects
- Public consultation/involvement methods and the process of PHS approval
- Public hearing location/venues
- Transparency of the decision-making procedures
- Impacts of public apprehensions on decisions

The rules created by the Lahore Development Authority (LDA) have been extensively evaluated to analyze public involvement in PHS projects in Pakistan[48]. Information collected through conferences, seminars, public hearings, and interviews with concerned officials and LDA officers has given us insight into real practice. The research also illustrates the methods of public involvement in concerned projects by introducing an effective social media platform. Social media may help individuals to participate in government initiatives and close the communication gap between the public and the government. It may encourage public engagement and collaboration, which is beneficial for the local authorities (LDA). Overall, these online networks improve public relations and create educated citizens. The process of research methodology is well displayed in stages and explained in the flow diagram; see Figures 1, 2, and 3.

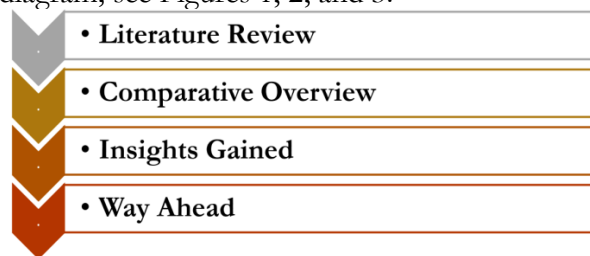


Figure 1: Research Methodology, **Source:** Author (2023)

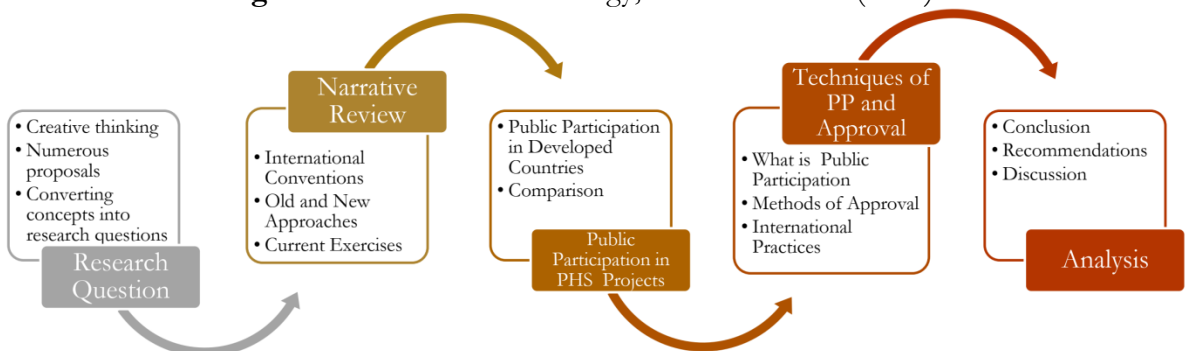


Figure 2: In Stages Methodology, **Source:** Author (2023)

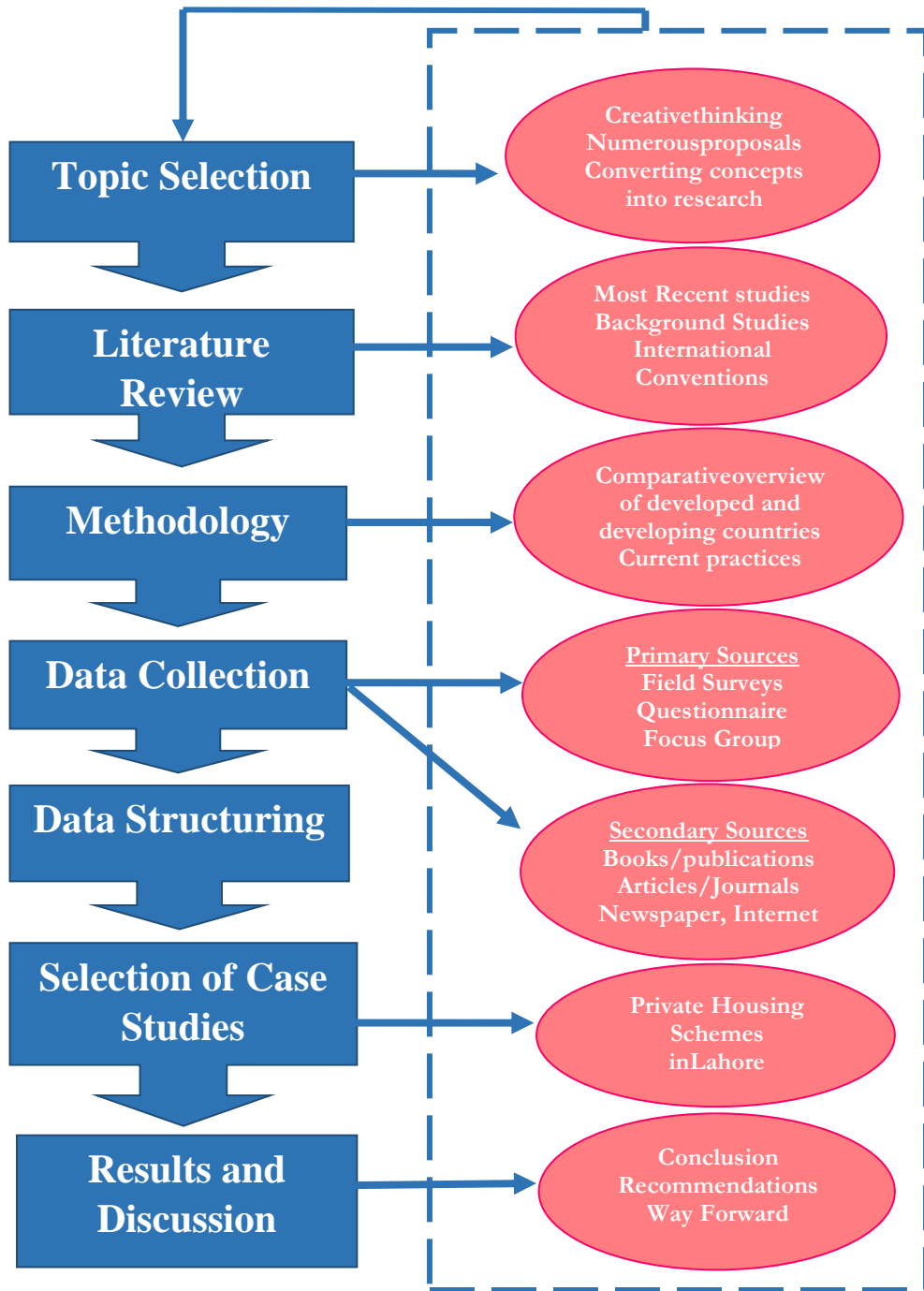


Figure 3: Flow of Study Diagram, **Source:** Author (2023)

Techniques of Public Participation and the Process of Private Housing Schemes Approval in LDA:

The right of a person or a group of individuals to participate in and influence public evaluation and decision-making processes is known as public participation. That is, residents of a community have the right to participate in its future planning. After all, it is these residents who will be affected by new developments, thus including them at every step of the project, from conception to completion, is critical. Citizens need more say in creating the future of our towns and communities; it is universally understood and accepted. Adopting proper involvement tactics; identifying real stakeholders of the project; resolving disputes and paying due regard to their genuine concerns are all factors that contribute to the

effectiveness of public participation [10][11]. There are some internationally practiced techniques for public participation in urban planning projects like private housing schemes [11]. Ensure that all parties affected are represented from the start.

- Transparency is essential for planners, residents, and stakeholders to form trusted relationships.
- Allow for imagination and consider suggestions.
- Providing core public involvement and communication skills training to community leaders and stakeholder representatives.
- Giving vulnerable people and needy communities particular regard and attention.
- Hiring experienced third-party facilitators to train sponsor agency personnel and external stakeholders on participative behaviors and tactics at the start of the project.
- Providing public or community groups with technical support to help them grasp technical facts essential to the decision.

Researchers[12] offered a six-step ladder that looks to be more applicable to our needs. From bottom to top, one may find the following phases (the lower steps implying no meaningful public participation) [13].

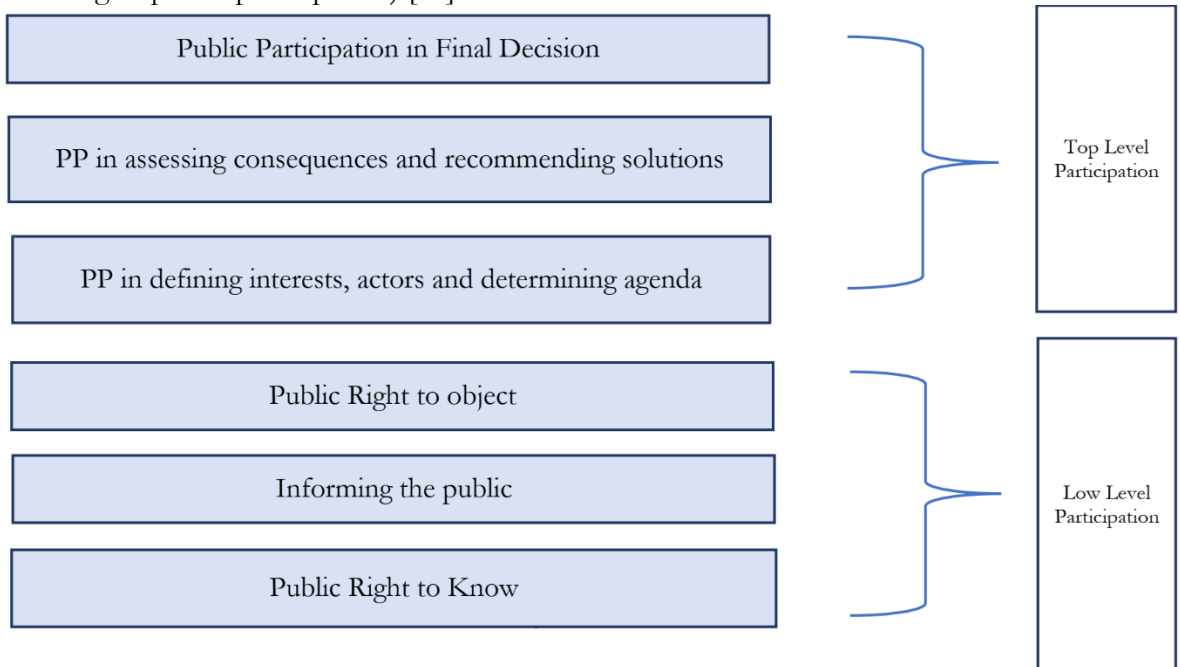


Figure 4: The public participation ladder according to research [14] with modifications

Lower levels are one-way operations since no specific response from the community is required. On the other hand, higher degrees of engagement necessitate two-way procedures, which include gathering public emotions and feeding that information into the decision-making process[15].

The private housing scheme approval process consists of multiple steps which are formulated by the concerned authority (LDA)[48], the first step is the processing of the application and after the scrutiny of land ownership documents, the concerned authority invites public objection in clause 21 of LDA PHS Rules (Updated)[48]. After being satisfied with the clearance of the land ownership papers, the Authority shall issue a public notice requesting objections on Form A in at least two prominent Urdu and one English daily national newspaper. The sponsor is responsible for the expense of publishing the public notice, as determined by the Authority. The following should be included in the public notice: (a) the location of the scheme, (b) the total area of the scheme; (c) the name and

address of the sponsor; (d) the list of khasranumbers along with revenue estate or mauza and (e) If any objections are raised, they must be lodged within fifteen days of the notice's publication date with the authority specified in the notice. The authority should withdraw the disputed land from the program if an objection is lodged over the ownership of a section of land included in the scheme, and both the sponsor and the object claim possession based on title documents. After the incitement of the public objections, the authority further processes the application according to the rules and regulations till the final approval of the housing scheme. On the other hand, after thoroughly studying of PHS technical planning and designing process, there is no such public participation after the purchasing of land by the private developers. As far as no rules and regulations exist in Pakistan related to public participation in the planning of designing private housing scheme projects(LDA PHS Rules 2021).

Public Participation Practices in Urban Planning Projects in Developed and Developing Countries:

The Developed Countries' Scenario:

In most industrialized nations, public participation before giving technical certification for development projects is becoming a more essential concept that might potentially improve the quality of decisions and the acceptance of associated judgments. Various public participation approaches are used at various phases of the urban planning projects. Its efficiency in terms of influencing the ultimate decision differs by nation. Even though much study has been done on their efficacy, such studies are sparse in comparison to the literature[16][17].

In the United States, the public is notified and invited to participate in consultations via the Internet, media, newsletters, and direct communication[18]. Telephonic conversations, community gatherings, and/or written comments from various stakeholder groups, both online and on paper, are all common coping strategies. The most prevalent means of consultation utilized in the United States are public hearings and community advisory committees. The public hearings are held at big "fancy" locations or in the city Centre, far from the project site. As a result, low-income groups are underrepresented[19][11]. Furthermore, In the U.S. three programs were made for public participation in the U.S. urban planning projects 1) The "Juvenile Delinquency Demonstration Program," 2) The "Community Action Program," and 3) The "Model Cities Program." Citizen involvement in the "Juvenile Delinquency Demonstration Program" is judged to be at the level of feigned citizenship or tokenism. However, the initiative is seen to have laid essential groundwork for subsequent programs. Citizen participation could reach the highest level of citizen control over a program in several cases where citizens already organized were aware of their possibilities under the "Community Action Program," which provided for maximum feasible participation and one-third of policy-making board members to be representatives of the residents to be served. The Model Cities Program only allows for a limited amount of public engagement. However, in many situations, volunteers were able to play a significant role due to governmental factors[20][21][22].

Germans develop two planning laws for public participation. In the case of the Bundesbaugesetz (BBauG), the findings show that the mechanisms for citizen engagement are limited and allow for little meaningful participation. The BBauG regulations address a phenomenon in the foreground of a heightened problem consciousness of involvement. The Statebauffirderungsgesetz (StBFG), which supplements the BBauG and was just recently approved, allows for involvement at the level of information, if not participating at the level of consultation. Both laws require a greater representation of the so-called "public interest" and a weaker representation of the individual however, organized organizations are not seen as participating[23][24].

The German "StBFG" and the American "Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Formulation Act of 1968," with its "Model Cities Programmed," both emphasize the creation and implementation of municipal programs and plans. Both agree that directly impacted citizens should be able to participate in the planning of their future environment, that they should be included early, and that the engagement process should continue[23].

Korea has been working to improve the government-citizen connection since the 1990s. The goals, like in many other OECD nations, were to increase public trust in government and public institutions, react to people's expectations, and demonstrate that citizens' opinions are taken into account when government decisions are made[25]. In the most recent version of the OECD Better Life Index, Korea received a 6.4 (out of 10) for civic involvement, which is on par with the United Kingdom and Canada[26]. Korea involves public participation in its urban regeneration and renewal projects. According to the Korean perspective, incorporating citizens' (or stakeholder's) opinions and ideas into an urban regeneration project or land-use planning process can result in more and better data with which to design or deliver a project. It has the potential to reveal crucial information about local conditions and applications. A variety of viewpoints might reveal flaws in a project that have previously gone unnoticed. Korea's national socio-economic development focus is urban renewal. The Special Act on the Promotion and Support of Urban Regeneration aims to make cities more competitive for people's well-being. On the other hand, they adopted the OECD strategies for public involvement which are citizen information, citizen consultation, citizen participation, and empowerment[27][26].

Glasgow, United Kingdom, developed high-density structures in the 1960s. The issue wasn't with the buildings' architecture, but with the fact that they were created for the wrong people. Families were re-housed in the towers after being evicted from poor apartment blocks around the city. Small-town residents were thrust into a strange and foreign lifestyle of living in towers, which destroyed community contact and isolated them from society. If the governments informed/invited public participation before the construction of such high-rise buildings then this type of issue would not have arisen[13].

The Developing Countries Scenario:

In the context of India, they also inform/invite public participation in their urban planning projects[23]. For example, EIA approvals, invite public consultation through hearings. As EIA is also part of PHS projects. However, the EIA report's quality of information is often low, with a lack of clear project descriptions, interpretation, and analysis of acquired data, as well as jargon. The directly impacted public in rural regions is claimed to have limited access to executive summaries of projects, and public consultations/hearings are considered to be partly independent of EIA. Although public hearings are performed by a panel comprised of representatives from affected agencies and individuals, they are held after completing thorough surveys and making all critical decisions. Public discussions have a negligible impact on final choices. People are more likely to feel betrayed as a result of this[28][23].

Since 2002, public engagement has been required in China not just during the preparation (scoping) and assessment of EIA for development projects, but also for planning. The hearing notice must include the project title, date, time, and location of the hearing, as well as the availability of the EIA report. Furthermore, the State Council of China mandates that the public have access to the environmental quality report and associated information. In China, procedures for public consultation include questionnaire surveys, expert consultations, and witness hearings. In reality, however, questionnaires are used to consult a small number of persons during the EIA process, mostly potential project economic affected or those who are likely to agree with the plan. There is no hearing panel or interpreter available to help indigenous populations comprehend what is going on.

According to reports, China's EIA system has failed to empower the people to have a significant impact on decision-making[29][30].

In the case of Iran, they involve citizen participation in their urban renovation projects. Participation is a major problem in troubled communities since it is a means of achieving social sustainability. When it comes to the basics of sustainable development, not only reconstruction is crucial, but so is people's engagement. They adopt the Miller [18](1995) concept of the design process which consists of four sections: 1) Schematic design 2) design 3) construction 4) Operation. Since 1966, Nawab highway design concepts have served as the principal axis connecting the Chamran highway in the north of Tehran to the Nawab highway in the south of Tehran. The construction of the Nawab highway needed a large expenditure, thus for the first time, participation bonds were sold in this project, allowing the municipality to build roughly 6 kilometers. They invite public participation in the design process for financing. The second project is, Joobareh an old neighborhood in Isfahan that is situated in a historical background. This area is close to Atiq Square and the Isfahan Jame Mosque. Long-lasting structures, oddly shaped terrain, and small pathways are all issues at this location. To achieve its aim of revitalizing impoverished neighborhoods, the Central Housing and Development Corporation launched the Joobareh cooperative housing concept. In 2007, the first renovation services office (public participation office) was established in Isfahan and Joobareh to encourage people's engagement in distressed area restoration for the first time. Feasibility studies, promoting people's awareness, giving people's involvement in fields, and providing rehabilitation services are some of the project aims[31][32][33].

Public Participation in PHS Projects in Pakistan:

The need to invite public objection to PHS projects was first recognized by the concerned authority (LDA). In the LDA private housing scheme rules 2014 (updated)[48], when the authority confirmed the land ownership documents they published a public notice in at least two leading Urdu and one English daily national newspaper. The authority provides fifteen days for objections and if any objection arises related to the land included in the scheme, then the authority cancels the ownership of disputed land. The public submitted their objections in written form to the LDA and the authority reviewed and removed all baseless objections, if the objections need to be resolved then they allow the developer to make agreements with the clients as per their requirements.

The LDA master plans rules 2014, also involve public consultation after the preparation of the draft master plan, the authority invites public objections or suggestions by giving public notice showing the salient features of the draft master plan and uploading it on its official website for the key stakeholders and also in at least two leading national Urdu and one national English newspaper. The authority also specifies the date, time, and venue of public hearings.

Recently for the preparation of a master plan for Lahore division 2050, LDA invites the general public, stakeholders, public or semi-government, autonomous bodies, private institutions, and organizations to come forward and submit their thoughts, suggestions, recommendations, and observations to the LDA office to address the current issues and improve the condition of the districts. In addition, in partnership with the respective districts' local government and district administration, LDA has organized a public hearing/stakeholder engagement workshop in this respect. Currently, LDA has done five public and stakeholder consultation workshops in different districts like Kasur, Nankana Sahib, Sheikhpura, UET Lahore, and Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) 11 Shahrah-e-Awan-Tijarat Lahore. They invite their guest to online sessions through Facebook and Zoom as well and all the details are shared on LDA's official website www.lda.gop.pk. They requested the public and stakeholders to submit their written

recommendations, suggestions, and objections to the Metropolitan Planning Wing LDA or submit them during the hearing. On the other hand, they can submit through an online platform.

In the context of Lahore, the public is involved in the Pre-planning process of Private Housing Scheme Projects because scheme planning is allowed only in a residential zone of the Master plan according to the LDA PHS rules 2014. When residential zoning has been done during master planning, the concerned authority invites public participation; the procedure for public participation in master planning is already discussed above.

Before the launching of private housing scheme projects in district Lahore, the developers required preliminary planning permissions from LDA. There are certain rules for getting preliminary planning permission which one the aspect includes proof of the ownership status of the land, whether it is self-owned or yet not purchased by the owner. If the land needs to be purchased by the owner, then the LDA invites public objections by issuing public notice.

NWFP Environmental Protection Agency develops an Environmental Assessment checklist and guidelines for small housing schemes for every private housing scheme project before its start of development; they must conduct an EIA of their project. EIA includes checking the loss of environmentally important land, water pollution, air pollution, solid waste, noise, congestion on existing roads, construction of housing units, etc. During this process, they involve public participation at the neighborhood level, where people give their objections, suggestions, feedback, etc. These are the practices adopted in Lahore for public participation.

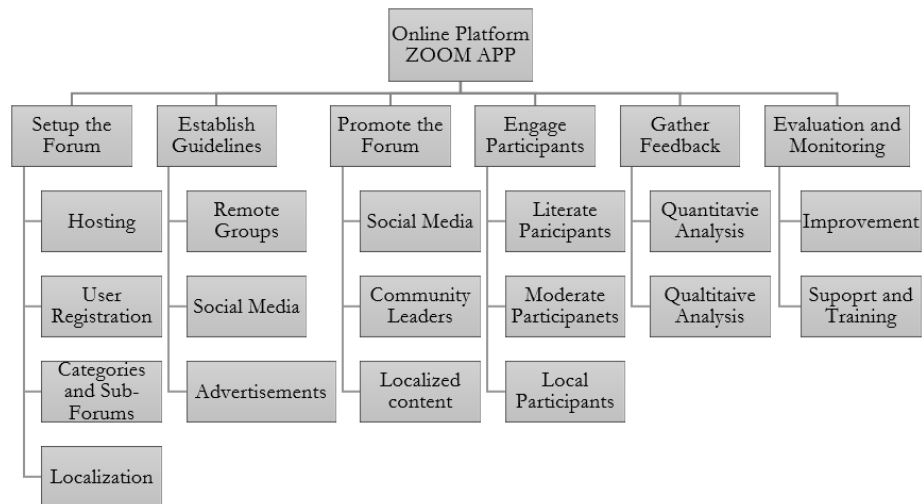


Figure 5: Flow Chart of Online Platform for Public Participation in Housing-Related Projects, **Source:** Author (2023)

Computer-based Public Participation Forum:

The development of a computer-based platform for public involvement in housing-related initiatives requires a clear definition of the project's scope and the forum's goals. To ensure that the forum is appropriate, take into account the local cultural and geographical background. In addition to choosing a platform that is easily navigable and accessible for the intended audience, case study authors should think about using social media platforms or well-known forum software that is well-liked in the sector. After taking everything into account, the ZOOM APP is preferable for involving the public in private initiatives. The flow diagram makes the procedure easy to understand [34]. The online platform's procedure is broken down into steps, such as setting up the forum, creating guidelines, promoting it, involving the public, gathering input from all interested parties, and concluding with forum monitoring and evaluation (refer to Figure 5).

Case Studies under LDA:

The expansion of the City of Lahore after 1947 towards north-south, as the initial fort was mostly along rectangular built-up regions that grew in area but decreased in density over time. The G. T. Road, Ferozpur Road, and Multan Road are three main roadways that have grown in tandem with the city. The availability of suitable land and sufficient infrastructure in the city's southern region is the primary cause of this growth tendency. Lahore, the provincial capital of Punjab, is currently regarded as the second-biggest city in Pakistan. After the establishment of the Lahore Development Authority, a major development occurred; there was an explosion of housing complexes. The Lahore Development Authority (LDA) records show that 140 housing schemes public and private have been approved. A sampling of fifteen of the 140 housing developments in these is selected. There are at least 1000 plots in each of the chosen schemes, representing several categories. The locations and boundaries of selected private housing schemes has marked on satellite imagery with the help of Google Earth Pro see Figures 6, 7, and 8.

The housing societies included in the case study area are listed below;

- LDA Avenue Ph-I
- Jubilee Town
- Sukh Chayn Garden
- Bahria Town
- NFC Ph-2
- AWT Ph-2
- Fazaya Lahore
- Lake City Lahore
- Khayaban-e-Amin
- KEMC Lahore
- Valencia Town
- NFC Ph-1
- Wapda Town
- OPF Lahore

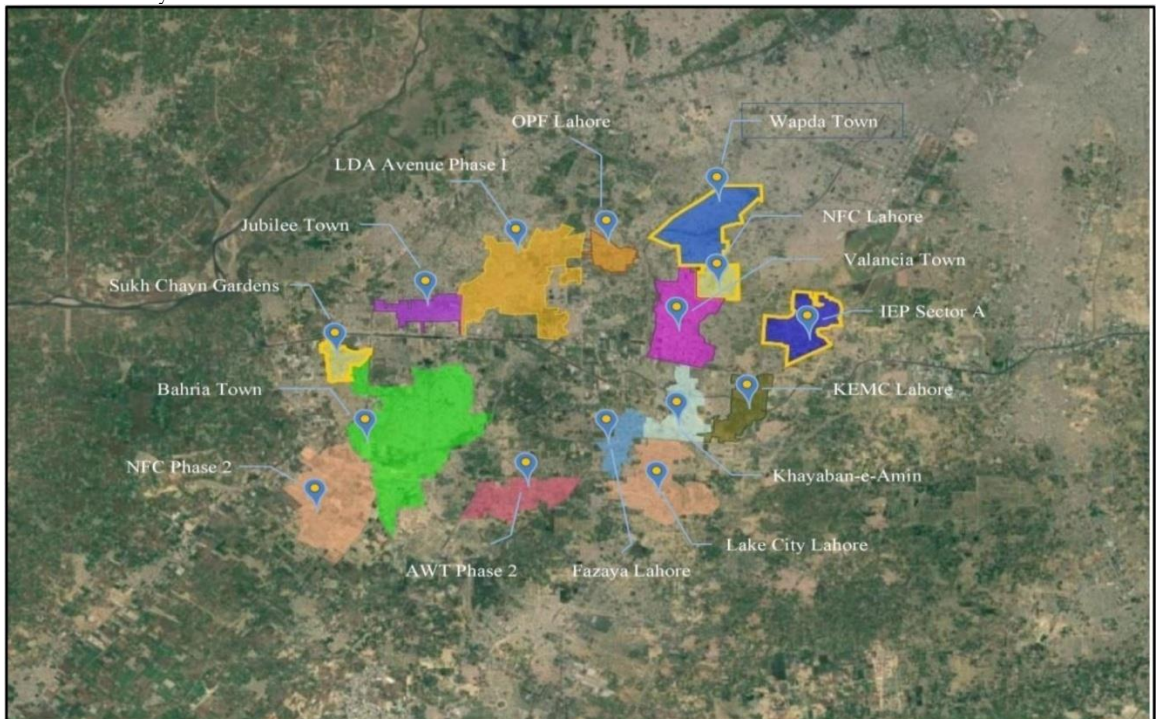


Figure 6: Google Earth Satellite Imagery showing the location of Housing Schemes (Lahore), Source: Google Earth Pro

Results and Recommendations:

Public engagement in PHS projects allows for a better understanding of stakeholder concerns and expectations, allowing for improved decision-making and a development project that benefits the people. In industrialized nations, public engagement in urban planning projects is relatively effective, and transparent, beginning early in the process, and

assessed by independent specialists. Negotiation and mediation mechanisms, community advisory committees, and focus groups provide stakeholders with more possibilities for mutual debate and decision-making. It has a minor impact on the project proposal and environmental sanction criteria in general. The following recommendations are made based on the prior analysis and conclusions to improve the efficiency of public participation in PHS projects in Pakistan and other developing countries.

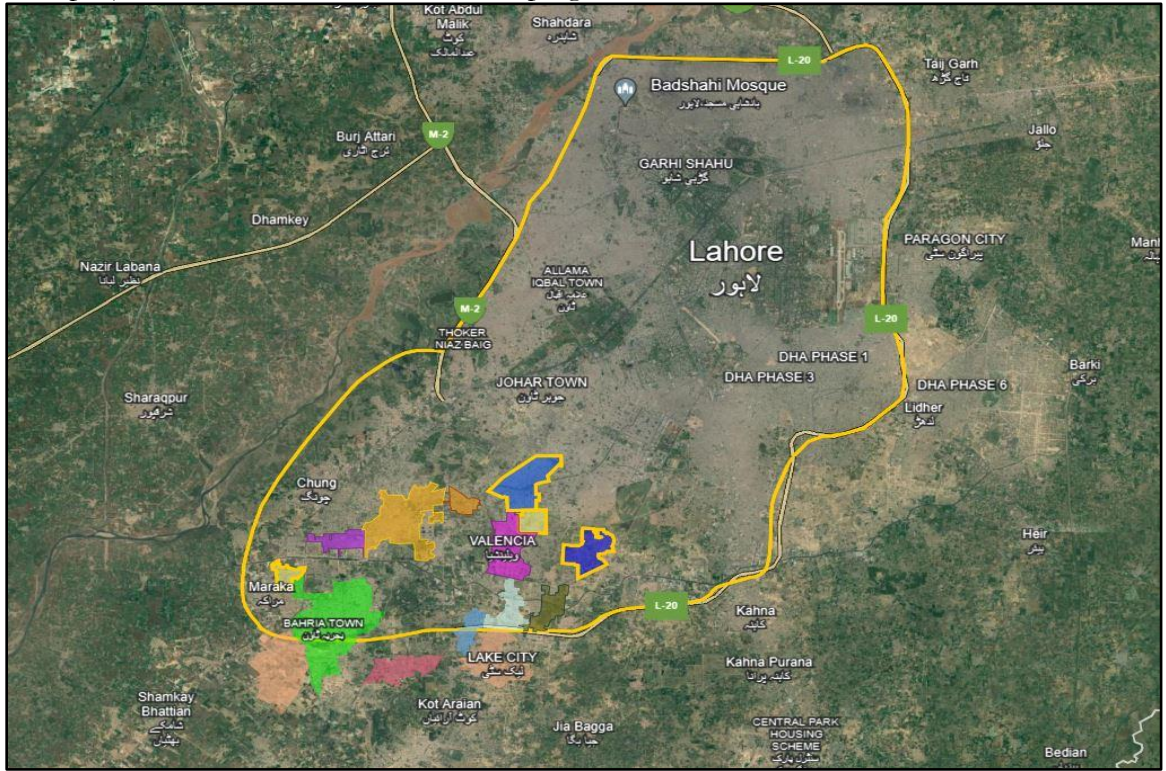


Figure 7: Google Earth Satellite Imagery showing the location of Housing Schemes with Details (Lahore), **Source:** Google Earth Pro

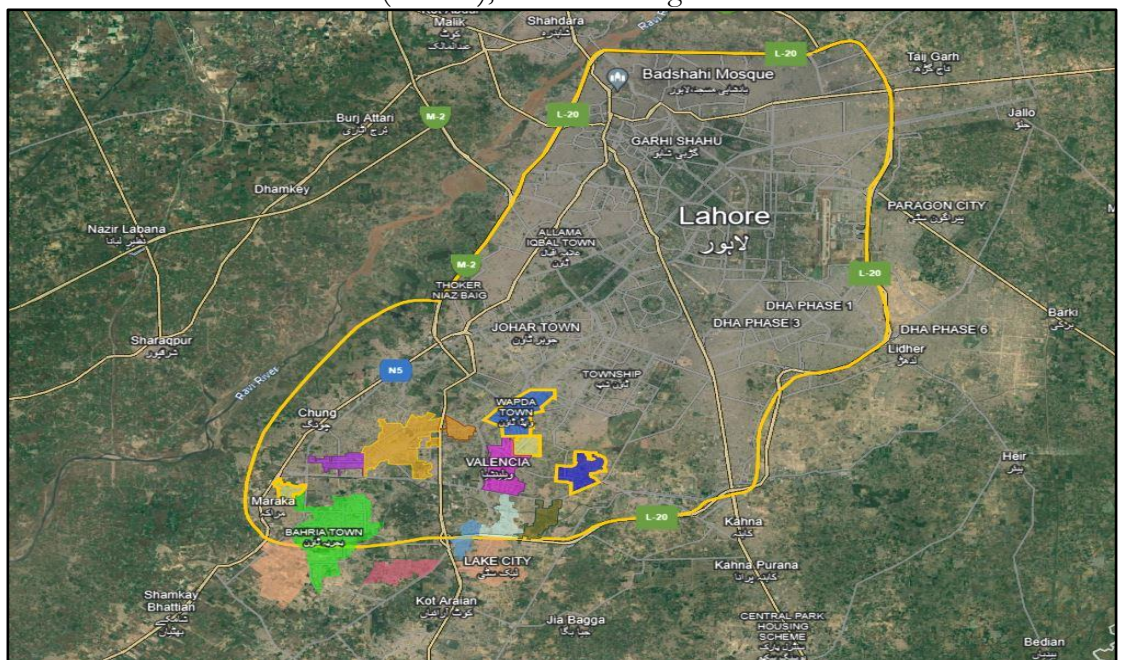


Figure 8: Google Earth Satellite Imagery showing the location of the Housing Scheme with road pattern (Lahore), **Source:** Google Earth Pro

In the approval process of PHS projects, public hearings should be held in a public setting rather than at LDA headquarters. Within the project region, invitations to public hearings may be distributed by television cable providers. It is required to arrange transportation at the expense of the project proponent to bring the immediate affecters to the public hearing. Before deciding on the date and location of the public hearing, specialists should be engaged.

Focus group talks should replace the public objections to the PHS projects. Similarly, public hearings should be substituted by mediation workshops and advisory committee sessions. Prior to the PHS project's commencement, a public meeting ought to be held on or close to the project site, as opposed to surveying the impacted populace by questionnaire. The impacted communities should be contacted personally for objections, suggestions, or feedback.

Advance methods should be used for inviting public objections, as due to the greater illiteracy rate people are mostly unaware of the terms and the process recently adopted by LDA. The concerned community should be informed by giving brochures or through television cables on behalf of developers, the authority should hire a third party or focus group who should be responsible for the checks and balances of this process.

The developer should properly invite the public for EIA public hearings. He should involve the representatives of the concerned community, for public hearings developers use advanced techniques like developing brochures and marketing techniques to involve people and invite their objections. On the other hand, The NWFP should not consider any project's EIA report unless the proponent can show that they consulted directly impacted communities and incorporated their actual concerns into the project design. Additionally, a soft copy of the EIA report should be made available on the authority's websites.

There should be extensive surveys to assess the concerned public requirements and their need for commercial facilities. Assess the Participation of the public who are living in slum areas and their willingness to move from slums toward a clean and peaceful environment. More study on the learning styles of Pakistani people and administrations is needed to better understand how the public may be more successfully involved.

Discussion:

Any procedure that actively involves the public in decision-making and fully takes into account their feedback is considered public participation. Public involvement is a procedure rather than a one-time thing. Throughout the whole PHS project, the developer or sponsor will engage in several activities and actions to both inform and solicit feedback from the public. Stakeholders, or those with an interest in a subject, such as communities, interest organizations, or individuals, can have an impact on choices that have an impact on their lives through public involvement. On the other side, in developing nations, delayed public participation and a lack of transparency in the urban planning decision-making process are important roadblocks to its efficacy. At the same while, public knowledge of development concerns is growing, as is public readiness to take part in decision-making. This reflects a rising awareness of the importance of long-term development. Furthermore, due to the need to give proof of societal acceptability, the literature emphasizes a few examples of successful public involvement practices, such as in the Philippines.

In the case of Pakistan, the policies formulated for PP in the approval process of PHS are quite outdated and discretionary. In practice, public engagement in PHS is treated as a purely formal necessity to satisfy regulatory requirements. It is limited to the public consultation stage of the PHS approval process. It is not certain that all stakeholders, particularly those who are immediately impacted, will be involved. Even if it is guaranteed, there is no system in place to ensure that the proponent incorporates stakeholder input and

that the responsible authorities appropriately examine it before making a final decision. Especially the land-related disputes, due to weak institutional framework and less efficiency of concerned authority, they just publish the public notice irrespective of the information delivered to the concerned community, and due to a lack of awareness in people, they are just stuck in these types of issues.

Public hearings are ineffective consultation devices related to hosting negotiation workshops and suggested committee meetings, which give stakeholders a greater say in decision-making and provide a learning opportunity. Despite the aforementioned flaws, public hearings at least allow for two-way communication between potentially conflicting parties. Its efficacy is primarily determined by its timing throughout the project cycle, the type of public engagement, and how it is carried out.

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Table 1: Assessment of public involvement in Urban Planning Projects in certain industrialized and developing countries.

Indicators/Standards after studying the international practices of PP in Urban Planning Projects	Techniques used to invite/ inform the public	Approach-ability towards related information	Providing information related to UP projects	Public consultation/Involvement methods and the process of PHS approval	Public hearing location/Venues	Transparency of the decision-making procedures	Impact of public apprehensions on decisions
Nominated Industrialized Countries (Germany, USA, and Korea)	Public notices published through social media, newsletters, newspapers, interactions with stakeholders	Issued on the social media, information in the hard form is accessible to Local Planning Authorities, public libraries, offices	Occasionally lack of data in reports is difficult and complex to comprehend by the general public	Public hearings, Written comments, and community advisory groups	Officially held near the city center and sometimes expensive to reach by poor people	Moderately transparent (Relatively more transparent in Korea)	Moderate public concerns sometimes lead to minor changes in project design
Nominated Developing Countries (China, India, Iran, and Pakistan)	Public notices available on websites and newspapers	Complete project details are mostly unavailable	Generally inaccurate/full of jargon	Public hearing/public Objections, Written Comments	Occasionally held in the city center and expensive to reach by poor people	Impervious/Lacking transparency	Low (preference is given to economic benefits)

Source: Authors' own construct based on literature review



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