



SOME ISSUES IN ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

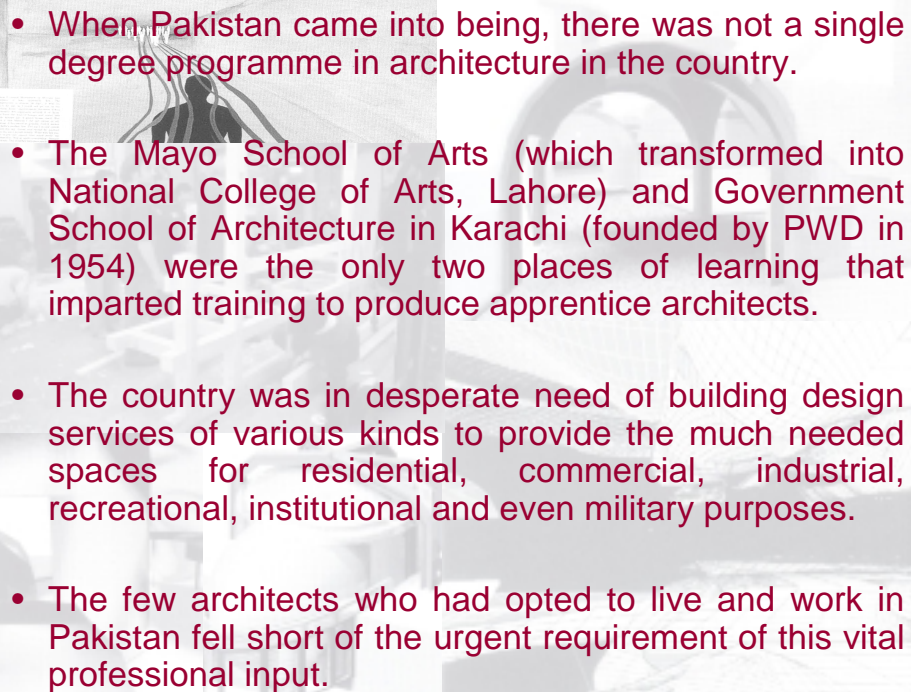
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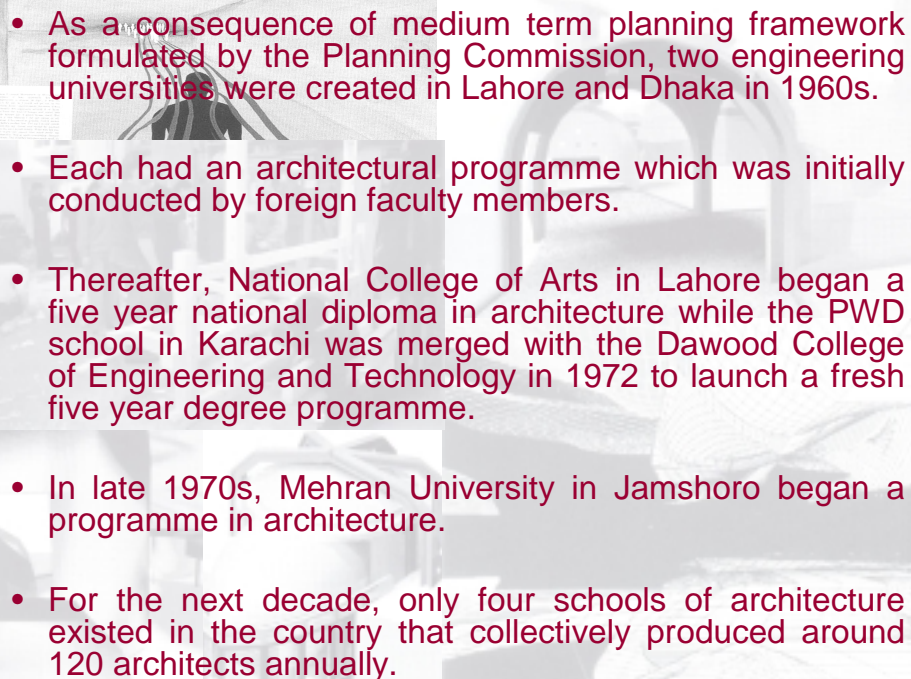
Dr. Noman Ahmed

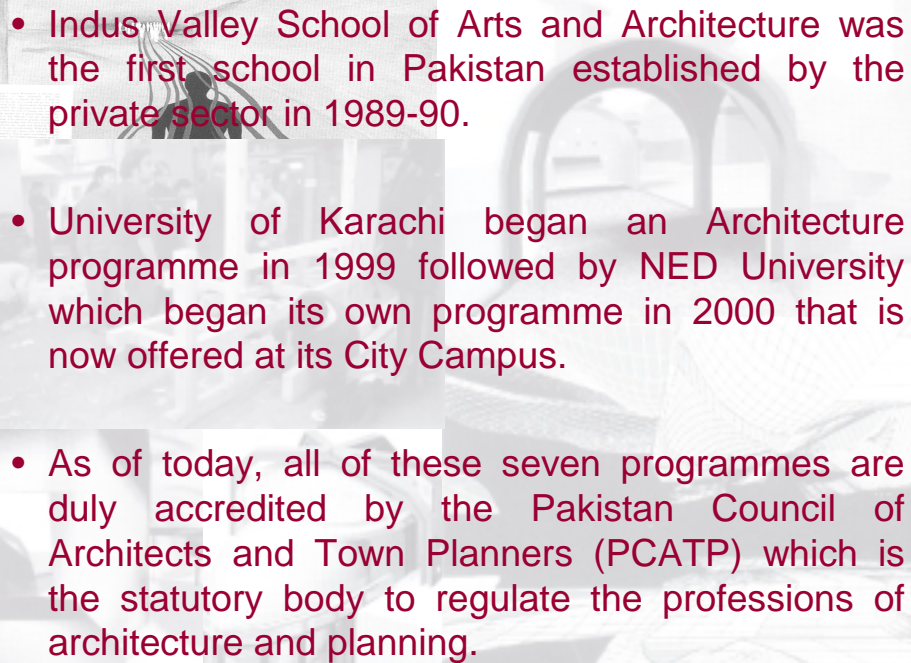


BACKGROUND

- Architectural education and research are vital components in the overall realm of the built environment.
- From the essential function of supply of invaluable human resource to the creation of knowledge for application, education and research play a very important role in the development and sustenance of professional inputs to the built environment.
- Whereas the country possesses some of the most remarkable examples of built heritage from the pre-partition times as a testimony to available expertise, the history of formal architectural education is fairly short.

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- When Pakistan came into being, there was not a single degree programme in architecture in the country.
 - The Mayo School of Arts (which transformed into National College of Arts, Lahore) and Government School of Architecture in Karachi (founded by PWD in 1954) were the only two places of learning that imparted training to produce apprentice architects.
 - The country was in desperate need of building design services of various kinds to provide the much needed spaces for residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, institutional and even military purposes.
 - The few architects who had opted to live and work in Pakistan fell short of the urgent requirement of this vital professional input.

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- As a consequence of medium term planning framework formulated by the Planning Commission, two engineering universities were created in Lahore and Dhaka in 1960s.
 - Each had an architectural programme which was initially conducted by foreign faculty members.
 - Thereafter, National College of Arts in Lahore began a five year national diploma in architecture while the PWD school in Karachi was merged with the Dawood College of Engineering and Technology in 1972 to launch a fresh five year degree programme.
 - In late 1970s, Mehran University in Jamshoro began a programme in architecture.
 - For the next decade, only four schools of architecture existed in the country that collectively produced around 120 architects annually.

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- Indus Valley School of Arts and Architecture was the first school in Pakistan established by the private sector in 1989-90.
 - University of Karachi began an Architecture programme in 1999 followed by NED University which began its own programme in 2000 that is now offered at its City Campus.
 - As of today, all of these seven programmes are duly accredited by the Pakistan Council of Architects and Town Planners (PCATP) which is the statutory body to regulate the professions of architecture and planning.

ISSUES IN ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Need in the Practice

- A conventional function of the educational institutions is to educate and train young professionals for consequent absorption in the architectural practice.
- However changing dynamics in the practice require much more than this service.
- Assessment of changing needs in architectural practice; developing the leadership qualities amongst the young professionals; motivation towards self improvement and skill enhancement are few of the aspects where concentrated support is needed from institutions.

Re-Education of the Professionals

- The changes in curriculum and professional demands are extremely rapid.
- Technology of outputs, communication and presentation alone is one dominant aspect which has drastically changed the working style of architectural practices.
- From tedious and labour intensive manual methods of drafting and drawing, computer and IT based approaches seem to have taken over.
- Changes and diversification in building types, financing modes, emerging technologies in construction and assessment of client demands are few of the areas where re-education is a vitally needed input.
- Societal understanding and its application in practice is also a key area of concern.

Quality in Service Delivery

- Currently, the type of clientele is now changing. So is the status of quality indicators.
- Time bound delivery of assignments, efficient follow-ups, scope bound delivery of milestone outputs and a highly focused manner of project supervision are few of the performance indicators for a conventional design practice.
- While the normal curricula and their delivery provide with the basic ingredients of ascertaining quality service, many factors need a fresh perspective.
- Quantification of quality parameters, linkup of design quality with construction/execution works and possibility of research to create new knowledge in this domain is hitherto a missing element.

Creation of Local Knowledge and Its Application

- A sound architectural practice cannot flourish without a local knowledge base which also possesses regenerative capacities.
- The scenario is extremely dismal on this count.
- Very few evidences of sound scholarship can be found during the previous 59 years of national history.

- With few exceptions, the tradition of serious minded research into pertinent issues related to architecture and the built environment is non existent.
- Few schools of architecture produce publications and journals which are otherwise an essential ingredient of academic functioning.
- Very few architects, who are practicing in the market, possess postgraduate degrees.
- Needless to say that without a sound knowledge base and capacity to apply the same, little improvement can be expected in the overall quality of design and related professional domains.

Role of Professional and Statutory Bodies

- Much is desired from IAP and PCATP than their existing status.
- Promotion of regular interface amongst the student body and professionals, organization of regular events to generate professional and social interaction, taking position on local, regional and national issues pertinent to architecture/built environment and extension of networking opportunities to young professionals are few roles expected from the IAP.
- PCATP need to publicise the distinctive image of architectural education and profession in the socio-political realm of the country.
- A closer liaison is needed between these two bodies and educational institutions.

New Schools and their Working

- Off late, the mushrooming of architectural education institutions has been observed in almost every nook and corner.
- More than 10 new institutions have sprung up during the last few years in the country.
- Interestingly, most of these institutions are opened up in the public sector.
- Departments of Architecture have since created at Peshawar University (Abbatobad Campus); NWFP University of Engineering and Technology, Peshawar; Punjab University, Lahore; Bahauddin Zakaria University, Multan; and Multan College of Arts; NCA Campus, Rawalpindi; UET Campus at Faisalabad and the Federal College of Arts and Design at Jamshoro are new additions in the public sector.

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- COMSATS Institute of Technology and College of Architecture and Design in Islamabad as well as Oriental College of Arts and Beacon House National University in Lahore are the additions by the private sector.
 - Public sector institutions seemed inclined to open new departments to qualify for more funding from Higher Education Commission (HEC).
 - Besides, a professional degree programme is obviously considered as a wise strategy.
 - Private sector usually targets the elite towards professional degree programme by aggressive marketing techniques.
 - The situation offers several prospects and predicaments that need deliberation.

New Avenues



- With the changing times, there are many new areas where the opportunities of exploration and contribution are ripe for architects, especially younger generation.
- Disaster management, construction and project management, urban and city design, heritage conservation, journalism, media affairs, building valuation real estate affairs, building technologies and many many new fields are becoming increasingly visible for application and input.



FINAL WORD

- The purpose of this brief presentation is to initiate an open ended debate around these vital issues.
- The Department of Architecture and Planning at NED University has begun this process by holding series of forum discussions.
- Hopefully this dialogue shall be taken forward by the concerned stakeholders in the larger benefit of the profession in general and the built environment in particular.