



Until the end of the 19th century, Karachi was a small fishing village. Early in the 20th century, Karachi emerged as a major trading centre as other Sindh towns (Alor, Mansurah, Bra Hamanavod Sehwan, Nasarpur, and Thatta), which relied on the Indus as a primary means of

industry up to the mid-twentieth century, but after the creation of Pakistan in 1947, it became the national capital, and Navel base, and the only seaport in Pakistan physically well protected against storms. Its other locational advantage was its land route connection with Iran, Afghanistan, China

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transportation for local produce (cotton cloth, carpets, leather goods, silk, wool, indigo, dairy products, fisheries and a few minerals), declined. Through the last century, Karachi has emerged as the key trading port in the region, initially for its hinterland to the north, and after partition for the whole of Pakistan.

The importance of Karachi grew further when the prepartition Government established their military base there, and export of raw materials such as cotton and wool started picking up due to demand for such materials in Great Britain and elsewhere in Europe, as a result of

and Central Asian countries, and sea route connection with India, Sri Lanka and nearby Arabian countries. As such, Karachi has a number of locational advantages to its credit due to which it has attracted significant industrial and commercial investments, leading to the large scale employment opportunities which exist today.

As a result of this development, its population swelled dramatically, ushering in the modern age of Karachi as a port and dominant commercial and industrial center. However, this increasing dominance of its industrial, commercial and port-related activities has meant that the economy of its hinterland has not really benefited from the

increased trade with the region.

Karachi had very little

city's prosperity, in some measure doubtless due to the lack of a regional planning approach towards Karachi's development.

Furthermore, this imbalance is likely to continue under current circumstances as Karachi's dominant role cannot be expected to diminish in the foreseeable future. Karachi's overtly industrial character has inevitably meant a tenuous relationship with its agricultural hinterland, except to the extent that it has been serving both as a market and outlet for agricultural produce. As such, the current development trends are likely to further the polarization of urban and rural Karachi, and will inevitably widen the gap between the city and its hinterland.

The negative impacts of the absence of a regional planning approach, have been further exacerbated by the absence of effective city planning. As large numbers of people have migrated to Karachi since partition seeking work, so planning systems have failed under successive administrations either to ensure appropriate land use or provide infrastructure and services to keep pace with the burgeoning population. Thus congestion, lack of infrastructure facilities, poor service provision, the growth of large informal settlements, environmental degradation and increasingly unemployment and poor security have become the common problems of Karachi today.

The impact of the environmental degradation that results is felt most keenly by the urban poor living in the Katchi Abadis and the near-shore marine environment which is

heavily contaminated with solid waste, and wastewater from both domestic and industrial sources.

