

EFFECTS OF MEGA METRO PROJECT ON RAWALPINDI'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL LIFE

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ABSTRACT; *The purpose of the study was to explore the effects of mega metro project on Rawalpindi's socio-economic and cultural life. The objective of the research was to study the "effects of metro project on the socio-economic and cultural life of business community of the locale." Research was conducted in the area near 6th road Rawalpindi. Mega metro project have more negative effects in the lives of the residents and business community than positive effects. The study indicates that there is no need of such mega project and betterment in other fields is more required than transportation.*

Keywords: Infrastructure, vehicles, Development, Culture

INDRODUCTION

A megaproject is an extremely large-scale investment project which are, "profoundly and astronomically immense-scale investment projects. Megaprojects are publicized to gain attention, "Megaprojects are magnetizing a plethora of public attention because of substantial impacts on communities, environment, and budgets. "Megaproject building has raised concern about the authentic benefits for the population and local economy" [1].

Due to infrastructural maintenance work city dwellers have to use alternative routes for travelling which leads to "traffic congestion, depletion of time, frustration, accidents and economic loss" [2]. The motorists and people both have suffered from jams resulted from mega metro project putting negative effects on urban life [3]. Due to this inconvenience the drivers have to take "alternative routes" increasing the travelling time. [4].

Business community has also been badly affected as a result of mega metro project, as congested roads led to reduced number of customers due to inconvenience because of lack of parking lots, roads blockage, traffic jams and longer alternate routes. On one hand all these aspects lead to the reduction in customer's number, which adversely affected the economic conditions of the business community, while on the other hand it also enhanced work opportunities for the labor class. "Ephemeral employment for construction work increased the economic activity but the local businesses reduced due to disrupted access" [5].

The traffic flow is also disrupted due to a large amount of vehicles using alternative routes and number of "Cumbersomely Hefty Goods Conveyances (HGVs)" on the road around the construction compounds and worksites during construction additionally have an unpropitious effect on businesses, residents and travelers [5]. Those who are the residents of the near locality of construction area are more affected because the infrastructural work disrupts traffic flow" leading to "traffic congestion" which has severe "social, economic and cultural" repercussions [2].

Developmental projects for the betterment of transportation facilities bear uncertain affects in the lives of the residents of the locality. The businesses located in the construction areas were pessimistically affected by the transportation projects [5]. Development through transportation projects "cost expensively" and put "uncertain affects" on urban life [6].

The economic development of country through mega metro project generates problems for the economic and working class. It has been rarely witnessed that construction of such mega transportation projects increasing economic development of a country [7]. It has resulted negatively in most cases. The benefits if analyzed in terms of "regional connectivity and networks" are plentiful however, within the city the economy completely collapses which makes it problematic to analyze the benefits [8].

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was conducted in the area near 6th road Rawalpindi. The study focuses on the effects of metro project on the socio-economic and cultural life of business community of the locale. Data was driven through structured questioners from a selective sample of 50 respondents. The sample size was selected by using non-probability sampling in which quota sampling technique was used to gather required information.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher has been conducted in the area of 6th road Rawalpindi. The research topic was "Effects of mega metro project on Rawalpindi's socio-economic and cultural life. The main objective was to find out the effects of mega metro project on business community and problems faced by the local people due to inconvenient transportation routes. According to these objectives the researcher explored the effects of mega project on the lives of the residents of the locale. The business community was badly affected and the inhabitants of Rawalpindi were facing immense problems in travelling. The business community faced massive financial crisis. Due to construction the local transport routs have changed and people have to suffer specially the business community. They have to face economic crises because of the reduction of customers due to lack of accessibility.

Table 1 show that 94% respondents agreed with the statement that metro project brought economic crises whereas only 6% of the respondents were against the statement because current situation doesn't affect their economy.

The respondents retorted to the statement "business activity destroyed due to mega metro project", 98% were in favor of the statement while just 2% were against because they were

Table#1 Economic crises faced due to Mega Metro Project in Rawalpindi. (n=50)

Question	Responses	Percentages
Economic crises faced due to metro	Yes	94
	No	6
Business activities destroyed	Yes	98
	No	2
Number of customers increased or decreased	Increased	10
	Decreased	90
Income	Increased	16
	Decreased	84
Financial loss faced	Yes	92
	No	8

not facing any adverse effects on their business activity. Those who were in the favor of the statement were facing economic loss due to reduced number of customers due to unapproachable conditions.

The results of the statement “number of customers increased or decreased”, 90% respond that customers number had decreased whereas just 10% said that number of their customers had increased. The reasons of the customer lessen were no parking lots and also traffic jams on the roads. Those who clam increase in customer number, it is due to changing in transportation routes or they were distant from the constructional area.

Results show that 84% respondents said their income decreased and only 16% responded their income had increased. Revenue reduced as a result of decreased number of customers, because of changed traffic routes and traffic jams. Income increased of the business community which was on easily accessible and less traffic routes.

According to the responses 92% said they had to face financial loss because of the mega project while only 8% were against it. Results illustrates that mega metro project had negatively affected the economic life of the residents of Rawalpindi dwellers, as the numbers of customers visiting the shops had critically dwindle due to alternate longer routes and traffic issues. The literature further strengthens the results by stating that the business area within the vicinity of “construction area” faced “too much loss” as the “number of customers decreased” due to “loss of parking space” and disruption in the “transportation system” [4].

Table 2 shows that 50% respondents say yes and 50% says no about the need of metro project. Mega project causing immense problems for the residents of the constructional area that’s why people were against the project whereas those who feel this inconvenience is temporary and in future it will be beneficial for us were in the favor of this project.

Table shows that majority of the respondents 80% use public transport, they face traffic issues daily. While 20% of the respondents had their own conveyance or did not avail public transport for any other reason. The percentile results of the statement that routs have changed due to the construction of mega metro project in Rawalpindi, 92% agreed while just 8% disagreed with this statement. Change in transport routs adversely affected the community of the locale because of the increased commuting time and transportation fares.

Table#2 Socio-cultural crises faced due Mega Metro Project in Rawalpindi. (n=50)

Questions	Responses	Percentages
Mega project was required	Yes	50
	No	50
Public transport used	Yes	80
	No	20
Local transport routs changed	Yes	92
	No	8
Have the fares increased	Yes	92
	No	8
Travelling time has increased	Yes	88
	No	12
Have the cultural festivals been affected	Yes	66
	No	34
Turn up at festivals affected	Negatively	42
	Positively	58
Familial interaction	Yes	82
	No	18
Celebration of cultural festivals decreased	Yes	48
	No	52

The percentile results of “have the fares increased”, 92% responded in favor while just 8% disagreed as they did not avail public transport. The construction work of the project generates difficult situations for the residents of that area as well as for the road users, the inflation stricken poor men more frustrated due to doubled fares for commuting small distances.

The resulted percentages of “travelling time has increased” due to change in routes, 88% were in its favor whereas only 12% were against it. The residents of the Rawalpindi were facing solemn problems due to changed transportation routes which amplified travelling time and fares which affect socio-economic life styles of the local people. The resultant values of “have the cultural festivals been affected” due to mega metro project, 66% of the respondents said due to transportation constraints restrained their cultural festivity was affected. While 34% said there was no affect on the cultural festivity of the urban dwellers.

Table 2 shows that 58% respondents positively answered the statement that “turn up at festivals affected” due to mega project construction whereas 42% responded negatively. The turn up on religious festivals have decreased due to divert transportation routes, traffic jams and road blockages which cause inconvenience and problems for the followers to reach the shrines of their religious saints. The resultant values showed that 82% of the respondents were in support of the assertion that mega metro project affected the familial interactions because of traffic congestion and longer alternate transportation routes. Whereas 18% abandon the assertion that mega project doesn’t affect their familial relations, they were residents of area far from infrastructural work place or maybe alternate traffic routes benefits them and travelling time was decreased for them.

The percentile value of “celebration of cultural festivals decreased”, 48% agreed while 52% disagreed because they were of the view that edification work was temporary so it doesn’t affect their cultural festivals in longer run.

CONCLUSION

The mega metro project reveals that it is not required for the citizens of Rawalpindi, people were facing more serious issues which need to be enlightened which have made their life a miserable plight rather than transportation facilities. Although public transport is used by most of the population but there should be some other convenient and cheaper solution instead of publicizing mega metro project which have more adverse affects than benefits. The solution which should not affect their business and personal lives.

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