Media Coverage

Seminar on “Clean Air, Green Future: Smog Mitigation, Resilience and Carbon Credit Feasibility”

December 04, 2025

Express Tribune

https://tribune.com.pk/story/2580410/smog-control-gaps-foil-policy-goals

Business Recorder

https://www.brecorder.com/news/40395640

APP Pakistan

https://www.app.com.pk/national/pides-study-reveals-critical-gaps-in-smog-control-sustainable-mobility/

Global News Pakistan

https://globalnewspakistan.com/2025/12/04/pide-study-exposes-major-gaps-in-smog-control-and-sustainable-mobility/

UrduPoint

https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/pides-study-reveals-critical-gaps-in-smog-2096213.html

Diplomatic News Agency

https://dnanews.com.pk/pides-study-reveals-critical-gaps-in-smog-control-and-sustainable-mobility/

KhabarWalay

https://khabarwalay.com/2025/12/04/pide-study-says-climate-plans-falter-due-to-weak-implementation/

Centerline

https://centreline.com.pk/2025/12/03/pides-study-reveals-critical-gaps-in-smog-control-and-sustainable-mobility/

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Smog control gaps foil policy goals

Speakers at seminar stress urban-mobility reforms

IMRAN ADNAN
LAHORE

Despite an expanding stack of clean-air policies, Lahore's smog crisis continues to deepen as weak implementation, poor inter-departmental coordination, and ineffective public communication stall meaningful action, experts warned while addressing a seminar.

They warned that transport remains the city's largest polluter, stubble burning persists despite subsidies, and citizens lack the incentives and infrastructure needed to adopt low-emission mobility habits.

They stressed that without long-term planning and a shift from reactive measures to sustained enforcement and behavioural change, Punjab's air-quality emergency will only worsen.

The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) hosted the seminar on smog mitigation, resilience and carbon credit feasibility in collaboration with the Rasta Competitive Research Grants Programme.

The event brought together researchers and policymakers to examine Lahore's worsening smog crisis, sectoral emissions, and emerging behavioural pathways toward sustainable mobility.

In her presentation, Dr Aqsa Shabbir stressed that Punjab must move away from reactive measures — such as ad-hoc closures — toward long-term, preventive strategies.

She said Lahore's air quality had begun deteriorating rapidly after industrial expansion in the 1990s, with smog becoming a recurring emergency by 2016.

Since then, 12 policy documents have been produced, including the Punjab Clean Air Policy (2023), Climate-Resilient Punjab Action Plan (2024), and the Smog Control Strategy (2024–25), but weak implementation, inadequate surveillance, and limited institutional capacity remain the biggest obstacles, she said.

Dr Shabbir said the transport sector contributes up to 83 per cent of Lahore's emissions, followed by industry and agriculture. While initiatives such as vehicle-inspection centres, fuel-quality monitoring, and electric vehicle-friendly policies appear promising on paper, coordination gaps — particularly between the transport and energy departments — are limiting progress.

BUSINESS
RECORDER
Founded by M. A. Zuberi

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Speakers stress need for improving AIQ

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at a seminar, while discussing and reviewing carbon emission-related policies in Pakistan, especially introduced by the Punjab government, have underscored the need for meaningful progress in air index quality (AIQ), which requires evidence-based policy design, sector-specific incentives, inclusive communication strategies, and integrated urban mobility reforms, backed by persistent public and governmental commitments.

The seminar was organised by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), in collaboration with the RASTA Competitive Research Grants Programme titled "Clean Air, Green Future: Smog Mitigation, Resilience and Carbon Credit Feasibility." The gathering was informed that the transport sector plays the role of a major contributor to carbon emissions.

The event brought together researchers and policymakers to discuss Lahore's escalating smog crisis, sectoral emissions, and emerging behavioural solutions for sustainable mobility.

Presenting first, Dr Aqsa Shabbir, Associate Professor at LCWU and RASTA Fellow, emphasised that smog mitigation in Punjab must shift from reactive closures to long-term prevention. She noted that Lahore's air pollution accelerated after rapid industrialization in the 1990s, with smog becoming an annual emergency by 2016. Since then, 12 policy documents have been produced, including the Punjab Clean Air Policy (2023), Climate-Resilient Punjab Action Plan (2024), and the Smog Control Strategy (2024–25). Despite these frameworks, weak implementation, insufficient surveillance, and low institutional capacity remain the biggest constraints.

Dr Shabbir reiterated that the transport sector contributes up to 83 percent of Lahore's emissions, followed by industry and agriculture. While initiatives such as vehicle inspection centers, fuel-quality monitoring, and shifts to EVs appear promising on paper, gaps in coordination, especially between the transport and energy departments, are hindering any progress.

In agriculture, subsidised super seeders and rice straw shredders have delivered partial success, yet affordability barriers, language-inaccessible awareness campaigns, and inconsistent monitoring allow stubble burning to persist. Satellite data confirms ongoing hotspots in Jhang, Hafizabad, and Nankana Sahib, indicating that improvements seen in 2024 are real but fragile.

Delivering the second presentation, Dr Sahar Zia, Assistant Professor of Geography at LCWU, introduced an innovative Vehicle Emission Reduction Calculation Model grounded in behavioural research and qualitative mobility data. This model shifts the focus from AQI readings to real commuter habits, analysing distance travelled, frequency, transport mode, and mindset.

Survey findings from 385 respondents show that 55 percent of Lahore's commuters, mainly students travelling 10–20 km daily, are willing to cut emissions if provided meaningful incentives. Scaling these patterns citywide suggests a potential 38 percent reduction in emissions if high-emission users shift to low-emission transport.

Dr Zia emphasised that citizens respond most strongly to reduced fares, tax rebates, fuel discounts, and reliable public transport, whereas poor infrastructure, discomfort, and high vehicle costs remain major barriers. She highlighted international best practices such as encouraging school placements within 5–10 km of residences to reduce daily commute-related emissions. Moderating the session, Dr Nasir Javed praised the interdisciplinary nature of the work and underscored additional challenges: political and bureaucratic mindsets, a lack of accessible communication for farmers and citizens, and limited public appreciation for environmental reforms.

He stressed that smog mitigation demands both strong enforcement and behavioural change, supported by coordinated, long-term planning.—

ABDUL RASHEED AZAD