



Changing Status of Indian Cities – From Walled Fortresses to Shared Spaces – A Historical Perspective

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Abstract

This paper examines the importance of redesigning in Indian cities which are suffering from isolation & segregated living. The city designs have to change in order to give way for community living & collective living. The disastrous effects of unplanned urbanization have made the people to lose faith in each other & each one wants to build a privately owned stronghold hence becoming inaccessible to community. This development is a reverse notion of great Indian thinking which always fostered community sharing of services & responsibilities. This paper considers the need for re-planning Indian cities with open spaces & trouble-free household living.

Keywords: Indian cities, seclusion, community sharing, need for planning

Introduction

Indian society since very ancient period has believed in theories of community living, community stake holder ship & integrated management system. This was instrumental in shaping a healthy society, a good environment, & integral family upbringing .

India is witnessing an important phase of urbanization as the urban population is exceeding beyond all numerical output. The problems of huge urbanization have also enhanced multiple folds. Urban crime, societal evils, misdeeds, atrocities, insecurity for women& children etc. The urban life has become not only stressful but also traumatic. (Vidhyadhara K. - Unleashing Urbanization –Urban planning in India 2011). There have

been sprawling new cities in addition to metro cities with fast developmental orientation.

Features of Present Day Urban Living

1. The present day urban life in India has left a great impact on age old community life. Old ideas of console, familiarity, family togetherness are almost elapsed.
2. Private ownership has changed urban India. Landed gentries have purchased large tract of land where they have raised big mansions which have been a world in itself. These days urban city has become a hide inside a walled compound.
3. Longstanding faith in shared amenities have changed. Each family wants to live individually



- without care for the neighborhood.
4. This has left a great impact on mutual relationship with each other.
 5. Cities are becoming private strongholds of people who do not wish to be on familiar terms with neighbors ,closer to their needs or help them in times of necessity. They are inaccessible , narrow-minded , insular & apprehensive.
 6. Cities are growing expanding while residential homes are closed in.

Houses in urban areas are built with individual facilities, concealed, entertainment options, Privately covered office, clandestine food store, personal pool, Private kitcheners, Private internet connectivity , individual bore wells, private garden area, confidential security , private & secretive warn alarms, etc. A home in urban India is almost acts as a virtual city as it has all amenities an urban life can provide. The needs are met easily within the fenced compound walls. The requirement are easy to achieve there is no need to go out to reach the outer space for any demands. (Vidhyadhara K. unleashing urbanization –urban planning in India 2011).

Global Trends

1. In Washington , Boston & Oreland people encourage carpooling ,common garden ,common parking lot , & share common commutation. This

- allows easy mingling familiarizing support
2. Residents of Denmark share a common child care ,recreation, security, & social activities .
 3. China has banned private ownership of land
 4. Stockholm has made regulations on private garden to be used by public (Robert Buckley & others - Property rights & interlocking policy constraints on urban land markets 2005)

Impact of compartmentalized Houses

1. People in the house meet rarely. They are not worried to talk to each other liberally. Each one is hectic in his own world. Family members do not share their thoughts as there are no shared & interactive lifestyles. All family members want privacy & houses are designed to reach out to each one's individual aspirations & future demands.(Robert Buckley & others -Property rights & interlocking policy constraints on urban land markets 2005).
2. Inter personal sharing of thought is absent as it has affected the children upbringing. The age old custom of nurturing the children in a community has been lost & parents have not been able to spend their time with the children which has negatively affected their childhood. Children are succumbing into dreadful companionships which is not only



- costing their health but also societal set up as well.
3. urban style of life has made people acquire selfish motives, depression, social segregation. Instead of becoming a social animal he has imprisoned himself in the artificial walls of privacy & hypocrisy. (Robert Buckley & others -Property rights & interlocking policy constraints on urban land markets 2005)
 4. Cities these days divided by caste, class, rank, titles , economic status, social order, professional position & other lines . Indian urban housing rules have made urban townships still more isolated & segregated. Villas luxury apartment's townships have grown in India dividing the population still further. Dharavi is considered a biggest slum with narrow lanes, no sanitation, no civic amenities but people are happy to know each other & share their views & responsibilities. (United Nations alliance of civilization 2014)
 3. Instead of private car owning shared commuting should be encouraged
 4. Gated complexes should be avoided in order to make room for sharing public area commonly.
 5. Inclusion of common garden space, greeneries, pavements, balconies, sporting tracks, recreational zones, etc.
 6. Stringent measures for reduction of private commerce will enhance mingling & familiarizing.
 7. Conversion of road to parks/ walking track/ common workplace & recreation will add to boosting each other's reliance.
 8. The policy makers should encourage environmental benefits of community living. Such as fewer cars on street means less congestion, increased more walking tracks, healthier urban environs.
 9. This will have a great impact on healthier cities, happier citizenry, fathom support for unity in diversity theory. A gross indictment that there is a lopsided form of civic entitlement can be best addressed through adoption of a new city planning. There is a necessity of deliberating a new pattern of shared routine consumption based on common lifestyle which would answer all the questions of urbanization menace is creating.

Prospective Strategies

Indian urban houses have to restructure in order to instill a civic sense & shared urban resources among all urbanites.

1. Government should shape a urban policy with a vision of uniting familial relations
2. Houses should be redesigned to avoid isolation. Neighborhood should be encouraged
10. Shared pattern of living are encouraged in western countries but in India. Private property ownership rights are made to



isolate each other the age old tradition of community living has forgotten encircling shields of privacy. Isolated cities have influenced isolated thinking habits among urbanites which is not only frightening & but also apprehensive waste of limited urban resources. Thus the need of the hour is to make provision for common services facilities

Role of the Government

1. Governments can draw the attention of the planners in Planning & development of feasibility studies towards restructuring urban landscapes.
2. Governments can draw the attention of the public by creating awareness of the dreadful harm the isolated living & thinking would cast on the integrity of the Nation.
3. Government agencies & NGOs have to consider impact assessments of proposed developmental projects on urban environment, drainage, sanitation, commutation & traffic etc.
4. Governments can draw the attention of the builders to think in an innovative way to involve a master plan for land formation transportation networking utilities services etc have to be devised.
5. Governments can draw the attention of the commerce department in formulating developmental strategies on Contract packaging deals, community storage houses , warm centers, community recreational facilities , sporting complexes etc.

6. Governments can draw the attention of the builders in formulating a detailed design for reclamation of land , shore protection, structures with ground treatment , ecofriendly outer spacing , healthy landscaping etc

7. Governments can draw the attention of the urban policy makers & NGOs on Geo technical works , roads ,street furniture, landscaping ,street lighting, traffic control ,surveillance, documentation ,construction, supervision interface meetings, etc which may lead to resource sharing without hassles.(United Nations alliance of civilization 2014).

8. Urban population is full of heterogeneous groups bringing cohesion among them is a difficult task. The ethnic diversity, cultural multiplicity, racial variety can be attended only with a cautious planning. Promoting mutual respect, equality of opportunity, reducing discrimination infusing democratic elements in governance can assist in creating such mutual societies. people & governments should not forget that social inclusion always comes with economic gains. Optimal use of public land needs an immediate planning attention of the policy makers. Government should review private ownership of landed properties. Urban developmental rights should be looked into.

Conclusion

A planned reorientation about designing cities can unravel several of



these social economic problems caused by present urbanization. The high rise buildings can be a cordial response to community sharing & living with better understanding ,better responsibility sharing & better thoughts stimulation. Indian heritage of community living can be relived through a meticulous planning of cities & houses. The increasing rates of urban crime , urban segregation, unhealthy social habits can be checked not by any legislation but by thorough re-handling of urban habitation landscapes. Watchful eyes of the community can help to build the personality self-image & character of a person mould him to become a better citizen. India needs not designer homes or villas but a space shared for providing access to familiarizing.

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