

A Socio-Historical & Economic Perspective of Town Planning in the Major Cities of India (From 2007-2009)

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Abstract

The major cities are densely populated and they are bound to face several unknown challenges. In such a changed situation and scenario it has become essential to revise the town planning schemes in a way that without any risk to their original features, everyone gets a well furnished house to live in with healthy surroundings around it. India is passing through hard times these days because of the ongoing process of urbanization, industrialization, modernization and westernization. A rural country at its roots, India is now passing through transformation. The people in the villages are leaving their villages and settling down in the cities in order to be witness to the ongoing social processes, and to enjoy their lives in the way they please. As a result, every small or big city in India now has a horrible density of population which demands an urgent revision of the town planning for the sake of the public health and environment.

In the modern age, when every country in the world is eager to be globalized, India too, is moving fast towards it at the risk of unexpected transformation. Individuality, education, employment, freedom, modernity, self-dependence and opportunities of career etc. are some of the things that are forcing the rural people to detach themselves from the long-prevailing and established modes of living and to settle down in the cities.

The paper covers up the various aspects of the cities highlighting particularly on the ongoing processes of urbanization and modernization, the transformation of the cities, increase in the slums, life of the people in the cities, problems of housing and living being faced by the people living in the cities and the need of revised town-planning in India for the betterment of the life of the people in India.

Keywords: City Planning, Social Transformation, Social Processes, Globalization, Urbanization, Modernization, Modernity, Global Demand, Architecture.

Introduction

Aristotle said, "A city should be built to give its inhabitants security and happiness." Plato commented on the significance of town planning saying, "A city is a place where men have a common life for a noble end." Town planning is an art of shaping and guiding the physical growth of the town creating buildings and environment to meet the various needs, such as, social, cultural, economic and recreational etc., and to provide healthy conditions for both the rich and the poor to live to work and to play or relax, thus, bringing about the social and economic well-being for the majority of mankind.

In the twenty first century when several ongoing social processes are working effectively, the people all over the world have changed their approach to survival. Now they want to satiate most of their needs within the limited means they have. The concepts like globalization, urbanization, westernization, modernization etc., are magnetically forcing the people to settle down in cities in order to make an all round development of their own personality and of the personality of their children. The result is that all the major cities are densely populated and they are bound to face several unknown challenges. In such a changed situation and scenario it has become essential to revise the town planning schemes in a way that

without any risk to their original features, everyone gets a well furnished house to live in with healthy surroundings around it.

City planning is a global demand relating to the social transformation. It is only through the city planning that the goal of clean environment and public health can be attained. Obviously, it is the demand of time to restructure and revise the cities, and thus to allow the individuals to live in the clean surroundings and to enjoy his survival on earth in the transformed social structure.

The architectural history of India is very rich. The rulers who ruled over the various states of India from time to time had a rich taste for art and architecture. The historical buildings and monuments still available in India reveal their love for art and architecture.

However, it cannot be denied that they were built and erected by keeping in view the needs and demands of the people in those days. As change is inevitable, in the field of architecture too, it is taking place. The cities and towns need to be restructured and redesigned. It may be possible only through the government policies and through specialist architects capable of reshaping the cities and towns in India.

Conceptual Framework

As observed by Chanakya, town, which is congested, should be freed of surplus population. The towns should be so situated as they would be in a position to help each other. People who come to stay at the time of a new settlement or those who come to reside later in this new settlement should be exempted from payment of taxes for some years. There should be a market provided for the sale of goods received from traders on highways. Dams should be constructed over rivers nalas. Temples and gardens should be provided. Arrangements should be made for looking after the aged, the children and informal persons. Cereals and wealth will grow if the agriculturists are kept busy. Attempts should be made to protect and increase quarries, forests and canals.

A city should be located in the central part of a country so as to facilitate trade and commerce. The site selected for the purpose of this city should be quite large in area, and on the banks of a river, or by the side of an artificial or natural lake, which never goes dry. Its shape should be circular, rectangular or square as would suit the topography. There should be water on all sides. Separate areas should be provided for marketing different goods. There should be a wall around the town. Three-east west and three North – south roads, should divide the town. Cemeteries should be located on the north and east of the town. All this can help the town planners and builders develop the towns systematically.

Aims of the Study

1. To study, observe and specify the town planning relating to the proposed specified study area.
2. To make a comparative study of the various forms of town planning in Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, and to suggest some of the relevant town plans for the present.

3. To study and to be familiar with the town planning trends in the past, i.e., from the Indus Valley Civilization to this day.
4. To analyse the various types of plans of the cities, i.e., structural, comprehensive and developmental.
5. To observe, study and understand the urbanizing patterns of Agra, Mathura, Gwalior and Jaipur cities.

Specific Objectives of the Study

To make a comparative study of the various forms of town planning in the various states of India, to suggest some of the relevant town plans for the present, and to produce the economic perspective of the problem.

Overview of Literature

Harappa Town Planning is one of the most outstanding and remarkable features of Harappa and the Indus Valley Civilization. Archaeological surveys have revealed several interesting facts about Harappa Town Planning. Indus valley civilization is considered to be the earliest urban civilisation. The people at that time were technologically advanced and very knowledgeable in the laying out of the construction of the city as a whole. The ancient civilisation was not only confined to the Indus valley but also extended to the north-western region of the country also. The roads, dwelling houses, large buildings and forts were very well executed. People followed a system of centralised administration. The houses were even protected from sounds, odours, and thieves. The streets were formed in grid system. Similar sized bricks were used for construction of buildings; wood and stone were also used in buildings. Municipal authorities maintained effective drainage system. Houses were properly placed on both sides of the roads, and also in the lanes. The doors of the houses opened in the lanes and not on the roads. The houses were built on plinths that rose above the street level with stairs recessed at the wall at the front door. The house planning did not let any hindrance on the roads so everything was well organized. The literature available on town planning sufficiently witnesses that even in the present scenario when there is a chaos in cities, through a proper town planning more and more people can be accommodated and the chaotic situation can be avoided.

Review of Literature

Problem of Urban Geography in India has emerged as one of the most challenging issues before last 50 years. A variety of approaches has been observed in the works brought out on urban development. In view of the above analysis, it seems pertinent here to review some past works related to the subject under study. The contribution in this field came mostly from town planners and geographers continued neglect various aspects of spatial analysis of urban growth, urban planning and problems.

Dalal, S. (2007) observes some states of Gujarat and Haryana, India and studied infrastructural facilities and population growth. He has found that decline in population of class III towns or medium towns is faster than in class I and class II towns. The study finds unbalanced urbanization in India as a

serious problem. He attempts to analyze the population growth of medium towns of industrially developed state of Gujarat and agriculturally prosperous state of Haryana.

Datta, P. (2007) has studied urbanization in India. Urbanization is an transformation from traditional rural economic to modern urban one. Socio-economic, politico-administrative and geographical processes are associated to urbanization. Urbanization is closely related to industrial growth. The paper has tried to illuminate the process of urbanization in India. They study and analyzed the census data carefully. It is found that there has been continuous concentration of population in class I town rather than in medium and small towns. Globalization, liberalization and privatization are addressing negative process of urbanization. Redirection of investment is recommended to develop strong economic base for small and medium cities.

Mishra, R. N. and Sharma, Pawan Kumar (2007) have studied functional patterns of towns in Rajasthan. Functions of town influence its morphology and constitute the divine force of the city life. It offers a good base for regional development planning. An objective of paper was to classify all urban centers of Rajasthan on the basis of the town functions. The towns have been classified into four categories of very highly specialized, moderately specialized and less specialized towns. They showed great variant in the dominant functions and their regional distribution.

Gajendra Singh, Jaideep Singh and Jai Singh (2008) authors have studied air pollution due to traffic in Jaipur. They have tried to study number of vehicles and spatial patterns of air pollution and suggest some remedies. The city is divided into 4 groups such as sensitive, commercial, residential and industrial areas. They alarmed that pink city may turn into black city.

Bhaduri, Sukla (2008) has studied growth of personalized transport in mega cities of India and its impacts. Metropolitan cities are experiencing increase in personalized motor vehicles. Economic growth, easy availability of loans, the increasing urbanization has increased the demand of personal motor vehicles. It is observed that Kolkata and Mumbai have better public transport system. The two wheelers has led adverse impact like high road congestion, reduction in speed, increase in accidents and high energy consumption and emission. Mega cities have high level of pollution.

Singh, Yadvinder and Rajinder kaur (2008) deals with the urban ecosystem of Jalandar city. Infrastructure with industrial and population growth. They studied development and expansion of the city. They assess industrialization and its interface with urban development concerning environmental degradation. Living condition of urban upper class people is good and lower class people in slum are miserable. Environmental degradation took place due to pollution, due to intense density of automobile and industrial noise and disposal of wastes and sewage water.

Saini, Vipin (2008) has studied the urban sprawl of Bikaner city. The objective is to identify the patterns of urban expansion and to analyze the causal factors of the urban expansion in Bikaner city. The analyzed topographical sheets, dynamic phenomenon of urban sprawl and land use change. He finds out that area of the city has increased faster than population. The city has expanded from walled city along major roads and railway tracts.

Tripathi, V. K. (2008) has described trends of urbanization, problems and planning of small towns in Ballia district. He has evaluated the trends and urbanization and consequent problems facing Ballia district of Uttar Pradesh. The urban population growth of the district has been affected by agricultural industry. Better medical facilities and establishment of public facilities in cities pulled the rural population. Due to heavy migration city faces many problems. Heavy traffic flow has made the city highly congested. Many geographers have established various aspects of different cities in urban geography.

Fazal, Shahab and Rahman, Atiqur (2009) has studied urban fringe modeling for future residential demands in his case study. This case study investigate land use and land cover transformation in Saharanpur city and on the basis of present trend its estimated demand for residential land in the year 2015.

Gangawata, Sonal and Khan, M.Z.A. (2009) authors studied socio-economic and functional structure of Bundi city. They studied the historical background and present status of the city. They also observed the change in demographic status and its impact on economy and occupational structure. They focuses on the evolution of functional structure of residential, industrial, educational, public place, government and semi government areas on the basis of present scenario of the city. The study shows that changing trends of population and limited infrastructure tourism has become major source of living.

Khan, Sayeed Ahmad (2009) studied urban growth in India and future prospects. They study the growth rates of urban population and net decadal growth of urban population. They projected the probability of future trend and explore the nature of these trends. In corporate quantitative approach method was adopted. They also got data from India Infrastructural Report and Planning Commission of India. The study has shown that the urban growth has declined but urban population has increased. It will affect urban infrastructure and environment.

Khandelwal, Shweta (2009) have studied about urban sprawl of Jaipur metropolitan, being old planned and popular city the growth of population due to influx of refugees from Pakistan. They examined the causes of rapid growth of urbanization and its impact of land use patterns and suggest strategies for land use planning for future. They got this from census handbook, field work, interviews, and discussions. It reveals that the process of rapid growth of industry and urbanization are based on changes such as rapid growth of population and

growth of secondary and tertiary economic activities and changes in land use patterns.

Saxena, Shipra (2009) have studied water supply for urban poor in India. In slum area, water supply situation is very pathetic. People do not have government supply. They arrange water from illegally fetching water from government water supplying pipes. Slums are located in polluted, unhygienic areas. Women and children are affected the most. Children loose precious education hours. Living in slums in a way increases the cost in terms of paying off informal sector vendors and opportunity cost. People have the capacity and willingness to pay but the government is reluctant.

Singh, Abha Lakshmi and Mohd, Salahuddin (2009) have studied addressing waste associated problems in Aligarh city. The paper focuses on the use of urban waste water in periurban farming. In the paper, an attempt has been made to examine the drainage and sewerage system of the city, use of urban waste water in peri-urban agriculture and to assess the health risks from the use of waste water. The study is mainly based on primary sources of data collected through village household surveys with the help of questionnaire interviews. Village located in the peri-urban areas around the Iglas Sewerage Pumping Station using waste water for agriculture for many years were identified and selected for in depth investigation. Five villages were selected for the study.

Research Questions or Hypothesis

1. Food, cloth and house are the basic needs of man, and a balanced life is one to which all the three are easily available.
2. The process of urbanization is forcing the people from the villages to settle down in the big cities for the sake of their betterment in the field of jobs, education and materialistic blisses and pleasures.
3. Town planning is essential in every city for the state of betterment.
4. The history of India witnesses a tremendous variation in the town planning patterns.
5. The states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan are particularly noted for their distinct town planning patterns.
6. Town planning provides specific identity to the towns and cities.
7. Town planning serves as a great factor of social upliftment and economic development.
8. The town planning in the Indian cities like Agra, Jaipur, Gwalior and Mathura have always magnetically drawn the people from all over the world towards them.

Research Methodology

The centre focus of the researcher shall be on the explanation, interpretation of cause and effect relation of the problem selected for the purpose and on the generalization.

Coverage

The study is theoretical based on the review of literature on the theme. While going through and analyzing the reviews and while making interpretation of the reviews, the researcher made a special focus on the relationship between town planning and socio-

economic development of India, and the possibility of socio-economic development in the country as a result of re-structured town planning.

Data Collection

For the purpose both the primary data and the secondary data were used. The observation of the architectural planning of the towns and the architectural buildings in them provided the hidden primary data to the researcher, while the various research journals, studies, books etc. provided sufficiently the secondary data which helped the researcher concentrate and study the problem.

Data Analysis

All the steps of scientific method prescribed and suggested by the various eminent social scientists were strictly observed. The researcher made a special focus on the analysis of the secondary data collected through the various sources.

Implications

1. The nature of research scientific and hence, all the steps of research suggested by the scientists must be observed
2. Objectivity is the soul of research, hence, the researcher must be careful and absolutely objective while collecting the data
3. Scientific analysis of the data imparts validity to research
4. In order to save time and make the work presentable tables must be used
5. Generalization must be made on the basis of the cause and effect relationship of the problem.

Socio-Economic Analysis and Interpretation

Town-planning reflects the civilizational status of a city. It needs to be structured in a way that it can be helpful in public health, economic prosperity and economic development. The India cities and towns are designed on the old patterns developed long ago. It cannot be denied that the town planning in India is so conspicuous. The architectural designs of the Indian cities, towns and buildings still draw magnetically thousands of people from the four corners of the world towards them. The prevailing town planning in India has long since been contributing to the enhancement of tourism in the country. The Taj in Agra, the Red Fort in Agra and Delhi, the Qutab Minar in Delhi, the Ajanta and Allora Caves in Maharashtra, the Bibi ka Maqbara, the fort of Gwalior, the Hawa Mahal and several other buildings in Rajasthan etc. are very popular, and invite the tourists from around the world to have a look at them and to enjoy their architectural beauty.

Social Transformation through Town-Planning

India with rurality at its roots, is now ready to transform itself for the sake of joining the process of globalization. Things keep changing as change is inevitable. The modern india which is fast on the way of transformation, reveals an entirely changed picture of the villages and cities in particular. Day-by-day the density of population is increasing in the towns and cities for the sake of individuality, modernity, education, employment etc. The true social transformation is possible only through town planning. Obviously, it will not be an exaggeration to state that re-structure of town planning in India is the utmost

need of times. In fact, a systematic town planning can solve several problems together. It can accommodate more and more people in less geographical area; it can safeguard public health; it can check the various forms of environmental pollution; it can promote economic prosperity in the country, and it can promote economic development by creating space for the various industries. Indeed, town planning can make the survival of the people better and more comfortable, contribute to the national income of the country, facilitate the working of the people by promoting better conditions of work, and enable the people to make an all round development of personality.

Conclusion

Town planning is helpful in several ways, but especially in the economic prosperity of the people and in the economic development of the nation. The restructured town planning in India can lead the country to join successfully the process of globalization. It can spare space for the business and industrial sector. The process of industrial in India can be successful only through proper and restructured town planning. The various problems being faced by the people, such as, poverty, penury, drudgery, housing, population density, slums, child labour, unemployment, environmental pollution etc. can be rooted out only through town planning. No doubt, in this field several town planners are contributing a lot, still it requires better and more skilled town planners to restructure the towns and cities keeping in view the changed needs and requirements. Economy is the bone of a nation. Hence, the town planning in India should be made in a way that the economy of the nation may be sound enough to facilitate the life of the people and to create more and more job opportunities in the business and industrial sector. In a nutshell, town planning can change the destiny. It can make India free from the blur of being a developing nation, and can win it the identity of being a developed nation.

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