

Planning Times

Issue 07 • October 2023



PEOPLE, PLACES AND POLICIES

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Planning Times

PEOPLE, PLACES AND POLICIES







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From the Editor

Urban Safety and Peace-Building

In an increasingly urbanized world, issues related to urban safety and peace building have become of paramount importance. Cities are not only hubs of economic activity and cultural exchange but also focal points of social and political tension. This compels us to explore the complexities and challenges of maintaining safety and fostering peace in urban environments.

Urban safety encompasses a wide range of concerns, including crime prevention, disaster preparedness, and public health, among others. It requires a multi-dimensional approach that involves not only law enforcement but also community engagement, infrastructure development, and effective governance.

Peace building, on the other hand, is a process that extends beyond the absence of violence. It is about creating environments where conflicts are resolved through dialogue and cooperation rather than confrontation.

As we delve into the intricate relationship between urban safety and peace building, we hope to highlight the importance of local engagement, data-driven decision-making, and sustainable urban planning. Furthermore, we seek to underscore the need for a holistic approach that acknowledges the interconnections between safety, peace, and overall urban development.

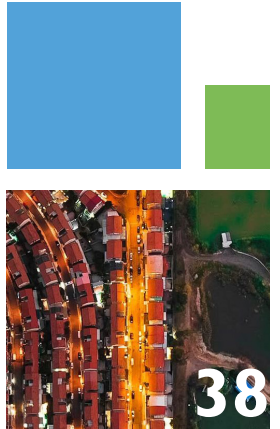
Join our writers as they discuss urban safety and peace-building measures in cities through climate safety and resilience, road safety, gender-based policies, and safety for the marginalized. We hope that the knowledge and experiences shared within these pages will inspire cities to embark on their own journeys toward safer, more peaceful urban environments.



Here's to the creativity you'll craft from our magazine!

Karthik Girish
Chief Editor
(editor@planningtimes.com)

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CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate Regulation as a Service

Understanding climate regulation as an ecosystem service

BY NANCY GROVER

ECOSYSTEM SERVICES and climate regulation are inseparable concepts that emphasize nature's vital role in both upholding a balanced climate and delivering indispensable advantages to humanity. Ecosystem services, encompassing everything from clean air and water to fertile soil, are the cornerstones of our well-being. Meanwhile, climate regulation underscores how these ecosystems absorb carbon dioxide, moderate temperature fluctuations, and bolster resistance to environmental disruptions. This synergy between nature's offerings and climate equilibrium is pivotal for safeguarding our planet's stability and securing the prosperity of all who call it home.

Ecosystem services are the essential benefits that natural systems provide to support human wellbeing and the environment. This concept recognizes the numerous ways in which ecosystems contribute to our daily lives and the economy. Understanding and valuing ecosystem services is crucial for sustainable development and conservation efforts. By recognizing and conserving the wide range of benefits provided by natural systems, we can ensure their continued support for human wellbeing and the environment in the face of current and future challenges such as climate change.

Provisioning services and climatic change

Provisioning services, which refer to the goods and resources that ecosystems provide, are greatly impacted by climatic changes. Climate change can have significant effects on food production, water availability, and the availability of other resources essential for human well-being.

Changes in temperature and precipitation patterns can affect crop yields, leading to reduced food production and increased food insecurity. Extreme weather events such as droughts, floods, and storms can damage or destroy agricultural lands and infrastructure, further impacting food production.

Similarly, climate change can affect water availability, with altered rainfall patterns and increased evaporation leading to water scarcity in some regions. This can have cascading effects on other provisioning services such as energy production, as many power plants rely on water for cooling.

The impacts of climate change on provisioning services have significant implications for sustaining life on the planet. Access to food, water, and other resources is crucial for basic human survival and well-being. Disruptions in provisioning services can lead to increased poverty, inequality, and vulnerability, particularly in developing countries where communities rely heavily on natural resources for their livelihoods.

Supporting services and climatic change

Supporting services play a crucial role in mitigating the impacts of climatic changes and indirectly contribute to sustaining life on the planet. These services include

processes such as photosynthesis (primary production), soil formation, nutrient cycling, oxygen production, and water cycling.

Photosynthesis, carried out by plants, algae, and some bacteria, is a vital supporting service as it produces oxygen and captures carbon dioxide, helping to regulate the Earth's climate. Through photosynthesis, plants also convert solar energy into chemical energy, providing the foundation for the food chain and supporting the growth of all other organisms.

Soil formation is another essential supporting service. Soils act as a reservoir for nutrients, water, and carbon, contributing to the fertility and stability of terrestrial ecosystems. They provide habitats for a wide range of organisms and play a significant role in regulating water cycles and mitigating floods and droughts.

Nutrient cycling involves the cycling of essential elements such as nitrogen, phosphorus, and carbon through the ecosystem. This process ensures the availability of nutrients for plant growth and helps maintain the balance of ecosystems. It also contributes to climate regulation by influencing the levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Water cycling, or the continuous movement of water through various stages, is essential for maintaining the water cycle and regulating climatic patterns. Supporting services such as evaporation, transpiration, and condensation are fundamental to this process, ensuring the availability of freshwater and influencing regional climates.

Tropical and subtropical forests, due to their high biodiversity and dense vegetation, play a critical

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The impacts of climate change on provisioning services have significant implications for sustaining life on the planet. Access to food, water, and other resources is crucial for basic human survival.

role in providing these supporting services. These forests are major contributors to photosynthesis, soil formation, nutrient cycling, oxygen production, and water cycling. Their extensive root systems prevent soil erosion and improve soil fertility, while their dense canopies regulate temperature, humidity, and rainfall patterns.

Regulating services and climate change

Regulating services are a key component of ecosystem services and play a crucial role in addressing climate change impacts. These services are obtained from natural systems and help regulate various environmental processes that are vital for the provision of other ecosystem services. Climate change refers to long-term shifts in weather patterns, including increased temperatures, changes in precipitation patterns, and more frequent and intense extreme weather events. Regulating services contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts

by helping to regulate and stabilize these changing environmental conditions.

One example of a regulating service is carbon sequestration, which refers to the removal and storage of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Forests and other vegetation act as carbon sinks, absorbing carbon dioxide through photosynthesis and storing it in their biomass and soil. By sequestering carbon, these ecosystems help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which is crucial for mitigating climate change.

Water purification is another vital regulating service. Wetlands and forests act as natural filters, trapping and removing pollutants from water bodies.

Through physical, chemical, and biological processes, these ecosystems improve water quality, ensuring the availability of clean water for human consumption and supporting aquatic life.

Erosion control is an essential regulating service that helps prevent soil erosion and land degradation. Vegetation, particularly grasslands and forests, contribute to soil stability by reducing the impact of wind and water erosion. This protection helps maintain fertile soils for agriculture, reduces sedimentation in water bodies, and safeguards biodiversity.

Regulating services also include flood protection and natural disaster regulation. Wetlands, floodplains, and coastal ecosystems act as natural buffers against floods and storm surges, absorbing excess water and reducing the risk of damage to communities and infrastructure. Similarly, coastal, and marine ecosystems such as mangroves and coral reefs help mitigate the impacts of natural disasters like hurricanes



and tsunamis, protecting coastlines and communities.

Cultural services and climatic change

Cultural services are an important aspect of ecosystem services that encompass the non-material benefits that people obtain from ecosystems. However, the impact of climatic changes on these cultural services cannot be overlooked.

One area that is particularly affected is the mental and physical health benefits derived from forest ecosystems. Rising temperatures and increased frequency and intensity of climatic disasters such as wildfires and hurricanes pose a threat to the well-being of individuals who rely on forests for recreation and relaxation.

These events not only lead to the loss of forest areas but also contribute to degraded air quality, which can have adverse effects on respiratory health.

Furthermore, the economic growth and job opportunities associated with ecotourism and

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One area that is particularly affected is the mental and physical health benefits derived from forest ecosystems.

recreation are also at risk. As climatic extremes become more common, natural areas, including forests, may suffer from degradation, reducing their scenic beauty and attractiveness to visitors. This, in turn, could lead to a decline in ecotourism activities and the loss of job opportunities in rural communities that heavily rely on these cultural services for their livelihood.

Climate Regulation as an Ecosystem Service

Climate regulation is one of the crucial ecosystem services provided by natural systems. It refers to the processes through which ecosystems regulate atmospheric composition, the greenhouse effect, precipitation patterns, air quality, and temperature moderation, all of which play significant roles in maintaining stable climate conditions.

At a global scale, forests, oceans, and other natural systems contribute to climate regulation by storing carbon dioxide, a major greenhouse gas, through photosynthesis. This carbon storage helps mitigate the greenhouse effect by reducing the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, thus curbing global warming. Additionally, forests and vegetation facilitate heat and moisture transfer, creating a cooling effect and influencing precipitation patterns.

Ecosystems also regulate climate processes at the local scale. For instance, forests act as micro-climate regulators, providing shade, reducing wind speeds, and moderating temperature extremes. Wetlands and coastal ecosystems play a vital role in regulating air quality by filtering pollutants and reducing the impacts of air pollution on human health.

The regulation of climate processes by ecosystems is closely linked to soil quality regulation. Healthy soils store carbon, enhance



water retention, and support nutrient cycling, all of which contribute to climate regulation. By maintaining healthy soils, ecosystems play a critical role in sustaining climate stability and resilience.

In conclusion, climate regulation is a vital ecosystem service provided by natural systems. Ecosystems contribute to regulating atmospheric composition, the greenhouse effect, precipitation patterns, air quality, and temperature moderation at both global and local scales. Factors like carbon storage, heat and moisture transfer, micro-climate regulation, and soil quality regulation all play crucial roles in this process.

Challenges to Implementing Ecosystem Services for Climate Regulation

Implementing ecosystem services for climate regulation faces several challenges. One major obstacle is the difficulty in quantifying and measuring the value of ecosystem services. Climate regulation involves a wide range of interconnected processes in natural systems, such as carbon sequestration, water cycle regulation, and temperature regulation. These services are

often undervalued or overlooked in economic decision-making, leading to their neglect in policy development and resource management. Additionally, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding of the spatial distribution and future scenarios of climate change effects on ecosystems, making it challenging to develop effective strategies for climate regulation.

Fragmentation and loss of habitat have significant impacts on ecosystem services and climate regulation. When habitats become fragmented, the interconnectedness of ecosystems is disrupted, leading to a reduction in the delivery of ecosystem services. This fragmentation can disrupt the provision of essential services such as water purification, soil formation, and waste treatment.

Furthermore, habitat fragmentation can contribute to climate change effects. Natural systems play a vital role in regulating the climate by absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen through the process of photosynthesis. However, when habitats are fragmented or lost,

the capacity of these ecosystems to sequester carbon dioxide diminishes, leading to increased greenhouse gas emissions and further exacerbating climate change.

The negative consequences of habitat loss on the provision of ecosystem services are numerous. Loss of habitat can result in a decline in biodiversity, thereby reducing the availability of genetic resources and impacting the ability of ecosystems to adapt to changing conditions. Additionally, the loss of coastal ecosystems like mangroves and coral reefs can increase vulnerability to storm surges and coastal erosion, jeopardizing the important regulatory service of coastal protection.

In conclusion, fragmentation and loss of habitat have detrimental effects on the delivery of ecosystem services and the ability of natural systems to regulate climate. Understanding and mitigating these disruptions are crucial for the preservation of ecosystem functions and the sustainable management of our natural resources.

Unsustainable land use practices have significant implications for both ecosystem services and climate regulation. These practices, such as deforestation, overgrazing, and mono-culture farming, have negative impacts on the environment and contribute to climate change.

Deforestation greatly reduces the capacity of forests to regulate the climate by absorbing carbon dioxide through photosynthesis. As a consequence, large amounts of this greenhouse gas are released into the atmosphere, contributing to global warming.

Overgrazing damages the structure and composition of grasslands, leading to soil erosion and reduced capacity to store carbon.

Without adequate vegetation cover, there is also a decrease in biodiversity and the loss of important ecosystem functions like water retention and nutrient cycling.

Mono-culture farming practice depletes the soil of essential nutrients and organic matter, leading to decreased soil fertility. It also increases the vulnerability of the land to erosion and reduces the ability of ecosystems to regulate water flow and purification.

The consequences of these unsustainable land use practices are far-reaching. They not only degrade natural landscapes, but also contribute to climate change through the release of greenhouse gases and loss of carbon storage capacity. Furthermore, the loss of ecosystem services provided by forests, grasslands, and fertile soils can have detrimental effects on food production, water quality, and overall biodiversity.

The intricate interplay between ecosystem services and climate regulation underscores the vital connection between nature's functioning and the stability of both our environment and societies. Ecosystem services, encompassing the essentials of clean air, fertile soil, and more, form the bedrock of human well-being. Meanwhile, climate regulation highlights nature's capacity to absorb carbon, modulate temperatures, and counteract environmental disruptions. This synergy between nature's provisions and climate harmony is imperative in safeguarding the equilibrium of our planet and securing the prosperity of all its inhabitants. As we navigate the challenges of a changing climate, embracing and nurturing this inseparable relationship offers a promising path towards resilience and sustainability.

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The intricate interplay between ecosystem services and climate regulation underscores the vital connection between nature's functioning and the stability of both our environment and societies.



ClimateSmart Cities Assessment Framework

Source: NIUA

Caring for Climate

Navigating the urban challenge of climate safety and disaster resilience

BY DEBRAJ DEKA

THE INEVITABLE trend towards urbanization continues to shape our world, with an ever-expanding proportion of the global population now calling cities their home. Cities account for about 60% of total global ‘domestic material consumption’ (DMC) of raw materials which includes sand, gravel, iron ore, coal and wood (UNEP, 2018). Moreover, urban areas constitute a significant portion of the world’s economy, and their role as hubs for trade, economy and commerce continues to grow in importance. This duality wherein cities, while serving as centers of progress and prosperity, also emerge as significant contributors to environmental challenges. Urban vulnerability against disasters requires meticulous scrutiny, encompassing not only susceptibility to hazards but also resilience measures in the face of disasters.

Various studies indicate that poor

planning and urban management are expected to cost Indian cities somewhere between \$2.6 and \$13 billion annually (Mani, M. et al., 2018.)

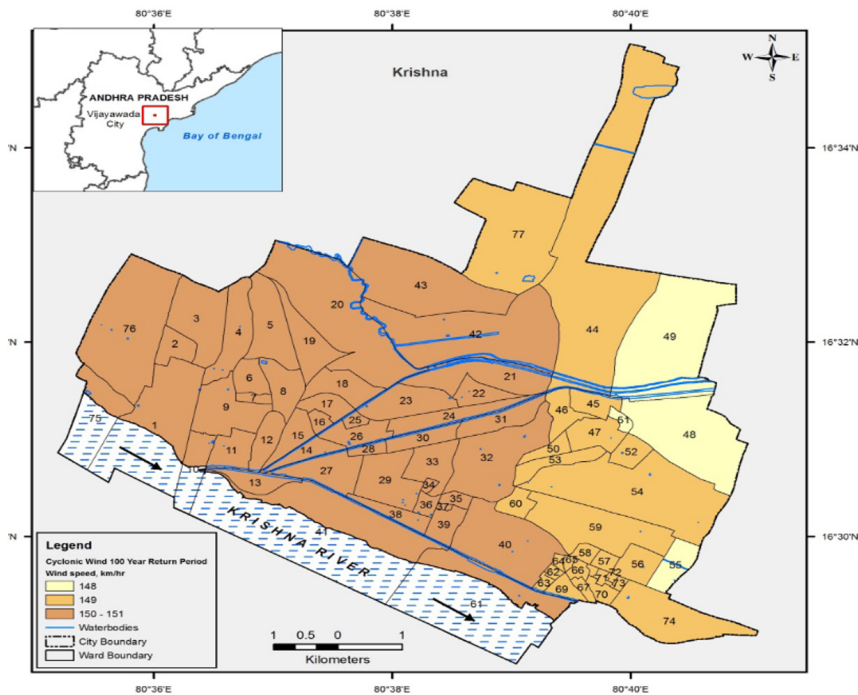
FURTHERMORE, by the year 2050, the global urban population vulnerable to cyclones is projected to rise significantly, from 310 million to 680 million, and exposure to major earthquakes is expected to increase from 370 million to 870 million (UNDRR, 2019).

According to EM-DAT, CRED, the total number of affected individuals in India due to varied disasters including floods, earthquakes, landslides etc. from 1900 to 2020 accounts for about 8,559,474 which accounts for about 8% of the total people affected worldwide.

THIS DUALITY, though long-standing, has gained significance in light of increasing vulnerabilities over time. Increased urbanization

attracts the masses, all seeking various opportunities and enhanced quality of life. However, within this urban landscape, low-income families often find themselves constrained to residing in vulnerable areas with deficient or even absent infrastructure, and inadequate social support systems. This contrast between aspirations and the reality of living conditions brings up the complex challenges posed by rapid urbanization. Up to 90% of people in urban areas in low-income countries live in unsafe, exposed housing. (UNDRR, 2015).

This could be further illustrated through households in regularly flooded areas of Mumbai who reported that they are aware of the flood risks but accept them because of the opportunities offered by the area such as access to jobs, schools, healthcare facilities, and social networks (Patankar 2015)



◀ Cyclonic Wind Hazard Map of 100 year return period

Source: Vijayawada CDMP

But, most of such built-forms lacks basic infrastructure and services, exacerbating the challenges faced by lower strata communities. This socio-economic disparity needs to be critically analyzed in the urban areas which ultimately increases the vulnerability of the entire settlement. These circumstances further accentuate the need to address the multifaceted issues associated with increasing urbanization and its resilience.

VARIOUS REGIONS in the world have explored the measures of resilience through various policies, guidelines, acts and frameworks. At the National Level, India introduced the Disaster Management Act, of 2005 with the introduction of the National Disaster Management Plan, with a major focus on understanding risk, fostering inter-agency coordination, making investments in DRR through both structural and non-structural measures, and prioritizing capacity development. At the District level too, the District Disaster Management Plan is being introduced for decentralization of efforts for resilience. Along with this, the Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework (CSCAF) was launched in 2019 by MoHUA to make the urban areas more climate-responsive and improve their resilient measures.



◀ Composite Vulnerability Map Source: Visakhapatnam CDMP

The assessment includes 8 progressive indicators across 5 thematic areas help cities to benchmark their development, understand the gaps and further prioritize climate-relevant development (CFCAF Manual)

A comprehensive approach that needs to be incorporated is integrating disaster resilience into the very structure of master plans. The infrastructures of critical importance for sustaining life, which include water, drainage, electricity and roads, if not made resilient enough, could lead to severe disruptions and challenges during disaster events especially the lower income communities materialized by higher density, lower safety standards maintained and limited access to resources.

WHILE NOT directly through master plans, this leads us to two cities of Andhra Pradesh that exemplify the effectiveness of a resilience strategy highlighted by NIUA. The first is Vijayawada, where the City Disaster Management Plan was implemented in 2015. The plan incorporates several key elements, including profiling, capability analysis (evaluating municipal infrastructure, resources, and manpower), hazard assessment, risk analysis, and vulnerability assessment for a range of hazards such as floods, landslides, earthquakes, cyclones, and tsunamis. Additionally, it encompasses contingency planning to address various potential hazards effectively. Similarly, Visakhapatnam has prepared a City Disaster Management Plan in 2014 to provide resilience in the face of disasters.

However, greater importance to the integration of resilience in master plans needs to be given to increase preparedness as resilience doesn't end with devising strategies

for disaster response but also embedding resilience and risk reduction into the very fabric of urban areas. This integration could be seen through the Tamil Nadu Regional and Urban Planning and Development Act, of 2023 which is being prepared taking into factors of climate risk and disaster resilience. It emphasizes the need for urban areas, not merely to react to disasters but proactively build resilience into its very foundations.

ALONG WITH IT, it must also be emphasized that though robust infrastructure and disaster preparedness are vital components, addressing the root causes of vulnerability in urban areas is equally crucial. In essence, resilient urban planning is not only about fortifying physical infrastructure but also about fortifying cities' social and economic fabric, ensuring that all residents, regardless of their socio-economic status, have a fair chance at weathering the storm. Furthermore, the increased importance of safeguarding the natural environment also remains fundamental to the long-term health and viability of urban areas. Green and blue spaces remain vital to the ecological balance from facilitating percolation for groundwater recharge, improving air quality to mitigating heat. Along with it, these spaces have a positive impact on mental and physical health, promoting well-being and reducing stress. They foster a sense of community belonging and connection to nature, making urban environments more livable. All these components need to be critically analyzed and incorporated into master plans to create settlements that are not only physically resilient but also socially, economically, and environmentally resilient.

INCLUSIVE urban planning is not only about safeguarding against

The increased importance of safeguarding the natural environment also remains fundamental to the long-term health and viability of urban areas.

disasters but also about ensuring that vulnerable populations are not left behind. This makes urban planning crucial for making cities more ecologically sustainable. This not only enhances resilience but also reduces the catalysts that increase the chances of disasters occurring and their subsequent impact. This further reduces individual carbon footprints and contributes to overall ecological sustainability. Additionally, the incorporation of indigenous techniques and traditional knowledge can yield better results in disaster risk reduction and sustainable urban development. These time-tested practices, deeply rooted in local cultures and environments, can offer valuable insights and solutions that harmonize with the specific needs and dynamics of urban communities (UNDRR, 2008).

IN A WORLD increasingly defined by urbanization, resilience is not merely a word; it is a necessity. The resilience of urban areas lies not only in their infrastructures but also in their capacity to safeguard the well-being and opportunities of every urban dweller from the lower to upper strata of society. Only through holistic and inclusive urban planning can we hope to build a future where cities thrive in the face of adversity and offer prosperity to all.

What is Urban Vitality?

BY SIDDHARTH AMULOJU

Understanding the impact of urban spaces and built environment on urban vitality.

THE STATE of being strong, active, and energetic defines the term Vitality. The quality of urban aspects/ elements like building blocks, urban squares, parks, play areas, pedestrian areas, open spaces that contribute to the public in cities is called as Urban Vitality. These elements can attract people for various activities throughout varied time schedules. The strength of public spaces directly effects the quality of life of residents. Many cities or small towns have less than required number of public spaces or parks which lead to over dependency and overcrowded.

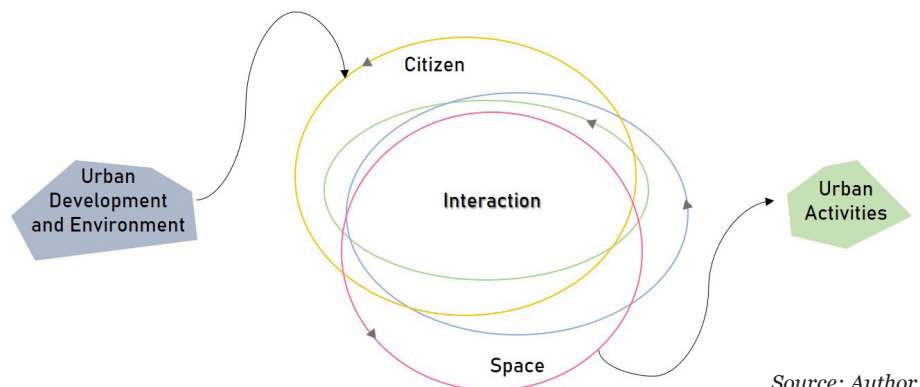
Children, adults, and elderly people need open spaces to spend some quality time that used to be in good old days where we get to see kids playing, people gathering at a place under a huge tree discussing on the local issues, social problems, chit-chat etc. which is a healthy practice and eye feast that enhances the well-being of any community. In terms of planning, that is what an

urban environment is and with such spaces where interaction takes place is the social development more than urban development.

Children, no doubt need parks and play arenas where they can play and interact with other children which is hard to see these days in our cities. The areas of the city with high vitality are perceived as alive, lively, or vibrant and they tend to attract people to carry out their activities, stroll or stay. However, the areas of low vitality repel people and can be perceived as unsafe.

THE CONCEPT of urban vitality is based on the contributions of Jane Jacobs, especially those of her most influential work, *The Death, and Life of Great American Cities*. Jacobs criticized in the 1960s the modern and rationalist architecture defended by Robert Moses or Le Corbusier whose protagonist was the private car.

Currently, the concept of urban vitality is revaluing Mediterranean urbanism and its history, in which public space, pedestrianism and squares are of great importance as



Source: Author

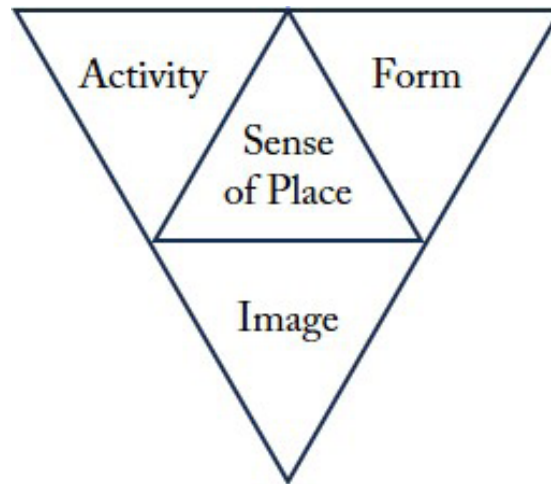
centers of interaction and social cohesion, in opposition to the Anglo-Saxon urbanism of large urban infrastructures, long distances and car-centric. Majority share of the road is being occupied by motorized vehicles and most of them are cars. No sufficient space for pedestrians can be seen neither the comfort to cross the road. There are not enough spaces to peacefully interact and have a quality time together neither space allocated to move around the streets. This is not urban development but an exact failure of planning and regulation. There must be a perfect balance between the places, activities, physical attributes, and conceptions to have a happy neighborhood or a city that makes a positive impact on the sense of place by giving itself a meaning.

ACTIVITIES include different type of land uses, pedestrian and traffic flow, behavior patterns with diversity and vitality. People with different backgrounds, traditions and culture having street life, events taking place showing their sense of belongingness, supporting attraction points and healthy growth of local economy.

Physical setting is the townscape, built form/ built environment, building ratios, block sizes, street scape and landscape that should be in scale and intensity with permeability and adaptability with the presence of landmarks and public realm (space systems).

Image is nothing but cognition, perception and information that shows the symbolism, imageability and legibility and cosmopolitan character with psychological access. This gives meaning to the community/ neighborhood/ city with cultural associations, perceived functions and attractions which lets for a qualitative assessment. All

Source: Author



three together bring a sense of place for living.

Jacobs (1961) proposed that mixed land uses, small blocks, diverse architecture, and urban density were essential conditions for urban vitality. Lynch (1984) defined urban vitality as an urban system's ability to maintain its internal survival, growth, and development, which developed from a fine urban form. He put forward four basic characteristics of urban vitality: sustenance, safety, consonance, and ecosystem diversity and stability.

URBAN VITALITY is a driving force of urban sustainable development and influences the well-being of its residents from the perspective of the urban organism linked to the three aspects of growth, diversity, and mobility.

It can be quantified with the elements that determine it as stated below.

- Diversity of uses of the space that can attract different types of people for diverse

“

There are not enough spaces to peacefully interact and have a quality time together neither space allocated to move around the streets.

activities and at various times, making the space constantly occupied and improving its security.

- Opportunities for personal contact and communication with building blocks and open spaces that are in adequate size since they can reduce the number of possible intersections and social interactions.
- Diversity of buildings with varied characteristics and ages, allowing people with different socio-economic profiles to live in all areas of the city.
- High population density and presence of residential areas are essential to attract other types of activity.
- Accessibility for all people without depending on private transport, with pedestrian access being the most important, as it is the most democratic, sustainable, and cheap, followed by access by public transport and provision of cycling facilities.

THE CITY is the most critical production and living space for human beings, and our world is experiencing extensive and rapid urbanization. In 2021, the global

urban population reached 4.35 billion, accounting for 56% of the global population. By 2050, two-thirds of the planet's projected population of nearly 7 billion is expected to inhabit urban areas. The New Urban Agenda and the 11th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 11) proposed by the United Nations both emphasize that a sustainable city needs to embrace resilience, security, vitality, and inclusion. Urban vitality can attract capital and talent, enhance competitiveness and creativity, and maintain resilience and is regarded as the raw power and energy within a city. A city's vitality largely influences its future development potential and the well-being of its residents. More population is directly proportional to the larger needs and innovation. Growing population always craves for new facilities and upgraded utilities for sustainable living.

TAKING ELURU CITY in the state of Andhra Pradesh as a best example to illustrate how the smaller number of parks can have an impact on the city's well-being as illustrated below.

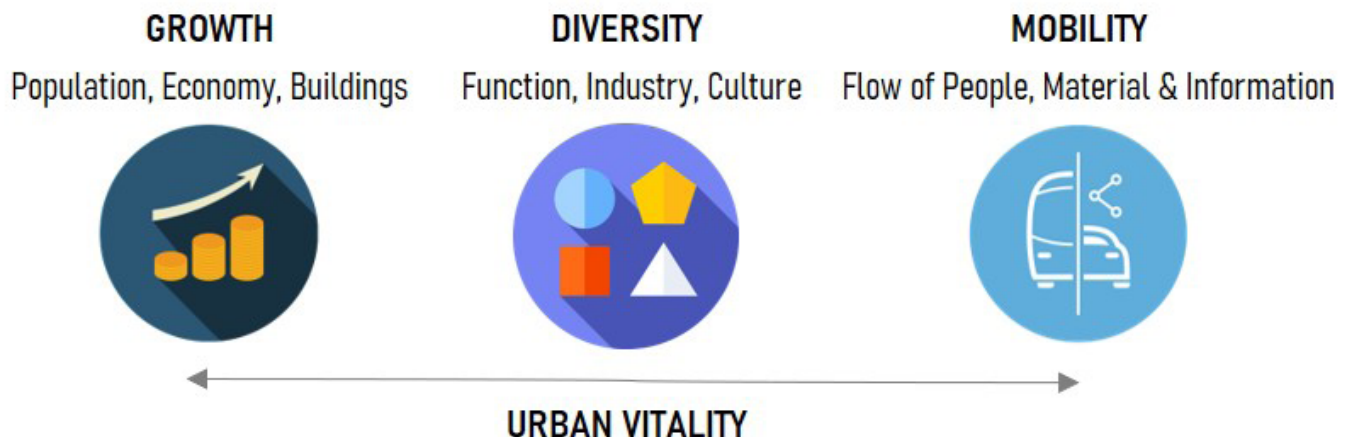
Jacobs (1961) proposed the concept of urban vitality try to answer the question. She believed that planning for vitality must stimulate and catalyze the greatest possible range and quantity of

diversity among uses and people throughout each district and promote continuous networks of local street neighborhoods. The street network planning, building design and placement of public spaces need to in a way planned to attract citizens to spend more time with each other irrespective of the diversity in culture and socio-economic profile which will eventually improves the urban vitality.

In recent years, urban vitality has become a research hotspot in urban planning and design, urban geography, urban economics, urban sociology, and other disciplines and has been incorporated into the local planning strategies of many city planners.

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The city is the most critical production and living space for human beings, and our world is experiencing extensive and rapid urbanization.



Source: Author



Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao Park with an area of 1.25 Acres is in the city main market accommodates more than 500 children at a time especially during the weekends.

Source: Author

The footfall is so high that casual movement is almost impossible. Can you believe there is only one park active for a population of nearly 4 lakhs?

Source: Author

THESE DAYS, we get to see towns and cities where there is a shortage of public spaces and suffering of citizens is seen through it. City planners need to focus on the old areas of the cities to redesign in a way it integrates the needs of all ages of the population for a healthy living. Provision of infrastructure won't just do it all alone but only by considering and combining all the urban factors like presence of diversified economy, population, collection of various facilities and infrastructure which includes public spaces, parks and play grounds to children, accessibility and connection to those spaces to the residential areas with a sustainable public transportation options that must sincerely involve the walking and cycling provisions, all into one page to bring an actual societal change and improvement.



OPINION

GENDER POLICIES FOR GENDER SAFETY

BY SIDDHESH R. KUDALE
Queer Author



WHEN ANYONE speaks about gender-based policies, it is important to question whether we only see the gender binary. In light of the recent women's reservation bill as well as the LGBT marriage petitions despite decades of public opposition and political red tape, it would be pompous to say urban planners have done significant or impactful changes for inclusivity and safety within urban spaces globally. There are undoubtedly some management measures like free public transportation, adding police constables on-board buses, adding extra coaches and reserved seats for women, and so on and so forth. However, is that enough? Is that the only way gender based policymaking works?

Getting any large-scale changes in a society is tough. The change must come from the grassroots as is indicated by many scholars in queer and feminist studies till date. And why so, one must ask and clarify – policies are meant to be equitable in principle, but who or what are most of the policies benefiting? It would be essential to look at various scales of policymaking with different approaches. The issues faced by slum-dwelling women are polarly different from those faced by transgender congregations, as opposed to those of middle-class housewives and rural women, and to each, a different priority.

ONE PLACE where Indian planning has so far been somewhat successful, even with respect to some western nations, is building enough public (sulabh) toilets to restrain people from urinating/defecating in public spaces – however, that has been more from the perspective of infrastructure provision and in terms of urban sanitation as a collective goal, and not from a service provision stand-point. That statement now begs the question of how does this relate with gender

safety? The relation to gender safety is the regular and widely accepted misuse of public toilets: something that is as basic, cannot be (has not been) regulated in the Indian context. The dilapidated nature of restrooms, the shady or dim-lit locations, the lack of sanitation, are some reasons that push many women and transgender persons, and at times even men to practically hunt for decent public restrooms, the standard locations for which are metro-station restrooms, chain stores and malls, but to each their own is how it mostly goes. Furthermore, most restrooms could/should, from a safety or service provision perspective, have access to menstrual hygiene items. And this is just the basic idea of where policymaking for gender safety should start.

IT IS NOT only here that it starts, however. Societal understandings of issues tend to direct urban development, or rather urban management. And where do these societal understandings start/come from? Societal conditioning starts at home and at school. Both these places do tend to hide and/or shame gender/sexuality specific issues and also tend to emerge in a patriarchal setting, which could be the result of a colonial residue of the idea of shame, but that is a topic of discussion for another day. Why understanding this is important, is that there are limited powers that a planner has to work with – the planner cannot, in a practical setting, change social or societal morality or education, nor direct, guide, or structure emotional development of a society, leading to a large-scale repression of policy changes by the society itself in many cases.

And in that context, it must be noted that Indian planning does have some solutions that could be learned from. India does have an extensive network of non-

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Societal understandings of issues tend to direct urban development, or rather urban management.

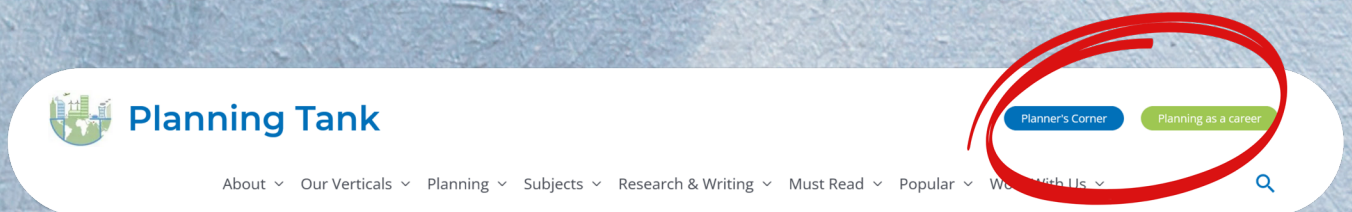
governmental organizations that work with social issues, and hold the capability to make on-ground changes. The different stories of the different focus groups can be adequately characterized and told only by someone who works at those grassroots, and these stories could – with an obvious support from statistical evidence – guide policy formulation well. Presently, NGOs tend to directly work with ministries and think-tanks (from the Delhi perspective) considering these are both places where planners and sociologists are employed in significant numbers. However, it would be essential to have government entities like the Development Authorities of various cities pair up with NGOs and private partners to better initiate, understand, comprehend, design and implement basic and better managed gender policies with respect to their immediate context, need and expressed priority.

LASTLY, it would also be essential to end discrimination to its core root to be able to better understand and establish policies that are cognizant of gender safety concerns – just making everything pink on women's day or rainbowing in June, does not support actual issues/causes enough to make lasting social or political changes. As planners, the one duty that we must take care of is that diversity and inclusion should not just be out of the perspective of timid acceptance or for show off – the point of participation is for it to be from the earnest heart and to really service those that are affected, to the best of your ability. As long as we all get that, I believe we could be capable to make better gender sensitive policies!



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OPINION

Marginalizing the Marginalized

Housing for Women in Urban India

BY SHIREN PANDITA

“

More than 35% of the total urban population resides in informal housing with minimum or no access to basic amenities, insecure tenure and physical inadequacies.

GENDER EQUALITY and women empowerment are human rights that lie at the heart of development and the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Despite the Constitutional guarantees, women have been under-represented in the policy domain. In India, only 14.5% of the parliamentarians are women. It has led to paucity in policies pertaining to women centric issues, and it is particularly apparent in the housing sector as social, political and legal factors combine to create huge barrier in accessing the housing market for women. Additionally, more than 35% of the total urban population resides in informal housing with minimum or no access to basic amenities, insecure tenure and physical inadequacies. The situation exacerbates for women, and more so for single women due to financial struggles and the possibility of eviction. As the odds of accessing formal housing option becomes limited for women – due to the huge disparity in income, societal taboos, lack of women centric policies and shortage of affordable housing options – the already marginalized gender gets further marginalized.

The need to capture the housing market for women has previously been promoted with a myopic attitude. It is so, as inter alia policies and interventions have not been indicative of the gender struggles and in most cases lacked a holistic approach towards promoting gender specific and basic infrastructure laden housing market.

ACCORDING TO CENSUS 2011, there are 27 million women headed households, constituting about 11% of the total households in the country. From 2001 to 2011 there

has only been 0.5% increase in the overall ownership of women. It is necessary to reiterate, however, that the trend undermines the difference between ‘belongingness’ (unaccountable) and ‘ownership’ (legal). The prevalence of the notion of subservient Indian womanhood along with social stigmas and pressure creates an invisible but obvious gap between their ‘actual role’ as legal owners, entitled to take decisions, and the ‘expected role’ where the concept of entitlement gets blurry. Moreover, previous policies like the JNNURM and Rajiv Awas Yojana have been focusing on creating new houses for a married unit, with incentives ranging from tax rebates to lower interest rate on loans for women buyers while failing to capture the market particularly for single women. They also lacked in quality construction and trunk infrastructure which further exacerbated the policy insufficiencies in the housing market for gender specific issues.

In a thesis study conducted in Delhi NCR, by the School of Planning and Architecture, Delhi, almost 80% of the women respondent’s prioritized affordability, transport accessibility and proximity to work as major indicators that influence their decision while looking for accommodation. Moreover, women’s travel is characterized by trip chaining i.e., combining multiple destinations within one trip. This, coupled with the fact that women in the country earn 19% less than men, creates a juggernaut of additional financial problems for women when seeking the housing market.

In most urban areas, especially in the metros, the spectrum of



affordability in the housing market leaves one with limited choices. This has widened the gender disparity in availing market options. Currently, the Indian housing market provides three types of accommodation, namely: rentals, hostels and owned. With a meagre income, shuffling between jobs for better opportunities and lack of collateral to opt for loans, women tend to seek rentals and hostels over owning a house.

TO SHIFT the trend and promote higher ownership rates, the government came up with schemes like the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna-Urban. It was observed that to avail the subsidies under PMAY-U, such as the interest subsidy on home loan and direct subsidy on individual house construction, people required title deeds. This in most cases become a bottleneck for women consumers as patriarchal dominance in property rights leave no scope for women to access these incentives.

Moreover, the interest subsidies borrowed by women in the LIG or EWS category under the Credit

Linked Subsidy Scheme are mostly insufficient, especially for private housing in Tier- 1 cities due to enormous housing rates. Besides, there are about 11 million constructed houses in the country which are vacant according to the 2011 Census. The number is bound to increase, considering 23% of the houses under PMAY-U are also unoccupied. The government's initiative to address the issue through converting the vacant houses into Affordable Rental Housing Complexes has definitely been a pivotal step in housing market parity. However, it still does not resolve the issue.

LAND SCARCITY and land values have proven to be a major drawback in promoting this. The urban saturation and surging land values in the city center has led the government to build affordable houses in urban fringes, disregarding factors like proximity to workplace and accessibility to affordable transport options. So, if the vacant houses were to be converted to rental housing, the issue will still remain the same.

“
The interest subsidies borrowed by women in the LIG or EWS category under the Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme are mostly insufficient, especially for private housing in Tier- 1 cities due to enormous housing rates.



PRESENTLY, the housing sector for women is being driven by a speculative market which is an outcome of juggernauts of knee jerk policies. There is a need to leapfrog from a conjectured housing market to a need-based housing market, where gender and socio-economic aspects find parity. In this regard, exercises like ‘needs assessment’ and ‘design thinking’ become crucial, where a non-linear, iterative approach helps in understanding the users and their needs. Moreover, to restrict ‘feminisation of poverty in the housing market’ especially in this rapidly changing dynamics of gender-based housing, policy makers have to empathise, identify and ideate challenges and solutions for building better policies for the future.

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Earth Pro, Vector Data
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DAY 03

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Raster Data Download,
Basemap preparation,
Contour mapping and Legend
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DAY 04

09.11.23

Georeferencing. Digitisation
Land use Mapping, Attribute
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DAY 03

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Buffer Analysis, Hotspot
Analysis, Introduction to
Remote Sensing and Landsat
Bands.

DAY 04

16.11.23

Landuse Land Cover Mapping:
Supervised and Unsupervised
Classification techniques.
Open Data Sources.

DAY 05

17.11.23

Introduction to Indices and
Raster Calculator. Vegetation
– Builtup – Water Index
Mapping (NDVI, NDWI, NDBI).

DAY 06

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Introduction to Watershed
mapping, Draining and stream
order and Sub-watershed
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Concept of Land suitability,
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POST GRADUATE EDUCATION

PLANNING OVERSEAS

Your guide to Masters programmes outside India

BY GAIBUL SINGH BHULLAR

Planning Overseas is focused on generating awareness of Masters courses offered by countries outside India for urban planning and allied fields. The information that you see here has been collected from official university websites, and the calculations are based on approximations and rounding-off of values sourced from the respective college/university websites. We hope this brings clarity to your choice of opting for planning and allied courses outside India.



Politecnico di Milano

Location: Milan, Italy

Course: MSc in Urban Planning & Policy Design

Duration: 2 years

Total expense*: ₹ 15 lakhs

This MSc is a multidisciplinary program completely taught in English that connects urban planning and design, urban policies, urban studies and social sciences.

*Tuition and application fees + Average living expense + Average travel cost



10



University of Sydney

Location: Camperdown, Australia

Course: Master of Urban and Regional Planning

Duration: 18 months

Total expense*: ₹ 47 lakhs

This course focuses on developing an understanding of the ways that cities and sites are constructed: physically, socially and environmentally.



Ann Arbor - Taubman College University of Michigan

Location: Ann Arbor, Michigan

Course: Master of Urban Design (M.U.D.)

Duration: 2 years

Total expense*: ₹ 85 lakhs

The M.U.D. is a breeding ground for urban design experimentation, approaching urbanism through multiple scales of inquiry with studio projects prompting both analytical and speculative design.

KU Leuven

Location: Leuven, Belgium

Course: MSc in Urbanism, Landscape and Planning

Duration: 2 years

Total expense*: ₹ 23 lakhs

The course focuses on multifaceted and multi-scalar solutions to issues such as social exclusion, unequal distribution of resources and spatial contradictions.

**Tuition and application fees + Average living expense + Average travel cost*



PEACE IN CITIES

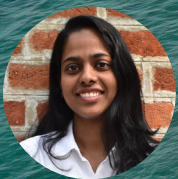
Thiruvananthapuram Peace Index 2023

Measuring peace in a complex
world for livable cities

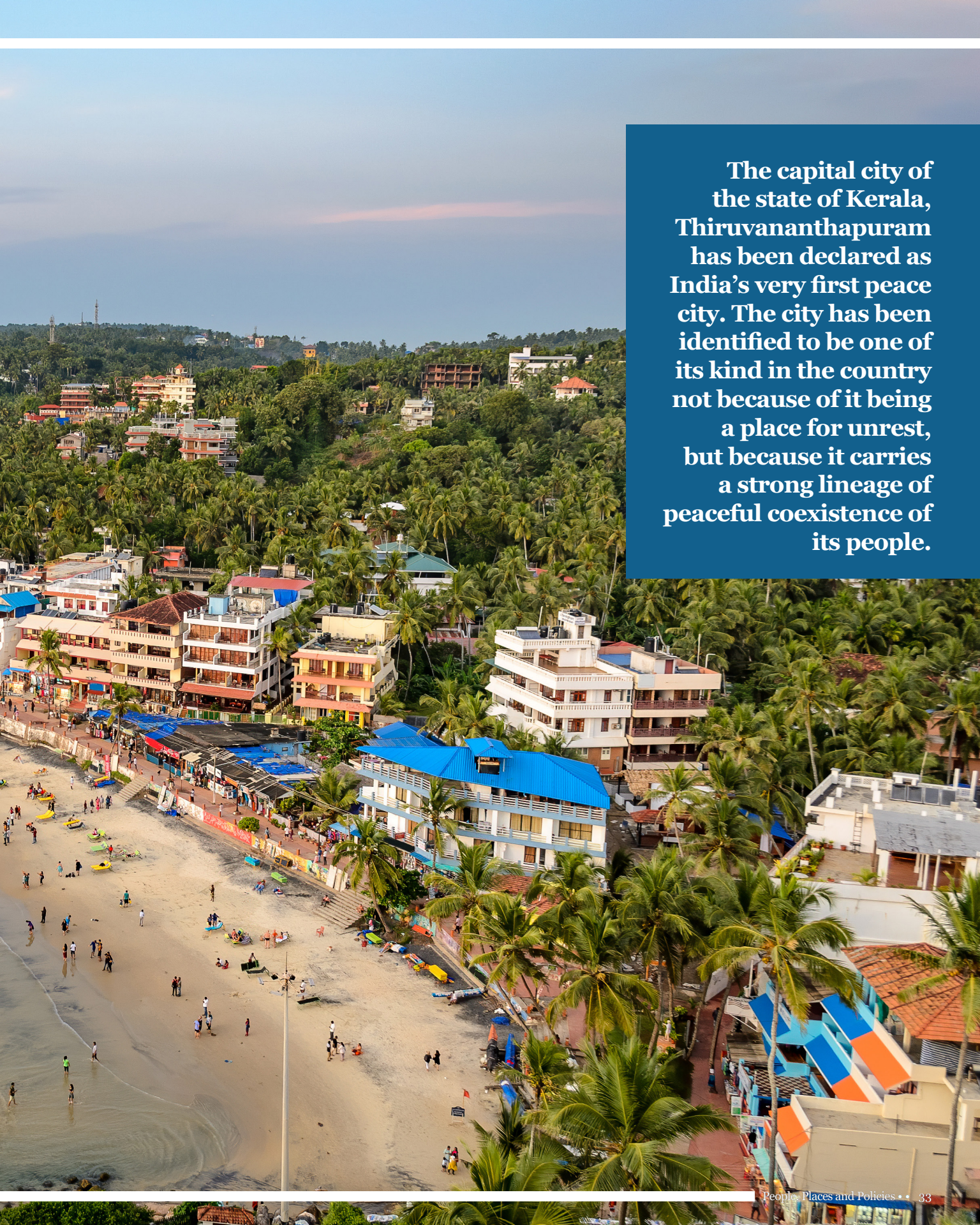
KILA Mayor's SDG Fellowship 2023
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Atharvi Netragaonkar
CEPT University, Ahmedabad



Vinila Vincent
CEPT University, Ahmedabad

An aerial photograph of Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India. The image shows a sandy beach in the foreground with many people walking and playing. To the right of the beach is a row of colorful buildings, including a prominent one with a bright blue roof. The background is filled with dense green palm trees and other vegetation, with some buildings visible on a hill in the distance. The sky is clear and blue.

The capital city of the state of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram has been declared as India's very first peace city. The city has been identified to be one of its kind in the country not because of it being a place for unrest, but because it carries a strong lineage of peaceful coexistence of its people.

PEACE has been the global agenda for nations to build better places of tomorrow, acknowledging the damage done in areas of unrest is far more than just physical damage. Peace is an overarching theme that underpins the common vision of a life of dignity and well-being for all. In the rapidly polarizing world post Covid-19, the rationale behind incorporating the agenda for peace building and equality in Thiruvananthapuram is to create a “Just” city. A just city is where the dignity and rights of the citizens are taken care of and an environment that is socially and economically just for all its citizen is offered.

PEACE MEANS DIGNITY, WELL-BEING FOR ALL, NOT JUST ABSENCE OF WAR

Historically, the region was amongst the first to enjoy peaceful relation with the East India company. Following which, there were many social infrastructural amenities built and social reforms that broke the caste system were taken place. Post-independence, the state’s socialist ideologies have increased the quality of life and continue to do so. The state was one of the first in the country to incorporate decentralized planning with divulged funds, functions, and functionaries to the local bodies both in rural and urban areas. Trivandrum being the capital, has been a stage for the democratic expression of public frustration against an unresponsive state or its institutions through marches, events, and strikes. A peaceful and just city can facilitate active participation that will be an impetus to the decentralized governance. This people’s planning process has been synonymous with political participation of the people in exercising their democratic rights like freedom of expression.



The city of Thiruvananthapuram, the administrative capital of Kerala is amongst the top 3 in the National SDG ranking.

DEVELOPING A PEACE INDEX at the city level will not only help in decentralizing the vision but also will help in spreading the identity of the peace city and reaching out to a larger mass. The index would be helped in rating each ward in the Municipal Corporation boundary and develop a healthy competition in order to excel as an entire city holistically. To furthermore strengthen this idea of the index we contextualize the definition of peace. What is peace for the people of Thiruvananthapuram and therefore develop indicators according to the definition.

THE VISION for the city is to make Thiruvananthapuram, a city of peace spatially as well as non-spatially within the next 10 years.

Area
215 km²

Population
9,55,494

Sex Ratio
1040

Wards
100

Literacy
94%

+

Positive Peace

... is the attitudes, institutions and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies.

-

Negative Peace

... is the absence of fear or fear of violence.

Source: Global Peace Index

THE MEASUREMENT OF PEACE is one of the major global agendas which eventually affect the wellbeing of people. To further understand its relevance and achieve the goal, decentralized planning mechanisms help a lot. Peace can be categorized under two domains. Negative peace and positive peace.

Negative peace is defined as the absence of violence or absence of fear of violence. Peace is further not just restricted to that. Positive peace therefore is considered in a further nuanced definition which helps in somewhat capturing the

intangible aspect of the term. Well-developed Positive Peace represents the capacity for a society to meet the needs of its citizens, reduce the number of grievances that arise and resolve remaining disagreements without the use of violence.

Considering this, there must be a contextual process of tweaking the definition of peace in the city of Thiruvananthapuram, to further understand what is peace for the people here. Thus, to do so, we ask the 100 ward councilors, who are democratically elected and represent the people of the city.

“

Peace is eventually related to building a livable city. Peace and livability of any city is directly proportional to each other. The effort can be thus in improving the health of the city and making the city more desirable for living.

Adv. V.K. Prasanth
MLA (Ex Mayor)



The process of understanding peace for Vattiyoorkavu ward was to take randomly sampled interviews of the people of the ward. The questions were asked in order to understand if the idea of peace is relative or common for the people of the city.

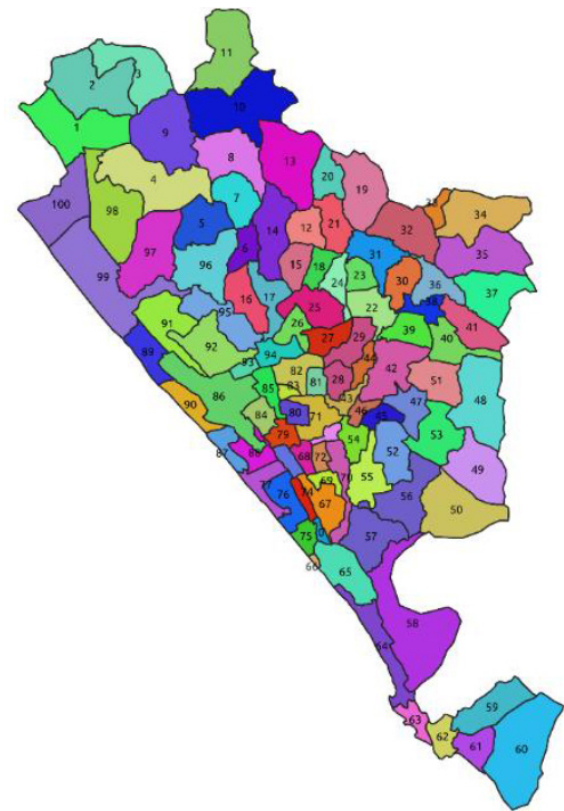
Such interviews need to be conducted in all the 100 wards to establish a holistic definition of contextual peace. Once we have responses on what defines peace, formulation of indicators and data collection by concerned authorities can start.

Positive Peace is a state of mind of an individual and thus on a macro level, the people of the city. On a global scale the following factors affect the state of mind.

- State of jobs & opportunities
- State of Health (*physical and mental*)
- Having someone to count on
- Social Security
- State of vulnerable.
- The state of good governance

Once the factors affecting peace of the city and its people are in place through questionnaire circulation within the 100 ward councilors, Data collection from the people can start through the process of sampling. The 100 wards can be thus rated based on these indicators.

The following are the indicators used for the national peace and social justice while considering the sustainable development goal.



A visual representation of ward wise map of Thiruvananthapuram Municipal Corporation for probable TPI representation

Source: Author

Indicator	Target	Justification of Target
Murders per 1,00,000 population	1	Global SDG target 16.1 aims to significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere. Average of the 3 best performing States has been set as the target.
Cognizable crimes against children per 1,00,000 population	0	Global SDG target 16.2 aims to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.
Number of victims of human trafficking per 10 lakh population	0	Global SDG target 8.7 aims to take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, and end modern slavery and human trafficking.
Number of missing children per 1,00,000 child population	0	Global SDG target 16.2 aims to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.
No. of courts per 1,00,000 population	4.25	Global SDG target 16.3 aims to promote the rule of law at the national and international levels, and ensure equal access to justice for all. Average of the 3 best performing States has been set as the target.
Cases under Prevention of Corruption Act and related sections of IPC per 10 lakh population	0.19	Global SDG target 16.3 aims to substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms. Average of the 3 best performing states has been set as the target.
Percentage of births registered	100	Global SDG target 16.9 aims to provide legal identity for all, including birth registration by 2030.
Percentage of population covered under Aadhaar	100	Global SDG target 16.9 aims to provide legal identity for all, including birth registration by 2030.

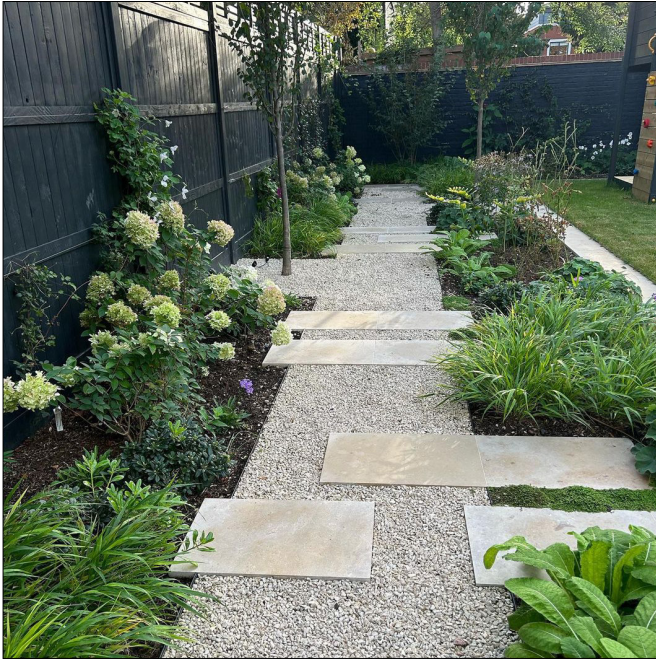
SDG Goal 16 Indicators
Source: UN SDG Goals



Once according to the people of Trivandrum the final defining peace parameters are included, indicators which can be used as a measuring tool or as a proxy to quantify the parameters can be identified. The data collection according to the indicators with concerned departments can be looked up by either the planning cell or the peace city cell. Once the index is consolidated, each ward can be given a rank based on its performance. The analysis of this will not help people understand the performance of their own ward but also will act as a people's progress card where the community would start developing a sense of ownership to the idea and identity of peace. Annual release and updating of this index and data will result in the overall growth and further will **nurture the identity of India's first peace city.**



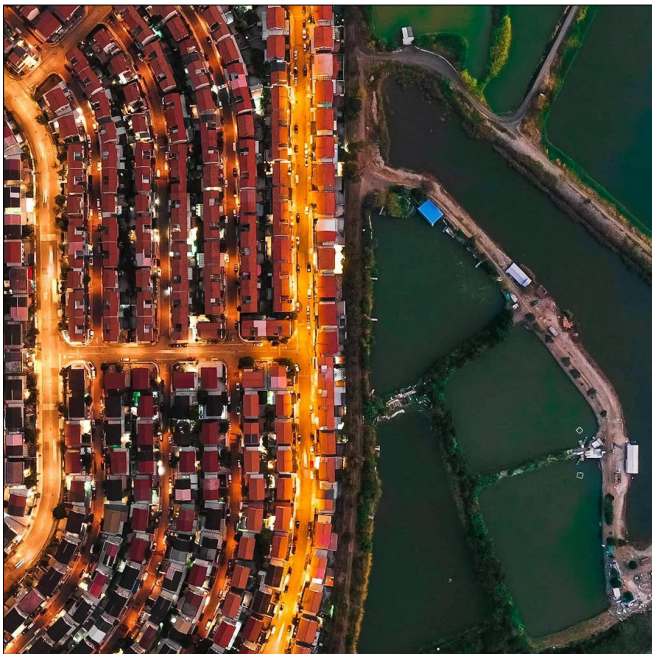
#ItsTimeToPlan



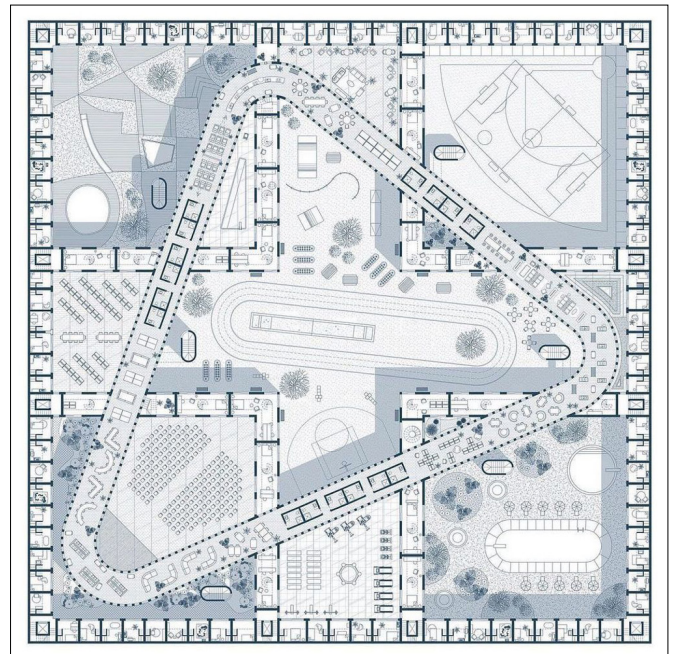
@charlotterowegardens shows the gravel and paving path fringed with new planting.



@landscape.first shows a park that can transition into a food producing hub during war or other crisis.



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CITY SAFETY

DESIGNING FOR DARKNESS

Reclaiming the tranquility of the night

BY ANN ROCHYNE THOMAS

A **SUNRISE** over the city of Kochi, set against the Western Ghats mountain range. Kerala, home to a 35 million-strong population and with a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.712 and a consumption-based HDI of 0.920, has a surprisingly subdued urban night culture. Yet its cities exhibit light pollution that diminishes celestial radiance during sunrise. Although the urban tree canopy of Kerala's cities generally conceals artificial light directed skyward, the visibility of stars in the night sky in most cities is rare.



“

The allure of 24-hour cities has thrown the natural cycle of light and darkness, into disarray.

In the heart of our urban landscapes, amidst the bustling streets and vibrant energy, as the sun sets, artificial lighting at night (ALAN) casts a glaring, often harsh, glow upon our cities. Contemporary lighting, though symbolic of human advancement, has unwittingly introduced a significant disturbance to a core element of our existence: the tranquility of the night. In our relentless pursuit of perpetual productivity, the night, once shrouded in darkness, has been overtaken by the pervasive presence of ALAN. The allure of 24-hour cities has thrown the natural cycle of light and darkness, into disarray.

LIGHT POLLUTION interrupts critical ecological processes and subjects organisms to chronic stress due to the excessive and intrusive invasion of artificial light into the nocturnal realm. It upsets the delicate balance of the natural world, where for aeons, the Earth's rotation has choreographed the cycle of light and darkness, synchronizing physiological and behavioral responses to ensure species' survival. ALAN can disorient or deter nocturnal species from hunting, foraging, or seeking a mate. Another loss incurred by this flood of artificial light is cultural. The awe-inspiring celestial marvels that once inspired us to contemplate the enigmas of the universe have now receded into the shadows of ALAN.

In an ironic twist, despite the bright illumination seen in modern cities, urban residents navigate a twilight realm where the interaction between artificial illumination and natural darkness evokes feelings of vulnerability. Streetlight glare, an unintended outcome of badly designed or inadequately shielded fixtures, causes discomfort and amplifies feelings of vulnerability. When artificial light interacts with wet surfaces, it adds yet another layer of complexity to the urban nighttime landscape. Rain-soaked streets, resembling mirages in a desert, result in optical anomalies. The scattering of light off wet roads and pavements creates a blinding effect that cloaks the streets in unsettling obscurity. This phenomenon holds particular relevance in Kerala, which experiences a remarkable 198 days of annual rainfall.

The absence of celestial marvels and the presence of disorienting glare can ruin the urban nocturnal experience. While artificial lighting seeks to enhance visual clarity and safety, the haphazard design and erratic distribution of light paradoxically undermine these very objectives. The traditional notion that light intensity is the sole determinant of visual perception is challenged in this environment. Safe urban navigation, we are reminded, relies not only on the intensity of light but also on its optimal distribution.

SKYGLOW is a phenomenon caused by excessive artificial light that brightens the night sky, disrupting ecological processes, hindering stargazing, and impacting our cultural connections with the cosmos. At present, approximately 80% of the world's population cannot gaze upon the Milky Way or encounter the undisturbed nocturnal wildlife that once thrived in our midst. While ALAN has undeniably contributed to the

vitality of urban nights, enhancing safety, aesthetics, and opportunities for activity, we must be mindful not to discard the opportunities and experiences that the absence of artificial light provides. Access to peaceful and unpolluted night vistas is just as vital for our well-being as clean air, water, and food.

Policy-makers bear a great responsibility to harmonize the advantages of artificial lighting with the preservation of nighttime darkness through the incorporation of dark sky preservation principles into planning and development policies. With 75% of the sky's glow originating from light emitted directly from fixtures, their design must prioritize functionality over frivolity.

Environmentally Responsible Lighting Design (ERLD) prioritizes sustainable outdoor lighting practices. It focuses on minimizing light pollution, energy consumption, and negative impacts on human health and the environment. ERLD recommendations include using shielded fixtures that direct light downward; warmer, orange-based hues in favor of harsh white-spectrum LEDs that have greater blue light content; and motion sensors to activate lighting only when necessary. Dimming controls that allow for adjustable light levels based on activity and time of night and cut-off fixtures that limit light output to a specific angle further enhance energy efficiency and reduce glare.

In order to restore dark skies, a multi-modal approach is required. Cultivating a culture of responsible lighting practices among both businesses and individuals is a central focus of this approach. To ensure the effectiveness of these measures, a vigilant monitoring system tracking progress in light pollution reduction is required, which can be enforced through a

“

The synergy of energy-efficient and thoughtful lighting design and practices has the power to shape tranquil urban environments.

robust system of incentives and penalties. Active advocacy for legislative measures at multiple governance levels is critical. Extensive educational initiatives on responsible lighting technologies and practices aimed at both the general public and urban planners and designers are also required.

THE SYNERGY of energy-efficient and thoughtful lighting design and practices has the power to shape tranquil urban environments. It is in the restoration of our dark nights that we safeguard the starry skies and cultivate a nocturnal culture that is more reflective than consumptive. By restoring our dark night sky, we can enhance human well-being, foster biodiversity, and hand down its remarkable beauty and benefits to future generations.

Pioneering India's Urban Renaissance

Unveiling the Amrit Kaal Vision

BY AAKRITI

IN THE ERA of continued and rapid urbanization, India stands at the confluence of an extraordinary transformation. Over the past decade, the contours of the Indian urban landscape have evolved at an unprecedented pace. With that in backdrop, the nation has been subjected with numerous visionary policies and ambitious missions to catalyze the development across various domains. As we stand on the juncture of a future that is dominated by urban centers, the need for comprehensive ways to guide this transition is more pressing than ever. In this context, the release of the First Report of the High-Level Committee on Urban Planning emerges as a clarion call, charting a transformative course for India's urban landscape. This 84-page document is a product of meticulous deliberations that embodies a road map for India's urban landscape in



coming times, addressing the key challenges that cities face. It's a manifesto for transformative action that sets to empower the Urban Planners and Practitioners towards a positive and sustainable change.

India's urbanization story is as old as the civilization itself. From the planned cities of the Indus Valley Civilization to the grandeur of Mughal and Mauryan capitals, urban centers have been the testaments of culture, commerce, and governance. The colonial era saw the emergence of structured townships, with British urban planning leaving an indelible mark on Indian cities. Post-independence, urbanization underwent a significant transformation, culminating in the rapid expansion of cities in the latter half of the 20th century. The current growth dates back to the same transformation, being shaped by emerging policies, political will towards change, and collective efforts by citizens of this developing nation.

TODAY, INDIA'S urban landscape is a tableau of contrasts. Sprawling mega cities pulse with vibrancy of economic activities, juxtaposed against Tier II and III cities grappling with the complexities of growth. Urban agglomerations, once confined to traditional economic powerhouses, have deepened themselves across the country, driving innovation. However, this urban resurgence is not devoid of challenges. Congestion, inadequate infrastructure, environmental degradation, and socioeconomic disparities are palpable manifestations of the urbanization conundrum in today's day and age.

Taking essence from the report and with India strive towards becoming the world's most populous country, urbanization stands to be a defining feature of its developmental narrative. The statistics paint a vivid picture: over the next three



decades, the urban population is slated to rise by a staggering 416 million, constituting more than 40% of the total population. Such a demographic surge places immense pressure on existing urban infrastructure, necessitating a paradigm shift in urban planning and governance. This report rightly underscores the need to address the emerging challenges, while outlining the key strategic areas of intervention.

The conceptualization of HLC's recommendation in the Amrit Kal is an exercise in inclusivity and collective visioning. The committee, comprising stalwarts from diverse urban domains including practitioners in the field, academicians, researchers, policymakers embarked on an extensive consultation process that traversed geographical, sectoral, and demographic boundaries. These experts converged in a symphony of ideas, contributing to a compendium of recommendations that reflect the collective wisdom of the nation, keeping the notions of Urban Planning at core. The committee's composition is emblematic of

a holistic approach, drawing from a spectrum of disciplines. Urban planners, architects, economists, environmentalists, and sociologists lent their expertise to the deliberations. Moreover, stakeholders from government, academia, non-profits, and industry were integral in shaping the recommendations, ensuring a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted challenges faced by Indian cities.

RECOGNIZING the pivotal role of citizens in shaping urban diaspora, several activities which are central to the citizens of the country formed the core of this dynamic consultation process.

Town hall meetings, public consultations, and digital forums served as conduits for citizen voices. Their aspirations, concerns, and innovative solutions formed the bedrock of several recommendations, reaffirming the committee's commitment to citizen-centric urban planning. This highlights the comprehensiveness and the extent of deliberations that form the backbone of the HLC's recommendation.

Priority Areas: A Strategic Framework

The report delineates its recommendations across four pivotal aspects, each serving as a cornerstone in the edifice of urban transformation:

1. Building Urban Planning Leadership, Capacities, and Institutions: The foundation of effective urban planning lies in cultivating leadership, nurturing capabilities, and fortifying institutions. The committee's recommendations in this domain encompass a spectrum of measures, including modernizing recruitment and service rules, establishing specialized cadres, and creating a national certification framework for urban planners. By catalyzing the human capital and institutional framework, India is poised to steer its urban agenda with greater proficiency.

2. Strengthening Statutory Urban Planning & Design: An updated legal framework is essential to unlock the full potential of India's cities. The report advocates for a comprehensive overhaul of state town and country planning acts, emphasizing rationalized planning boundaries, region-specific planning frameworks, and a shift from land-use-based zoning to form-based regulations. These reforms are instrumental in ushering in a modern era of urban planning and design.

3. Enhancing the Economic Geography of City Regions: To catalyze economic growth, India must leverage the potential of its city-regions. The committee recommends the establishment of economic development councils in million-plus cities, forging partnerships between city governments and the private sector. By creating vibrant economic gateways, India can attract global





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The report amplifies the resonance of the committee’s vision of viewing complex urban problems through a rational lens of systemic efforts.

investments and talent, fostering rapid economic expansion and innovation.

4. Leveraging the Potential of Urban River & Waterfront Cities: Rivers, often integral to the urban landscape, present both challenges and opportunities. The report advocates for a national mission on urban riverfront development, allocating substantial funds to rejuvenate river-fronts in 25 cities. Drawing inspiration from exemplars like the Sabarmati Riverfront Development project, this initiative seeks to revitalize urban areas, seamlessly blending ecological sustainability with urban planning.

The Report amplifies the resonance of the committee’s vision of viewing complex urban problems through a rational lens of systemic efforts. It serves as an external validation of the recommendations, offering insights and perspectives that further enrich the discourse. The emphasis on modernizing state recruitment rules, creating central support schemes for urban planners, and instituting a national framework for certification resonates with the broader urban planning community, underlining the far-reaching implications of the committee’s vision.

The report underscores the need for an inter-ministerial task force under the aegis of the Secretary,

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. This task force, comprising representatives from key ministries and organizations, serves as the fulcrum for the seamless execution of the recommendations. The collaborative synergy between ministries, including NITI Aayog, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Department of Personnel and Training, and others, exemplifies the inter-sectoral approach needed to drive urban transformation.

AS INDIA embarks on this transformative urban odyssey, the recommendations outlined in the Pathways to Amrit Kaal emerge as a beacon of hope and possibility. By nurturing urban planning leadership, fortifying statutory frameworks, invigorating economic geographies, and harnessing the potential of rivers, India is poised for an urban renaissance. These recommendations encapsulate a holistic approach, paving the way for cities not only to thrive but also to serve as engines of inclusive growth. The vision of Amrit Kaal envisions an India where the fruits of development reach every region and citizen. With continued and holistic efforts being directed in this direction, the systemic development in the nation will serve as the cornerstone for an empowered and inclusive economy.



TRANSPORTATION

The Road to Safety

**Prioritizing Road Safety
in Urban Planning for a
Sustainable India**

BY ISHITA SARASWAT

IN OUR LIVES, we've all passed by a road crash site at least once. I find myself contemplating what might have occurred and the potential consequences for the

victims. Only recently have I grasped the gravity of road safety concerns, not just in India but across the globe. Shockingly, approximately 1.3 million people each year lose their lives due to road traffic crashes worldwide, with India accounting for about 150,000 of those fatalities. These incidents could be avoided through improved design and tactical urbanism initiatives.

A common misconception is that road safety concerns pertain exclusively to highways. In reality, a substantial portion of crashes occur on city streets. As highlighted by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways Road Accident in India 2021 Report, a staggering 412,000 road crashes occurred in 2021, and a substantial 45% of these incidents occurred on non-highway roads. These figures compel us to reconsider, even if we initially believed road crashes were primarily the concern of highway engineers. While striving for picturesque cityscapes, town planners tend to prioritize aesthetics over safety.

However, charming streetscapes lose their appeal if they lack proper pedestrian crossings, marked bike lanes, and visible traffic signage, turning them into hazardous zones.

Indian planners should prioritize road safety in alignment with India's commitment to SDG 3.6, which aims to reduce injuries and deaths from road traffic crashes along with SDG 11. India faces a significant road safety challenge, with a high rate of road traffic crashes, injuries, and fatalities. By prioritizing road safety in urban planning, cities and regions can contribute to achieving SDG 3.6, which is crucial for ensuring safer transportation infrastructure and reducing the burden of road traffic injuries and fatalities. This commitment not only saves lives but also supports India's broader sustainable development efforts, enhances public health, and reduces the economic and social costs associated with road crashes.

WHEN DISCUSSING "safe roads," planners typically think of "pedestrians," followed by

cyclists and other non-motorized transportation users. However, genuinely safe roads encompass the security of all road users. The responsibility of designing safer roads falls particularly on transportation planners, who oversee crash safety and the broader scope of road safety. Every category of road user deserves a secure environment. As such, planners must adopt an inclusive approach that caters to the requirements and vulnerabilities of all groups. This includes following road design standards, creating pedestrian-friendly crossings, dedicated bicycle lanes, efficient public transportation systems, and well-defined traffic regulations. Ignoring any of these aspects endangers the overall safety of the road ecosystem.

WHILE ONE may argue that the design interventions are doable for greenfield developments and not for brown-field developments. Tactical Urbanism is a useful approach in this regard. Tactical urbanism refers to a grassroots approach to urban planning and design that involves making small, often temporary, changes to the built environment to improve the safety, functionality, and vibrancy of public spaces.

When applied strategically, tactical urbanism can indeed contribute to road safety in several ways. Street Arts, Traffic calming interventions, sidewalk enhancements, prioritizing road users as per requirement on existing roads, plantations, pop-up spaces and plazas are just some of the many interventions covered under tactical urbanism. While tactical urbanism can offer many benefits for road safety, it's important to note that these interventions are often temporary and may require ongoing maintenance and evaluation.



Moreover, they should be part of a broader road safety strategy that includes long-term infrastructure improvements and comprehensive planning. By combining tactical urbanism with traditional urban planning methods, cities can create safer and more livable environments for all road users.

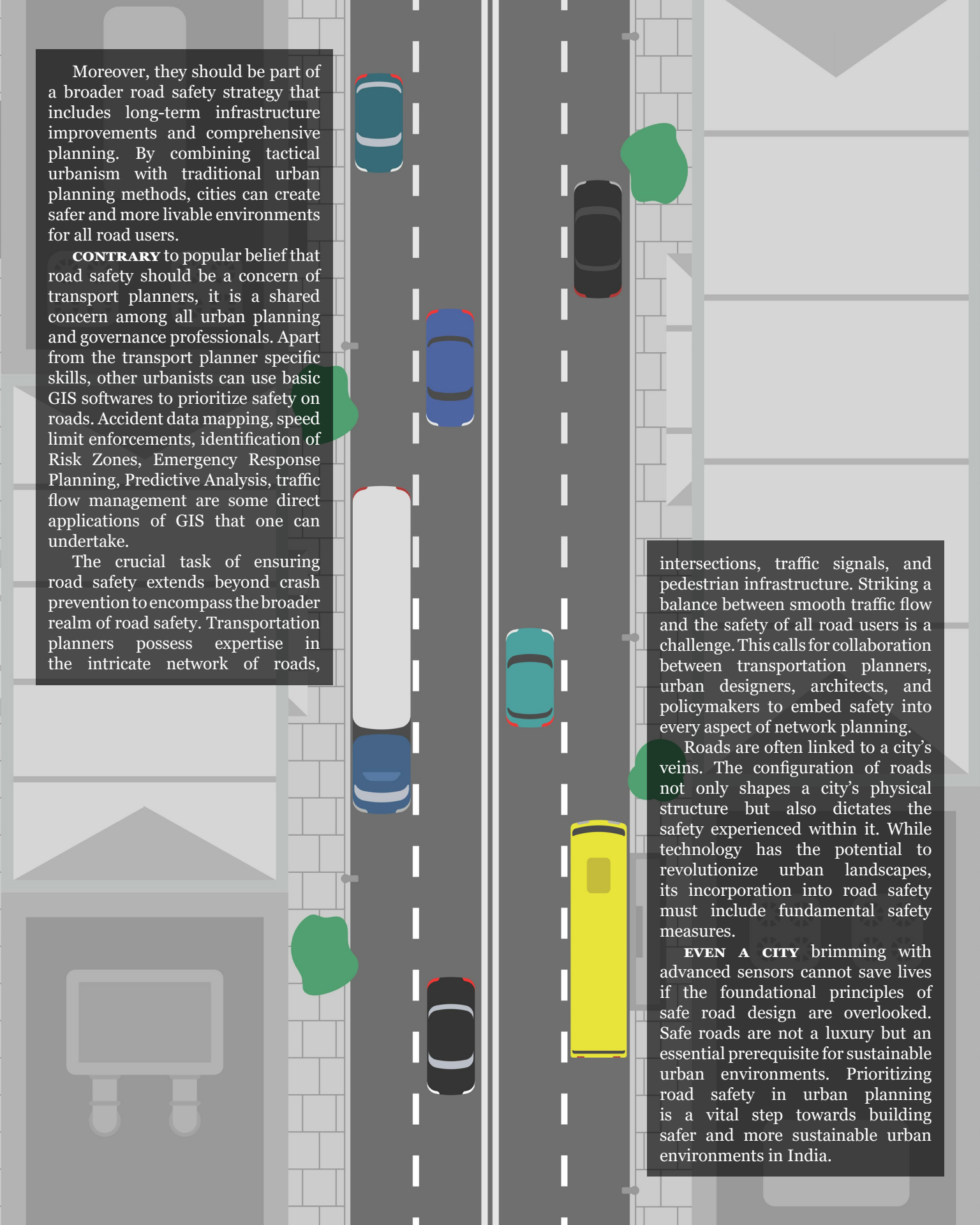
CONTRARY to popular belief that road safety should be a concern of transport planners, it is a shared concern among all urban planning and governance professionals. Apart from the transport planner specific skills, other urbanists can use basic GIS softwares to prioritize safety on roads. Accident data mapping, speed limit enforcements, identification of Risk Zones, Emergency Response Planning, Predictive Analysis, traffic flow management are some direct applications of GIS that one can undertake.

The crucial task of ensuring road safety extends beyond crash prevention to encompass the broader realm of road safety. Transportation planners possess expertise in the intricate network of roads,

intersections, traffic signals, and pedestrian infrastructure. Striking a balance between smooth traffic flow and the safety of all road users is a challenge. This calls for collaboration between transportation planners, urban designers, architects, and policymakers to embed safety into every aspect of network planning.

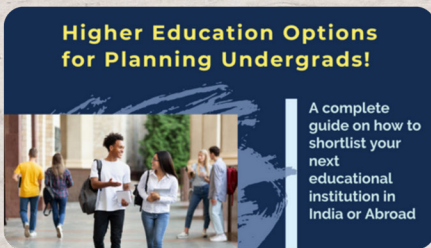
Roads are often linked to a city's veins. The configuration of roads not only shapes a city's physical structure but also dictates the safety experienced within it. While technology has the potential to revolutionize urban landscapes, its incorporation into road safety must include fundamental safety measures.

EVEN A CITY brimming with advanced sensors cannot save lives if the foundational principles of safe road design are overlooked. Safe roads are not a luxury but an essential prerequisite for sustainable urban environments. Prioritizing road safety in urban planning is a vital step towards building safer and more sustainable urban environments in India.





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A high-resolution satellite image of a densely populated urban area, likely in a developing country. The landscape is a mosaic of small, colorful buildings with red, blue, and orange roofs, interspersed with green trees and vegetation. A prominent, winding road or highway runs along the right side of the image. In the center, there are several large, open, reddish-brown areas that appear to be sports fields or parks. The overall scene depicts a complex, organic urban form.

IMAGERY

Satellite Watch

It is interesting to see how basic elements like buildings, public spaces, streets, and natural features interact to give different urban forms. Let's appreciate our beautiful cities for what they are through the lens of a satellite.



Thiruvananthapuram, 2023





Medellín (Columbia), 2023



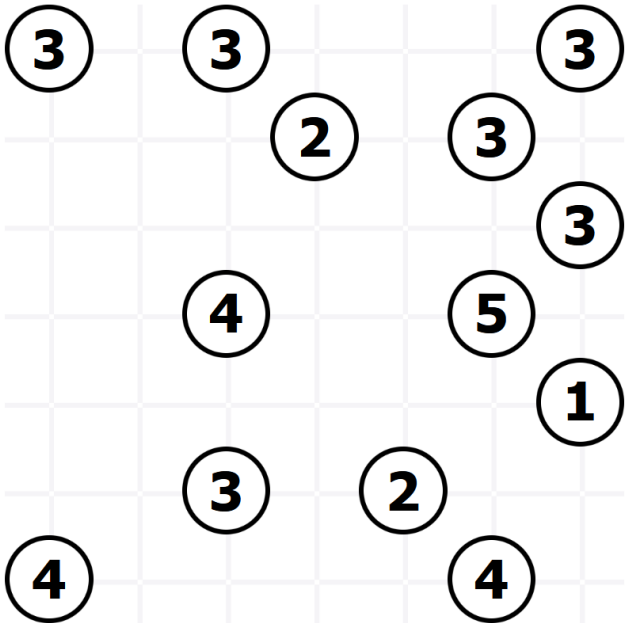


Dhaka, 2023

PUZZLE

Difficulty ●●●●●

Difficulty ●●●○○



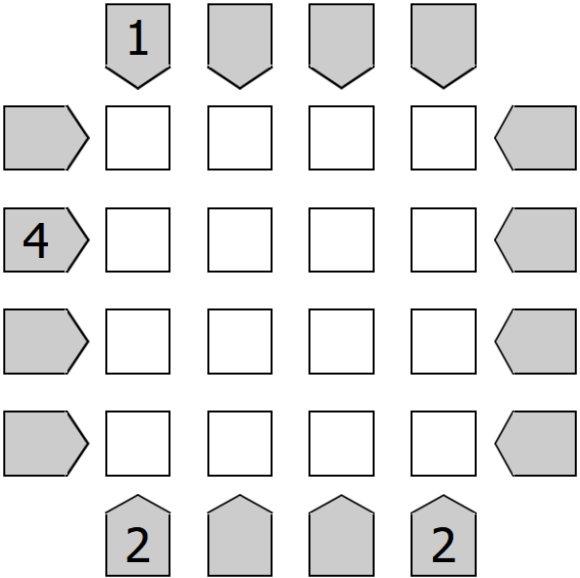
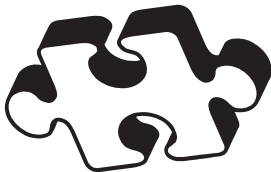
Metro Hashi

Create one single metro line through all stations.

The goal is to connect all of the metro stations into a single connected group by drawing a series of lines between the stations.

The lines must follow certain criteria:

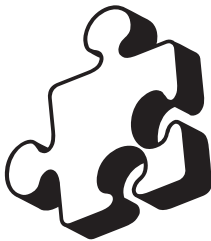
- They must begin and end at distinct stations, travelling a straight line in between.
- They must not cross any other lines or stations.
- They may only run orthogonally.
- At most two lines can connect a pair of stations.
- The number of lines connected to each station must match the number on that station.



Skyscrapers

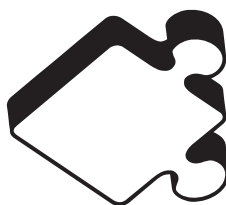
The objective is to place skyscrapers in all cells on the grid according to the rules:

- The height of the skyscrapers is from 1 to the size of the grid i.e. 1 to 4 for a 4x4 puzzle.
- You cannot have two skyscrapers with the same height on the same row or column.
- The numbers on the sides of the grid indicate how many skyscrapers you would see if you look in the direction of the arrow.
- Write numbers in each cell to indicate the height of the skyscrapers.

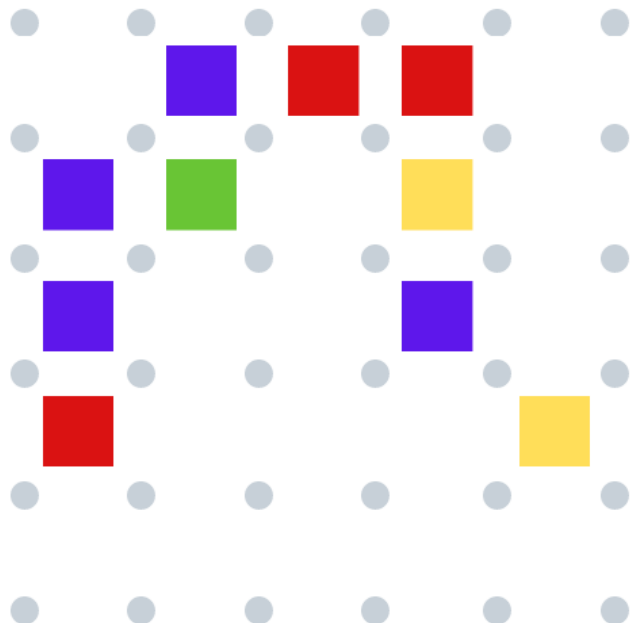


Think again!

TIME



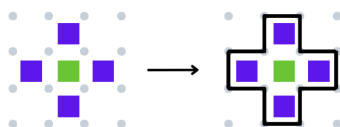
Difficulty ●●○○○○



Loop the Landuse

Make a single loop around the landuse colours.

Make one single loop around all the landuse colours. There are no crossings or loose ends. There is only one line which is continuous.



Each landuse colour indicates exactly how many lines should be drawn around it. Cells which do not have any colour inside can be surrounded by any number of lines.

Here's a key for the landuse colours

Industrial - surrounded by 3
Commercial - surrounded by 2
Residential - surrounded by 1
Recreational - surrounded by 0



Stuck in a puzzle?

Scan this QR code to find solutions to all the puzzles below

Difficulty ●●●●○○

Y q h x X V i P B n o o Y I y w T Y a x
q v L F K h M g y t i l a t i v Z B W A
T X C L d o Y f T R Z l i t s j A W x t
x h r B D C v F g e u l l F y e h n Y j
w s i g d Q b v p g i G w e c L y h R i
U d v r u q K A l u i k l n d l X G x G
P u c i u z D X q l h b a s I e z x R v
W d f j x v z n K a a s k h g v M k t e
D h E e L H a z t t s K Y M U M y E c s
P a w U e r n n s i D C y N E N q D a G
D k y R T y t e a o U g u r v Q u n b N
d a o R V a v n c n G C R w m a L T g Z
Z F r e d n e G j g t q P N o t k N A h
n N D k I R f v F T s h r H k w d F c r
b y t i n g i d f a d P a I W v x C w G
C o m p l e x l N o p H f p r d B l T Z
J w j B c z s A G Z E m s g u E p f H E
O o q a o n d s J v d Q P H c r w g u I
B v e h h G p k t v a n m n m c a k n e
P P d u J P T u y h H l u w B s w m y e

Word Search

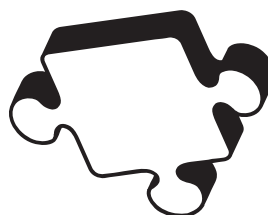
Find the words in the puzzle.

Words can go in any direction.
Words can share letters as they cross over each other.

Complex
Darkness
Dhaka
Dignity
Gender

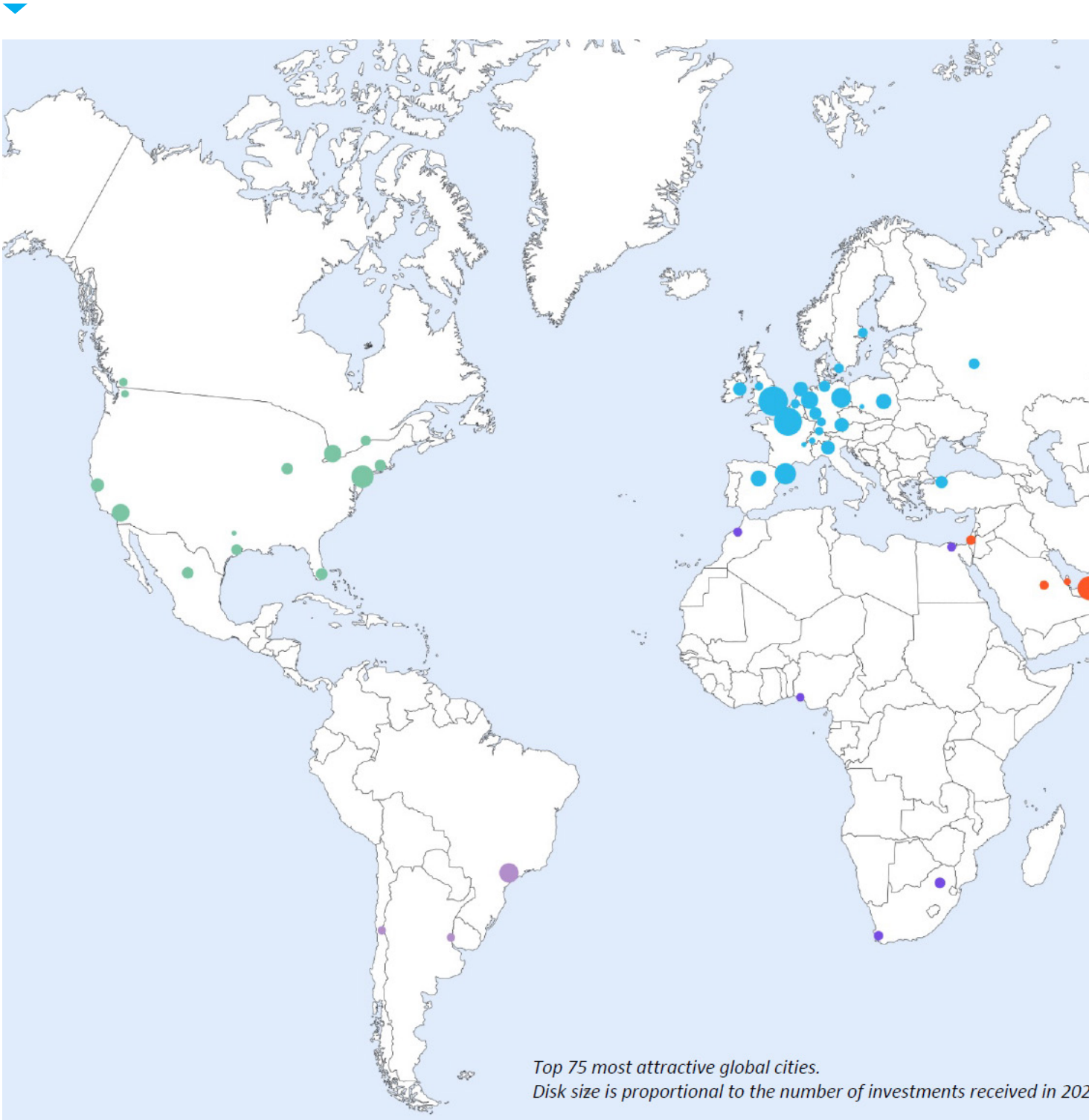
Investable
Medellin
Peace
Regulation
Renaissance

Road
Thiruvananthapuram
Tranquility
Vitality

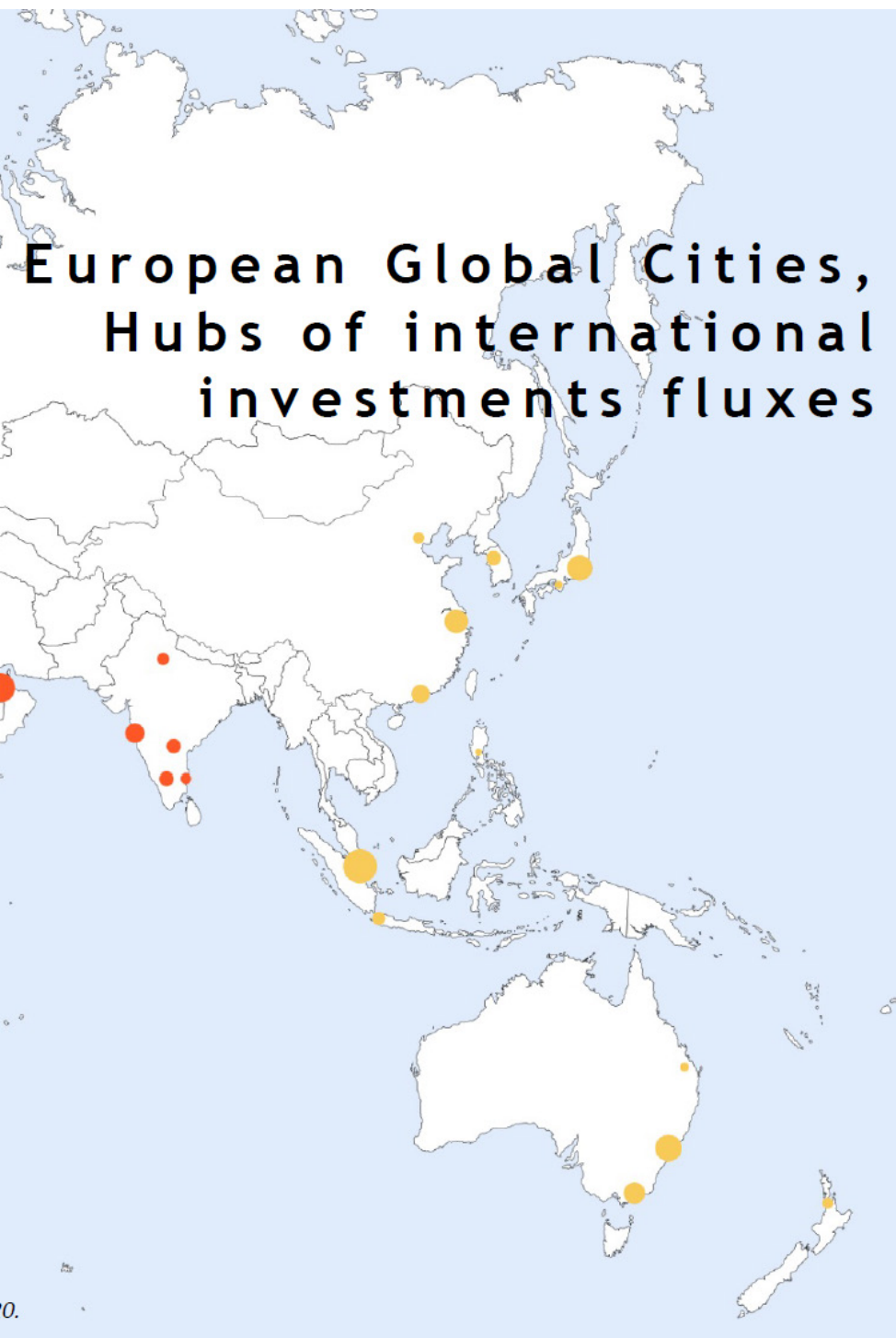


Five Indian cities among the top 75 most attractive global cities

Source: Global Cities investment Monitor (2021)



Top 75 most attractive global cities.
Disk size is proportional to the number of investments received in 2021



CITIES

What makes Cities Investable?

BY TSOMO WANGCHUK

INVESTMENT in cities is becoming increasingly important. As urban populations swell, the need to create and maintain infrastructure grows as well. This includes the development of residential and commercial housing, roads and transportation networks, educational institutions, and the list goes on. This infrastructure development requires huge investments - not just for building infrastructure, but also for creating an environment that can attract and retain businesses.

According to McKinsey (2016), the world spent \$9.5 trillion on infrastructure in 2015, which is 14 percent of global GDP. However, according to the report, this amount is insufficient and \$3.7 trillion is needed every year until 2035 for investment in economic infrastructure alone in order to keep pace with projected GDP growth. Another report by World Bank (2022) estimates that India will need to invest \$840 billion over the next 15 years, or an average of \$55 billion per year, into urban infrastructure in order to effectively meet the needs of



its rapidly growing urban population. The current spending pattern globally is resulting in significant infrastructure gaps. And while there has been increased investment in economic infrastructure, gaps still remains. Therefore, investable cities should aim to create attractive and stimulating environments that encourage top decision-makers, talented individuals, and financiers to come together and foster business and social innovation.

HAZEM GALAL, a global leader for cities and local government at PwC, defines an investable city as a city filled with opportunities. These opportunities come in the form of an attractive investment climate, a robust infrastructure, and a vibrant cultural ecosystem; all of which are essential for cities to be considered investable. A city must have the right combination of infrastructure and environment to attract investors, entrepreneurs, and skilled labor, as well as foster innovation and growth. For instance, cities with universities that offer world-class education draw both students and faculty, creating a pool of talent that can be utilized by businesses and industries. It is important that cities identify their unique strengths and develop strategies to attract investments and drive economic growth. As budgets are always tight for cities, they have to figure out how to build a city with a strong, robust economy (McCarney, 2017).

Investors strive to select the

most advantageous opportunities by taking into account both high returns and low risks. As a result, fundamental factors play a crucial role in investment decisions. In order to make a city attractive for investors, there are a few key elements that must be present. First, cities must have a solid economic base that will support the investment and any returns on it. This means having a diverse set of industries that can generate jobs and tax revenue, as well as access to global markets and capital.

Second, cities must have a secure political environment that promotes and protects the rights of investors. Third, they should have good infrastructure, including reliable transportation networks, efficient energy systems, affordable housing, quality health care services, and access to good education. Finally, cities must also have an effective governance structure in place that is capable of creating the necessary incentives and regulations for businesses to thrive and invest in the city.

THE GLOBAL CITIES investment Monitor (2021) analyzed that investors at a global level have anticipated the cities of Paris, Shanghai and London as the most attractive to set up a business over the next three years. It added that in order to attract investors, a city's brand is also significant when it comes to analyzing a city's attractiveness for businesses. The

report also parsed the top 75 most attractive global cities, among which five of these are Indian cities - Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Delhi and Chennai.

As per the Global FDI Annual Report 2022, India witnessed a surge in FDI projects and ranked 5th in the FDI destination countries, 2021. This is mainly due to investments in the software and IT services sector that accounted for 29% of total inbound investments.

However, no Indian cities were listed on the top ten FDI destination cities, 2021. The two global studies shows that Indian cities have a great potential to attract investments, but cities must focus on analyzing their growth drivers which must be tailored and maneuvered strategically.

WITH INDIA'S target to becoming one of the two largest economies in the world by 2047 with economy of around \$ 35 trillion, Indian cities needs to grow and become investable cities that attracts businesses. The growing metropolitan cities of the country must be fostered with quality infrastructure investment. As private investments are unfolding at a steady pace, the cities must leverage the power of public-private partnerships, international financing mechanisms, and capacity-building resources. This will help our cities to create sustainable and inclusive urban environments that attract investments and promote long-term economic growth.

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