

Rethinking Urban Voids: An Investigation beneath the Kathipara Flyover, Chennai into a Transit Hub by Adaptive Utilization of Space

Authors : V. Jayanthi

Abstract : Urbanization and pace of urbanization have increased tremendously in last few decades. More towns are now getting converted into cities. Urbanization trend is seen all over the world but is becoming most dominant in Asia. Today, the scale of urbanization in India is so huge that Indian cities are among the fastest-growing in the world, including Bangalore, Hyderabad, Pune, Chennai, Delhi, and Mumbai. Urbanization remains a single predominant factor that is continuously linked to the destruction of urban green spaces. With reference to Chennai as a case study, which is suffering from rapid deterioration of its green spaces, this paper sought to fill this gap by exploring key factors aside urbanization that is responsible for the destruction of green spaces. The paper relied on a research approach and triangulated data collection techniques such as interviews, focus group discussion, personal observation and retrieval of archival data. It was observed that apart from urbanization, problem of ownership of green space lands, low priority to green spaces, poor maintenance, enforcement of development controls, wastage of underpass spaces, and uncooperative attitudes of the general public, play a critical role in the destruction of urban green spaces. Therefore the paper narrows down to a point, that for a city to have a proper sustainable urban green space, broader city development plans are essential. Though rapid urbanization is an indicator of positive development, it is also accompanied by a host of challenges. Chennai lost a lot of greenery, as the city urbanized rapidly that led to a steep fall in vegetation cover. Environmental deterioration will be the big price we pay if Chennai continues to grow at the expense of greenery. Soaring skyscrapers, multistoried complexes, gated communities, and villas, frame the iconic skyline of today's Chennai city which reveals that we overlook the importance of our green cover, which is important to balance our urban and lung spaces. Chennai, with a clumped landscape at the center of the city, is predicted to convert 36% of its total area into urban areas by 2026. One major issue is that a city designed and planned in isolation creates underused spaces all around the cities which are of negligence. These urban voids are dead, underused, unused spaces in the cities that are formed due to inefficient decision making, poor land management, and poor coordination. Urban voids have huge potential of creating a stronger urban fabric, exploited as public gathering spaces, pocket parks or plazas or just enhance public realm, rather than dumping of debris and encroachments. Flyovers need to justify their existence themselves by being more than just traffic and transport solutions. The vast, unused space below the Kathipara flyover is a case in point. This flyover connects three major routes: Tambaram, Koyambedu, and Adyar. This research will focus on the concept of urban voids, how these voids under the flyovers, can be used for place making process, how this space beneath flyovers which are neglected, can be a part of the urban realm through urban design and landscaping.

Keywords : landscape design, flyovers, public spaces, reclaiming lost spaces, urban voids

Conference Title : ICUPADSD 2018 : International Conference on Urban Planning and Architectural Design for Sustainable Development

Conference Location : Mumbai, India

Conference Dates : February 22-23, 2018