

## Assessment of Socio-Cultural Sustainability: A Comparative Analysis of Two Neighborhoods in Kolkata Metropolitan Area

**Authors :** Tanima Bhattacharya, Joy Sen

**Abstract :** To transform a space into a better livable and sustainable zone, United Nations Summit in New York 2015, has decided upon 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) that approach directly to achieve inclusive, people-centric, sustainable developments. Though sustainability has been majorly constructed by four pillars, namely, Ecological, Economic, Social and Cultural, but it is essentially reduced to economic and ecological consideration in the context of developing countries. Therefore, in most cases planning has reduced its ambit to concentrate around the tangible infrastructure, ignoring the fundamentals of socio-cultural heritage. With the accentuating hype of infrastructural augmentation, lack of emphasis of traditional concerns like ethnicity and social connection have further diluted the situation, disintegrating cultural continuity. As cultural continuity lacks its cohesion, it's growing absence increasingly acts as a catalyst to degrade the heritage structures, spaces around and linking these structures, and the ability of stakeholders in identifying themselves rooted in that particular space. Hence, this paper will argue that sustainability depends on the people and their interaction with their surroundings, their culture and livelihood. The interaction between people and their surroundings strengthen community building and social interaction that abides by stakeholders reverting back to their roots. To assess the socio-cultural sustainability of the city of Kolkata, two study areas are selected, namely, an old settlement from the northern part of the city of Kolkata (KMA), imbued with social connection, age-old cultural and ethnic bonding and, another cluster of new high-rises coming up in the Newtown area having portions of planned city extension on the eastern side of the city itself. Whereas, Newtown prioritizes the surging post-industrial trends of economic aspiration and ecological aspects of urban sustainability; the former settlements of northern Kolkata still continue to represent the earliest community settlement of the British-colonial-cum native era and even the pre-colonial era, permeated with socio-cultural reciprocation. Thus, to compare and assess the inlayed organizational structure of both the spaces in the two cases, selected areas have been surveyed to portray their current imageability. The argument of this paper is structured in 5 parts. First, an introduction of the idea has been forwarded, Secondly, a literature review has been conducted to ground the proposed ideas, Thirdly, methodology has been discussed and appropriate case study areas have been selected, Fourthly, surveys and analyses has been forwarded and lastly, the paper has arrived at a set of conclusions by suggesting a threefold development to create happy, healthy and sustainable community.

**Keywords :** art innovation, current scenario assessment, heritage, imageability, socio-cultural sustainability

**Conference Title :** ICECESS 2018 : International Conference on Environmental, Cultural, Economic and Social Sustainability

**Conference Location :** Venice, Italy

**Conference Dates :** April 12-13, 2018