

# **Urban Housing**

## **Lecture 1**

### **Housing**

Thirst for a place to dwell has been persistent since time immemorial when our ancestors started looking for places for shelter, in search and in protection from natural habitants.

Given in the figure below, you would notice the right bottom unit, the first evolved dwelling unit, the single cell unit. The humans erected this place that eventually, in the process became a dwelling or a house. In due course of time, this process began to accommodate other activities. This consists of, what is commonly known as, social life. This has been continuing to the present day. The difference lies in the number of people, the scale of needs and wants, the search of housing has simply grown and poses a threat to housing.

### **What is Housing?**

Today, people in cities live in many kinds of houses, small to big apartments, a tree house for instance, a communal garden etc. There are different varieties of houses that people live in.

Housing is a process, a process that accommodates factors such as;

- > Social and Cultural lifestyle of people.
- > Economic aspects
- > Production process of housing; the time, the process etc.
- > Finance
- > Who will finance; the government or private sector which brings in the need of a stakeholder.
- > Ourselves, the community.

With this vague idea about the factors involved in housing, housing can be defined as follows;

Housing is a process that involves *social, cultural and economic backgrounds of the inhabitants of the city, that varies between different scales, that requires a production process over time, involving financing mechanisms*, thus taking up different stakeholders, investors, public sector and the community as a whole.

Cities have grown over the years. As the plan has intervened, after industrial revolution, the plan has intervened in setting the pattern or the growth of the city. What was single dot has grown? Why has it grown you ask ? People from the rural areas migrate to the urban areas, these migrants play a key role in the development and the physical expansion of the city. There are different concepts of city, as depicted in the figure below. All these are different thoughts on what cities are, based on predefined patterns. These cities has enormous diversity.

Cities are composed of neighbourhoods, neighborhoods are composed of urban blocks. Urban blocks constitute different kind of houses, parks, retail to commercial to different spaces. Now there is a rural influx of people into the urban areas, where these people come from an entirely different social and cultural background. So when these people from different conglomerate into the urban blocks or urban houses etc, they use it. Which means that the city is socially active. This urban diversity induces the aspect of vibrancy at different scales. It may be a large park to a smaller scale of a house.

Cities support physical growth and expansion. Historically, it was said that after industrial revolution, there is a city and there are suburbs. During the world war times, the city and the industrial part were located in the suburbs with the housing as well. However, as cities expanded, the concept changed. The urban core formed within a city, with a surrounding of semi suburbs; the inner circle and this was surrounded by what is known to be the, outer ring suburbs/exurbs i.e newly formed suburbs.

Cities are said to grow on potential rings and corridors. For instance; Chennai has a potential north, south, east and west corridor.

It starts from Fort St.George historically. Take Bangalore, it grows in concentric patterns like the urban core, inner ring and outer ring and now since there has been an influx of people, the city has expanded horizontally and vertically.

### **What is urbanization?**

It starts from our rural areas, where people look at cities and admire the opportunities available for one to grow. In search of these local employment opportunities that cities provide, people from the rural areas leave their agricultural jobs and begin to migrate into cities. This migration is the first step, in the process of urbanization. Once people move, they search for jobs. A positive aspect is that, they get placed into jobs and settle, while a negative aspect would be those who still look out for jobs. All these lead to a formation of slum or shack settlement and that is an end result of urbanization. What is the problem between slum and urbanization ? It simply boils down to, housing. The question becomes, where is the land to provide housing ?

Urbanization denotes a diffusion of the influence of urban centers to a rural hinterland. Urbanization can also be defined as a process of concentration of population in a particular territory. According to Mitchell Urbanization is a process of becoming urban, moving to cities. Changing from agriculture to other pursuits common to cities.

### **Causes of Urbanization:**

> Industrialization

> Social Factors

> Modernization

These are the reasons for which, people in rural areas want to migrate to urban areas. However, what does this do to urban areas?

- > Problem of overpopulation

- > Disintegration of Joint Family : Back in the rural areas, families stay together in a number of 10 to 20 on an acre or so. However while migrating to urban areas, only 3 or 4 of them do so, while the rest remain behind.

- > Cost of living is more.

- > Increase in Crime rates

- > Problem of pollution is exorbitant

- > Stress

## **Urbanization in India**

On the left, it reveals that the urbanization rate is very less. While, the Geopolis on the right reveals that they are more cities being urbanized. It is evident that there is a problem with the census data, in other words, they are not many people/ migrants who registered themselves with census data. The census data reveals that hardly 5 % of the cities in India are urbanized more than 50 %. The blue indicates, urbanization rate more than 50%. However, on the right, it is noticeable that there are many blue dots, which means that more than 30 to 35% of the cities in India have already been urbanized.

## **GRAPH**

This graph indicates the levels of hierarchies. This gives you an idea about what are the different strategies or different hierarchical positions between the rural and the urban. So you can begin with small hamlets upto a mega city, between which, the following fall; hamlets, medium and large sized villages, different tiers of cities, large sized metropolitan and finally mega cities. These are classified based on their population. This interestingly reveals that; small hamlets and hamlets have

considerably decreased over the past 7 decades. From 1951 to 2011, you can see that the percentage has dropped significantly, from 21% to 8 %. There is a marginal growth in megacities, from 3 to 4 %. The major part is the transition; the peri urban, which is between the medium and large villages, which has grown from 5 to 17 %, this is a state of transition from rural to urban.

### **Housing - an urban challenge :**

- Building regulations that limit urban density - such as floor space indexes - reduce the number of houses available, thereby pushing up property prices.
- Outdated rent control regulations reduce the number of houses available on rent - a critical option for the poor.
- Poor access to micro finance and mortgage finance limit the ability of low income groups to buy or improvise their homes.
- Policy, planning and regulation deficiencies lead to proliferation of slums.
- Weak finances of urban local bodies and service providers leave them unable to expand the trunk infrastructure that housing developers need to develop new sites.

This metaphorical diagram states that; deciphers increase. Increase in what ? housing in demand increases, housing growth increases, more population, need of the dwellers of the houses increase, increase in crime rate, increase in pollution etc, all these are tied up with housing. Hence, it is a process, it ties up a lot of factors attributed to it.

Some of the urbanization facts that you might consider to remember ;

> Most Urbanized States : Tamil Nadu 43.9%; Maharashtra 42.4 %

> 3 out of the world's 21 megacities, in millions: Mumbai (19); Delhi (15); Kolkata (14)

- > Large Cities : 23 in 1991; 40 in 2001
- > Urban Population : 25% of 850 million in 1992; 28% of 1030 million in 2002.
- > Estimated Urban population by 2017: 500 million
- > Percentage of Urban poor residents : about 25%
- > Slum population : About 41 million in 2001.
- > Estimated Slum population by 2017 : 69 million

### **Role of Housing in Architecture**

Housing as a commodity is needed everywhere. Role of housing in architecture is very keen. I mean it becomes more crucial when lot of influx of people start living what you see in this images. Shack/ slums/ informal housing, these people lack basic housing to protect themselves from natural disasters, they lack sanitary conditions, they lack access to safe drinking water, they also lack in security and tenure arrangements; this only goes to show that they are vulnerable to forced evictions i.e they can be pulled out any from Gajikundu from Turkey. It means, they can be pulled out at any point of time. The turkish term Gajikundu means that, in one night it disappears and the next day it reappears. These forced evictions are not only faced in India, but in other developing countries as well.

### **Housing a component in neighbourhood and planning**

There are three scales that help decide what is the role of housing;

- > **Housing has to be incorporated as a strategy to provide different developments at different places.**
- > **Housing has to be composed of neighbourhoods, that promotes community living.**

In today's times, there are inequalities present, there are different hierarchies in social life etc. Half the people are privileged to enjoy certain services while the other half don't get to enjoy even their rights. Housing as a strategy should include all these inequalities at a more larger level. At a smaller level, housing has to support communal living. It has to incorporate, different classes of people.

> **Housing has to ensure a particular standard or quality.**

> The next question that an architect needs to consider is; **How can we make housing complex a part of the urban.**

Today in most cases, such communal living is available far from the city, however opt to not go there since their employment opportunities are within the city.

### **Housing industry in India - an Outlook**

The Real estate is one of the influential and opportunistic sector. After agriculture, this sector is the largest employer. The housing market and the real estate sector has well established relationships with the corporate sector, as well as different office space requirements.

### **Real Estate cycle in India :**

Real estate **boom** meaning there are high capital inflows, the factors that push up the property price, the construction rate, the interest rate on home loans etc. The next process is nothing but; **Contraction** meaning the vacancy rate. After a boom, there is a high vacancy rate that depicts the demand is met, but there is vacancy in construction. This however, leads to **Recession**, a common term that we hear or face, on daily basis. This means that there are; high capital outflows which only goes to show that there is a reduce in property prices, reduce in construction rate, reduce in interest rate in loans and there are a lot of houses vacant. The last process on the cycle is known as; **Recovery**, where the construction rates rise, people need houses and people start moving. On the whole, this is the real estate cycle in India that has 4 phases.

## **Property and Real estate market - an outlook in India**

The property prices or the rate of construction in a state like Delhi has gone down by 1.49%, in Chennai it has risen by 12.58% and in Surat it has risen by 17.89%, in Chandigarh it has gone down by 5.67%, in Coimbatore it has gone down 7.61 %. The property markets are dictated by two things ;

> slow economic growth

> High interest rates in home loans.

### **India's housing boom era**

Since 2002 to 2007, housing prices in India rose rapidly. There was a strong economic growth and urbanization supported house prices. All these metropolitan cities like Karnataka, Chennai etc, expanded since many people from rural areas migrated to the cities.

Since 2005 to 2007, the economy grew at 8.9% per annum. The price increases were accompanied by interest rates which fell as low as 7.5% from early 2004 until 2005.

By 2006 mini speculative boom had been set off, and residential properties in Mumbai cost 100 times the average annual income.

Developers refocused on building low-income homes. But India's economy quickly rebounded and house prices soon started to rise again. Infact, Tata housing inculcated something such as affordable housing.

Now the economy quickly rebounded and prices have rise once again. Hence, it is evident that everything is dictated by the economic growth of the country.

### **Housing a need - third world example**

This states that; there are no easy solutions to the Third World's diverse housing problems because a lack of adequate shelter is merely one manifestation of generalized poverty. Decent shelter for all can never be guaranteed as long as there is widespread poverty. At the same time, sensible policies can help mitigate shelter problems.

This interesting graph shows how population has grown in urban areas;

A conceptual image that depicts that many people are running in search of houses - The housing demand.

There are reports that have stated that, the supply of cheap housing has risen, with 30,500 units built between June 2011 and January, says the report based on 132 such projects in 22 cities.

There is also a statistic that indicates the need of 50 million house for about 10 to 25,000 a month in India.

### **Housing need:**

It is nothing but; the growth in household, migration, Present household conditions, Rise in standard of living.

### **Housing demand:**

When there is an accessibility to housing, when they rise in status, when they are dictated by purchase power, when people can afford more houses; such factors lead to Housing demand.

### **Housing Supply:**

This is nothing but;

> Alterations

> Upgradations

> Improvement in Housing stock

## > Extension

A statistics revealed that, Housing shortage at the beginning of the 11th five year plan (1.4.2007) - 24.71 million dwelling units. Additional housing requirements for the 11th Plan (2007 - 2012) - 1.82 million dwelling units. Total housing requirements during the 11th plan period including the carried over housing shortage - 26.53 million dwelling units.

This is a short conceptual graph that indicates that; when the demand rises and the supply falls, when more people come as demand increases and there is no proper supply of houses to the people, the prices of housing rises. On the other hand, when the demand falls and the supply rises, when there are more houses available and there is no demand, the price falls. Finally to conclude, the demand for housing in the high income group is always less, while the demand for housing in the low income group is always high. Promoters and developers promote the kind of housing that high income groups would opt for at additional high stocks.