

Urban Upgradation: A Modern Need of Urban Areas

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ABSTRACT

The present urban society faces crises and we need to overcome them by upgrading the urban areas. The cities have been subjected to severe social and economic pressures, which have disproportionate impact on the urban environment. Improved Infrastructure makes the cities safe, resilient and sustainable. The development and improvement of urban infrastructure, that leads to the improvement in functions and services required for an economy is called urban upgradation. Infrastructure contributes by driving economic growth, facilitating urban mobility, ensuring greater access to health and education; enhancing safety and security; guiding urban growth; enhancing environmental quality; improving the living conditions and reducing intra-urban disparities. The approach of urban upgradation is improving the environment of the city along with enhancing the transportation sector, solid waste management, sewage and sewerage issues, by considering all the classes of people in city leads to an overall upgradation, and the improvement in quality of life of people.

The paper aims at discussing the need of urban upgradation, in the lives of people of urban areas.

KEYWORDS: Infrastructure, Urban Upgradation, Redevelopment, Regeneration, Transportation.

Introduction

The present society faces crises for several years, that deeply affects the construction industry, housing market, stopping investments in public infrastructure and rising the unemployment. So, it is necessary to adopt new strategies, in order to overcome this difficult situation. For the transformation and upgradation of urban areas and to preserve the environment and landscape, necessary actions, policy formulation, studies, researches, legislative proposals, ban areas, are carried out. Thus, the common agricultural policy, cohesion policy, community policy on research and development, transport policy and the energy and telecommunications policy, environmental policy and housing policy too, based on the principle of sustainable development.

The most important interventions, in the recent decades, targeting urban areas, are considering the urban upgradation which focuses on solving important problems of the city, which will benefit both current population, and the future population, in order to achieve the quality standards of the disadvantaged communities. It aims to solve urban problems and finding a long-term improvements to the economic, physical, social and environmental aspects of an area to be changed.

Most of the cities in India have blighted areas with severe stress on physical infrastructure and services and many of them have lost their productivity levels. The urban growth rate in India has been relatively low compared to developing countries. The annual exponential growth rate during 1951 was 3.47 percent. It came down to 3.11 percent in 1991. It has gone down further to 2.74 percent in 1991-2001 and Census of India, 2011 data reveals that it has slightly increased to 2.76 percent. Urban upgradation includes Conservation Development

Redevelopment Relocation Rehabilitation. Urban upgradation is an opportunity in solving problems such as: the lack of identity of a residential area, the total lack of public spaces and the high urban density, which makes it impossible the widening of roads, green areas creation, planting trees along the sidewalks etc. The urban upgradation term is synonymous with urban rehabilitation or urban renovation or urban regeneration. Urban upgradation involves the distressed urban areas revitalization, through actions such as: rehabilitation of historic areas; improvement of living conditions in residential districts; redevelopment of public spaces: squares, parks, urban furniture and so on; modernization of urban infrastructure: water networks, gas, electricity, transport infrastructure. A project of this complexity, such as that of sustainable urban regeneration can be achieved only through the cooperation between institutions, universities, urbanists, environmental associations and builders. Urban upgradation actions are based on social, economic and technical reasons. Social reasons are: improvement of life quality; adaptation of buildings and housing to our needs; improvement the image of the housing area or district; improvement the network of social relationships and perception of security. Economic reasons are explained by the fact that: we revalued building or dwelling and responsibility is and we must invest in it. Technical reasons, are explained thus s avoid excessive damage and increase of long-term costs.

Street design and modes are leading factors that can affect the city planning. Observing developing cities in the field of transportation planning reveals many weaknesses that have major effect on citizens, such as traffic congestion, a shortage of pedestrian walkways or cycling paths, a lack of affordable public transportation. Due to rapid urban growth, the increasing rate of motorization and lack of comprehensive planning, developing countries have a less than adequate amount of formal public transportation. In addition, the deficiency of the street design elements, which do not always consider the users behavior, has resulted in emergence of informal public transportation modes.

Urban public spaces have been involved in urban upgradation projects to create a symbol of the city and have been proved to be useful in urban upgradation. The elements of public spaces are applied to the area better known as open space and can be used in meaningful way to the public. Urban public spaces are for people to enjoy nature and provide a gathering place for a social event is to demonstrate the characteristics of an urban landscape and real life scenarios stage. It is to improve the quality of urban environment, promote people exchanges, the urban history and culture, as well as arouse people's sense of identity and belonging to all.

Challenges and options

- The process of urban upgradation must be carried out in the existing overcrowded and high density old areas without interrupting ongoing services or disrupting lives of their residents.
- The urban upgradation projects offer opportunities to improve environmental performance while raising the spatial and socio-economic qualities.
- The existing Town Planning Acts, City Development Acts, Urban Development Acts or Rules do not have adequate provision for urban upgradation, renewal, regeneration, redevelopment, reconstruction etc as highlighted in the planning commission report.
- Urban upgradation is a deliberate effort to change the existing urban environment through planned and large scale adjustments, to acceptable standard that are required for urban living and working.
- The urban upgradation has the options of eliminating of unhealthful, unsanitary or unsafe conditions of buildings in the core of the city.

- The urban upgradation will be accomplished through the improvement of existing structures and infrastructure, attraction of new investment and reinvestment, and prevention of deterioration of the properties in the city.

Urban Upgradation

Urban upgradation includes the development and improvement of urban infrastructure that leads to the improvement in functions and services required for an economy. Various terms were referred to these upgradation processes that are commonly used interchangeably. Terms such as

- Revitalization
- Regeneration
- Redevelopment
- Renewal
- Rehabilitation
- Conservation
- Restoration
- Reconstruction
- Refurbishment
- Renaissance

There is a need of urban upgradation in many parts of the city because the existing conditions in the city are not up to the mark. The infrastructure services provided are not taken greater care of, nor proper maintenance works are to be carried on it. In many parts, no proper road infrastructure throughout the city, as some roads lack in proper pavements, some in road furniture, some lack in signs and signals, whereas some lack in having sufficient carriage way width. Many urban areas lack in proper collection, conveyance, and disposal of solid waste, lack of storm water drains causing water logging of some areas during rainy season. Sewerage issues in many parts of the city, where some parts are having overflowing sewage water, that leads to rise of many diseases.

Government has launched programs like AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation) that focuses on infrastructure creation that has a direct link to provision of better services to people. Its thrust areas include water supply, sewerage facilities and septage management, storm water drains to reduce flooding, pedestrian, non-motorized and public transport facilities, parking spaces, and enhancing amenity value of cities by creating and upgrading green spaces, parks and recreation centers, especially for children. The issue arises because of lack of policies and provision for the maintenance of infrastructure.

In some countries, urban upgradation policies have existed before the formation of policies at urban level. By urban rehabilitating were obtained achievements in terms of: physical and socio-economic regeneration of urban areas; construction of main roads; emergence of new generating jobs functions; renewal of urban infrastructure; arrangement of parks and other green areas; construction of buildings with cultural and recreational functions.

Through urban regeneration were obtained: improving the aesthetic appearance of building facades; improving roads network and auto and pedestrian traffic; improving the quality of parks and sports fields; improving education buildings and not least, transition to an integrated approach of urban regeneration.

Valsad City, Gujarat

Valsad is located at the Southernmost tip of Gujarat with geographical location: 20.07° to 21.05° N (Latitude) and 72.73° to 73° E (Longitude). It has a population of 1,14,634 People as per the Census of India 2011. The area of Valsad city is limited upto 3.08 sq km. Valsad City is the Valsad District Headquarters. Valsad is well known for its production of mangoes, chemicals, textiles, horticulture, paper industries. Valsad - Umargaon industrial area lies within 50 km of the Dedicated Freight Corridor in Southern Gujarat. This region is connected by NH-8. It has a good connectivity with major industrial centres in the State: Ahmedabad (345 km), Rajkot (528 km), Jamnagar (616 km), Ankleshwar (150 km), Bhavnagar (514 km), Mehsana (419 km), Surat (77 km) and Gandhinagar (373 km). Also the connectivity with Delhi, Mumbai, Ahmedabad with the rail line of western railways. There are about 300 Nos. Large and medium scale industries in Vapi, considered as the main Industrial hub for Valsad District.

Need of Urban Upgradation in Valsad

In the times, where cities are progressing towards the aim of becoming smart city, the existing conditions of the city are not upto the mark, and lagging far more behind. The road infrastructure is lacking the finished paved roads in many areas, also lack of road furniture, signs and signals. There is a lack of parking space, some of the roads in major areas are not wide to withstand the traffic, leading to high congestions. Some of the areas are lagging in storm water drains, leading to water logging in rainy seasons. Some of the areas are having lack of sufficient sewage lines, leading to waste water nuisance, also resulting in spread of diseases. The city is lacking for a good solid waste management plant, also the collection and conveyance of waste is improper, whereas the disposal is at such toxic place, which causes a great damage to the environment and also the eco system.



Figure 1 Approach road towards dumping site



Figure 2 Waste scattered on the road edges

Figure 1 shows the situation of the roads, during the rainy season. The roads getting water logged with no sufficient drainage system. This is the approach road towards the open dumping site. The road is not paved norfurnished. Figure 2 show that due to the irregular road surface, the waste also gets scattered on the road, while conveying it to the dumping site.



Figure 3 Heaps of waste disposed at the Auranga riverbank

Figure 3 shows the dumping site, located on the banks of the river, It is such widespread, and irregularly dumped. The waste also being burnt at the site. The leachate also getting mixed with the soil water percolating through. And the waste, that gets mixed with river water spoils the river water, harming the water lives. Thus, all these leading to air, water, soil pollution, as well as there is no solid waste treatment plant in the city.



Figure 4 View from the Auranga river bridge



Figure 5 Sewage water disposed into the river

Figure 4 and 5 are taken from the road bridge over the river auranga, where it is seen that sewage water is getting mixed with the river water, that's a very big issue, polluting river, damaging the aquatic animals as well. Currently, sewage treatment plant is under progress.



Figure 6 Waste disposal at the road side

Figure 6 shows the actual nuisance of the waste in the city, as there is no proper collection systems in the city. The waste is scattered irregularly at many places in the city leading to unhygienic conditions.

Concluding Remarks

Urban upgradation is an absolutely necessary and irreversible process, aiming to: upgrade urban structure, rehabilitation of public use areas, rehabilitation of entire urban infrastructure, of residential buildings, including the rehabilitation of their total energy, of the monuments and historical areas, of collective use equipment, and improving mobility and urban transport too. The conclusion is, also, that integrated sustainable urban upgradation is the synthesis of possible solution, through which are supported existing cities, by applying bold strategies, rebuilding and regenerating the buildings and public spaces, avoiding the use of land, saving the energy, improving the traffic and streamlining the waste generation. Urban upgradation means to improve the quality of life and invest in the future. It is a very large project, difficult, but not impossible, but in any case urgent. Absence of planning and consideration of the needs of the users leads to mismanagement of resources and lack of provision of the infrastructure and facilities.

By urban upgradation program, it can improve the area and give it more functional than the previous situation. Urban upgradation also concerns with the physical, economic, social, environmental, cultural and historical of the urban area.

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