



Indian cities benefit from mixed use.

councillor. When implemented, it allows us and our children to face the reality of our city inclusive of the rich, the poor and the very, very poor.

The spin off is more than social harmony economic redistribution or mutually beneficial co-existence, it is a celebration of being humane. Since we are a proud democracy, we'd better learn to be socially inclusive!

The policy can be embedded in many ways depending on the degree of success we seek. Mixed use in this context is very topical. The other uses which can move into the residential zone are to be sourced from local culture and created by local demands. Grocery shops, small workshops, services like tailoring, mechanical maintenance, garbage recycling, home offices, small/medium IT firms, local vegetable farming and so on. It is an endless list and it should spring from socio-political soil.

Embedding mixed use housing in planning: Planning's delivery process is a hierarchical system. From the State Planning Policy, it filters down to the City Master Plans, wherein exist the Detailed Town Planning (DTP) schemes.

It is generally the City Master Plans that are in denial mode for such concepts. They usually lack a vision beyond the mundane functional city structure

model long disowned by academia.

The City Master Plan preparation and delivery mechanism is now a task of the Municipal/Urban Local Body (ULB). Earlier this task was undertaken by the state's planning department.

The ULBs are empowered to create city development plans and to arrange finances for their implementation and sustenance. The state policy must insist on a statutory minimum inclusion of mixed-use housing. The DTP schemes would then use the concept and customise the idea to local application.

This is the difficult part that calls for a learned approach to urban design within the DTP schemes. There would be stakeholder meetings including local merchants' unions, residents' associations, power corporations, municipal councillors, district administration et al.

Building rules need to be flexible to accommodate the local building typology solution. Tools like transfer of development rights, land pooling incentives, public funding of projects would be needed to accomplish the task.

The point is that if we need to have mixed use housings it needs to be through detailed urban design at the DTP scheme level involving user groups and stakeholders.

DENSIFYING SUBURBIA WITH MIXED-USE

Cities across the country are expanding at a brusque pace. The sprawl is triggered mostly by privately promoted housing layout schemes of various densities. Mixed use housing in low density housing zones would need to invent a typology of residential design that allows multi-functional adaptation of the home premise.

It calls for a little inventiveness in the way projects are conceived and marketed by the real estate industry. The ideal scene would be for the DTP scheme preparation process to have a healthy conversation with builders. Such discussions might now be happening under totally dubious circumstances. However, a legitimate engagement with clean intentions could deliver unimaginably quick results in our city.

Homes with additional space for a small office/shop/workshop, a cottage industry, rentable attic spaces for mini gatherings, guest suites for 'couch surfers', rentable dormitories, working women's hostels, mini eateries are all functional possibilities that can to be incorporated. Adding all these public front aspects to homes would stimulate a spontaneous street scene's emergence. This could bring the place alive.

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