The State & Urban Inequality session, Limalopolis

Housing for All & "Right to the City"

Slums and the City:
Housing for all is a significant aspect of development agenda, intricately intertwined with the land question. While issues relating to equity in land and land-use allocation are addressed through planning, the adverse land-person ratio in most cities, particularly for the millions of toiling masses, demands the consideration and achievement of collective ownership and sharing as an inevitable condition.

Right to land: Why is land price uniform regulated by free market forces or Why is low-cost land for promotion of affordable housing not available- Development plan of cities do not reserve land exclusively for affordable mass housing. - Land value is regulated by the free market forces. Land is traded in open market. For example In Mumbai cost of land contributes to over 70% of the value of real estate. So construction of affordable housing is impossible. A small 30 sqmt house can cost over …. US $.

Collective ownership and sharing are therefore important in the larger interest of democratising housing and the achievement of "Right to the City" objective. Implicit in the demand for collective ownership and sharing of all resources is the achievement of certain key principles of democracy, liberty; that is equality and fraternity- implying solidarity of the excluded and discriminated people in particular, mutual respect, trust and support. Such aspirations can be partially if not fully fulfilled by exercising integrated affordable housing plans.

David Harvey who speaks of "the urbanisation of class struggle" in his book 'Rebel Cities', defined the right to the city as far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city". Rather he says, "it is a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanisation. The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious, yet most neglected of our human rights".

2. Living in slums is not a choice: Why are slums proliferating- absence of production and availability of affordable houses for a vast majority of the population is an important reason. It is the denial of access to formal housing to the millions of poor and toiling masses that slums proliferate.

Residing in slums is not the preferred choice of the poor. It is the forced ghettoization of the poor and the marginalised. Rule of law seldom works in the pockets of parallel power where a nexus of slum lords, government officials and police, and political representatives control and manage land and the manner and method by which houses and services are built and distributed.

Moreover, living conditions in most slums are deplorable and oppressive. Low-grade and insufficient services coupled with unhygienic living conditions, adversely affect the health and labouring capacity of the slum-dwellers.

Repairing and retrofitting the adhoc civic services and collapsing infrastructure will not work, a planned redevelopment is the need of the hour. Redevelopment of slums has to be through participatory planning and reconstruction.

4. De walling the city:

What we are deeply concerned about, is the constant division of our cities into disparate fragments; both in social and spatial terms. Polarisation of people and communities in terms of their religion, race, caste, class, faith, gender, nationality …. is leading to social instability

and tension. Indeed, our cities are producing and reproducing backyards of exclusion, discrimination, hatred, neglect and abuse; even natural habitats are being systematically destroyed leading to increasing levels of social intolerance and climate catastrophe, thus undermining the very idea of cities and their sustainability.

This phenomenon is realized in many world cities, more critically experienced in the cities of developing nations. While cities are expanding, public spaces are rapidly shrinking, in both physical and democratic terms. The democratic 'space' that ensures accountability and enables dissent is also shrinking-- very subtly but surely. This means space for wider public participation and dialogue are shrinking. It is in these prevailing conditions that we are compelled to pursue the idea of public spaces as being the foundation of city planning. Public spaces ensure physical, social and democratic well-being of all.

The struggle for unification of the broken pieces of urban ecology is a political battle that has to be pursued through democratic struggles.

"Public action can play a central role in economic development and in bringing social opportunities within the reach of the people as a whole. What the government ends up doing can be deeply influenced by the pressures that are put on the government by the public" (Sen and Drez, 1989:38)

Why are cities being continuously fragmented and walled into contesting spaces Or Integrate and network the city- recognise existing land occupation pattern.

Develop integrated, Unsegregated land use plans. Price land based upon their use, thus challenging the free market trend of achieving uniformity that by design is primarily unjust and ridden with discrimination and exclusion. De walking is our key objective

5. **Open Data:** Why are data often skewed and unreliable for most people- open mapping is the way forward. Mapping of slums is a significant political task. Mapping…………..

In order to intervene with an objective of achieving unification of the divided urban landscape, mapping would be a good start. The process of mapping is an effective means for mobilizing participation. Promoting open data and organizing public dialogue are key tenets of democracy. Mapping is a significant political act as it opens new doors to socio-political understanding and valuation of the various resources—natural and man-made—while exposing and challenging the deep nexus between the various adverse forces that has over the years severed the various links and relationships.

A collective mapping process is also necessary in order to challenge the information and data that is meted out regularly by governments and their various agencies, which as we know, in many instances is propagandist and not necessarily in the wider public interest. The illegally land-filled mangrove and wetland areas manipulated for construction of various infrastructure and amenity projects or the case of saltpan areas being reserved for affordable housing, are two such examples.

All you need is the plan, the road map, and the courage to press on to your destination.

Maps are an insight into a nation's progress. Not maps that define national boundaries, but maps that define cities and neighbourhoods.

Maps that reveal the resources we have and how we share them. And the resources we may have lost.

Open spaces, water bodies, vegetation, wildlife.

Maps that make us vigilant and protective. Ours is a voluntary effort that has helped create a basis for the 'Open Mumbai' vision plan.

An even more concerted effort by government is needed to continually map the city in extensive detail... if we are to build a more equitable city for its citizens.

Open spaces reflect the quality of life in a city. In India's financial capital, Mumbai, rapid development and expansion of the city has resulted in the erosion of its open spaces at a rate that is truly alarming.

The 'lungs' of the city, like recreation grounds, parks and gardens, along with invaluable natural assets like mangroves, wetlands, forests, rivers, creeks and the natural coastline, are fast shrinking. It is our opinion that the situation simply has to change. The Mumbai Open Spaces Map is an important first step towards the preparation of a larger vision plan that will network these diverse open spaces and thus 'engineer' their expansion.

This comprehensive mapping has been carries out by P K Das & Associates, Planners & Architects. A 'Vision Plan'

draft with the objective of re-envisioning Mumbai with open spaces as the basis for the city's planning and development programmes, is ready.

Through this plan, we hope to ensure that open spaces in Mumbai are not only conserved and protected from all forms of unregulated construction activity but expanded substantially.

Mumbai can thus take one step closer to being not only one of the most important cities in the world, but one of the most 'liveable' as well

6. **Just & Equal cities Achievement:** Integrated planning for equality and justice: of slums across the city and their integration with the development plan in order to to address questions of density, FAR, Social amenities provision including open spaces, and infrastructure standards that are equal across the city for different classes of people. Key objective being the achievement of equal and just cities for all and the democratisation of cities. Case of Mumbai slum mapping and master planning of slums.

   Planning as a right: Why are city development plans rooted in ideas of achieving exclusive cities, manifest increasingly in the construction of gated communities- in order to push poor and working class people to the periphery and marginalise them through inadequate basic services and subject them to horrifying environmental conditions

   Prepare development plans based on existing land occupation pattern………………