Social Mix in Town Planning in Indian Context

1Ashutosh Gaikwad, 2Ninad Deshpande
1Research Scholar, 2Research Scholar
1Citified consultancy services,
2Citified consultancy services

Abstract - **The idea of social mix has been a beloved topic of discussion among sociologists, academicians, urban planners and civil engineers for a long time now. This paper tries to discuss the objectives that social mix is considered to achieve since the idea was first coined. Various literature and research studies about social mixing have been done in England and America. This paper discusses the concept in the Indian context as well. The research paper is based on secondary data with various resources which includes internet, magazine, books, international and national research papers by research scholars.**

keywords - **Social mix, Urban Planning**

Concept

Concept of social mix There is a widely held belief by government, policy makers and academics that living in clustered or isolated neighborhoods has a negative effect on residents' life chances over and above the effect of their individual characteristics. There is a large body of literature on these so-called neighborhood effects and neighborhood effects have been claimed in relation to a variety of outcomes: school dropout rates, social isolation, difficulty in finding employment etc.

Why is it important ?

Leadership -

It has been argued that a mixed community contains an essential group of knowledgeable people. To promote social harmony by reducing social and racial tensions This aim could be achieved by reopening channels of communication and interaction, decreasing distrust and hostility. The success of a social mix can be measured by the number of conflicts, exchange of ideas, networking among people, employment opportunities for diverse backgrounds etc and is dependent upon how aptly the social mix is implemented.

To promote social harmony- By reducing social and racial tensions

This aim could be achieved by reopening channels of communication and interaction, decreasing distrust and hostility. If people belonging to varied communities based on either different races, caste, color, economic status, social status, etc are placed together in a residential context then the perceived difference in the way of living in the minds of the people will become clear and the tension between communities will ease. The social mix of this type should not be made too severe otherwise the reverse effects will be manifested and more conflicts rather than harmony will be prevalent in that society. The degree to which we exercise this mix will depend upon the type of mix,elements involved, social, economic and geographical features of that area.

Employment and economic stability: Diversified population, it is said, permits `most of the city's needs to be ' satisfied within the city's limits' and provides a range of employment which promotes general security and stability. The more kinds of work there are available, the more likely it will be that every worker

will find a job.

Social Mix based on Social Status - In residential areas we can see a sharp divide between high income residential housing and low income residential housing. The expense of the housing in such areas is the major factor behind this divide, as lower income households cannot afford such housing. We cannot advocate social mix on the extreme ends of the spectrum i.e. mixing high end housing and squatter settlements. But what we can propose is, bringing close to middle class housing with lower middle class housings. It can be observed that such social mix will result in multiple advantages like higher standard of living of the people, shared public amenities and social bonding among these classes.

Reluctance for Social mix among elected members - Social mix talks about an urban utopia which is free from any kind of social divide. Social Cluster which is essentially a result of disparity in class, income, caste, color, religion, dominance, history or a combination of multiple different differentiating factors. Hence social clustering can be coined as an antonym for social mix. Social clustering is primarily a result of difference in income. High income households who can afford to live in the most expensive areas of the city who can afford high class residential housing prefer not to live in areas which are not as exquisite

as these areas. This type of clustering is governed by the invisible hand of the market which depends upon supply and demand of such areas and houses. Other factors of differentiation in this case are irrelevant and such scenarios can be seen worldwide in extremely high income residential housing areas. But there are many other types of social clustering which have been manifested by people - housing segregation depending upon religion (especially in India where there is tremendous religious heterogeneity and diversity) the western counterpart being segregation of housing based on color. Such differences lead to social clustering dependent upon social differences. A Hindu person in India will not sought his house in an area which has high number of muslim households similarly a Muslim person would not sought his house in an area which has high number of Hindu household. This is governed by the feeling of "safety" as a person feels that he is safer in an area which has a high number of people belonging to his community regardless of the condition of law and order of the state. Elected members/politicians have understood this social clustering and capitalized on this feeling of perceived safety that a person experiences had he been placed in an area where many people of his community reside. They have also encouraged such a type of religion, class, caste based divide. To understand the reason behind this, we must first understand how elections work in India. It is seen time and again that there are far greater chances a candidate in a constituency wins the election if he/she belongs to a religion, caste, sub caste etc which is more demographically dominant. Politicians have understood the winning formula in such a socially divided society and it is to their advantage that if a socially diverse population also lives in isolation it is far easier to win the election. This is done by selecting a candidate from that particular community that is demographically dominant as the votes would not divide in such cases and a higher number of voters would be only from a particular community. This can be done in countless different areas for countless different religions, castes and sub castes. Social mix also enables people from diverse backgrounds to make use of social infrastructure in the area. The roads constructed in the area are used not only by the rich but also by the poor, not only by a particular community but by all the residents in the area. The hospitals cater not to a particular community but to all the residents, similarly schools give opportunity to students for a diverse background which in the long term encourage the students to develop a feeling of cooperation and tolerance towards a different community.

Review of literature

A research conducted by BoglárkaMéreiné - Berki György Málovics RemusCreţan with the title ``You become one with the place": Social mixing, social capital, and the lived experience of urban desegregation in the Roma community. The paper, the researcher examines the relationship between social mixing, social capital, and the lived experience of residents affected by the desegregation of an urban Roma area. Using qualitative data from a participatory action research (PAR) process in Hungary, they explore the two-way relationship between desegregation and bonding, bridging, and linking forms of social capital. They concluded that the presence of strong negative neighborhood effects, acknowledged by marginalized residents themselves, indicates that social mixing can contribute to the enhancement of wellbeing and social mobility for many segregated Roma families.

A research was conducted by Afri Amira and Benrachi Bouba with the title 'Social Mix, A Living Together Through Public Space: Case Study The main objective of this article is to quantify the impact of public spaces to achieve the goal of social mix and its management, in order to promote living together. In order to carry out our survey, the study uses two survey tools: the mind map and the questionnaire. The choice of these two tools is not fortuitous. It has been studied in order to carefully check whether the constraints for public space development are dependent on the evolution of inhabitants 'social relations. Public space is a social and cultural place, of use and form, and an important element in the creation and development of social mix. Its presence allows creating a collective social life between inhabitants, whatever the social characteristics (age, sex, cultural level, origin…, etc.). It is necessary to think carefully about the city with the objective of social mix, by introducing the latter into the planning of neighborhoods, through laws and regulations.

A research conducted by Wendy Sarkissian, Ann Forsyth and Warwick Heine with the paper title 'Residential Social Mix': The Debate Continues' This paper discusses some of the goals which the concept of residential social mix has sought to achieve in the century since its emergence as a town planning ideology. Recent research is reviewed and some general guidelines for planning socially mixed residential areas in Australia are suggested. The need for Australian evaluative research is emphasized.

Objectives of the study

To understand the concept and components of social mix in the Town planning system.
To analyze the social mix system in reducing social conflict in order to foster individual and social maturity.
To understand the importance of physical functioning of the city and its inhabitants.

Conclusion

To conclude it can be observed that social mix in the town planning system is extremely crucial as the concept of social maturity is refined as well as social conflicts are reduced. According to the study, social mixing enhances wellbeing and social mobility. In a country like India where it has one of the highest populations in the world, concepts like social mixing is decisive. Social mix accounts in recent years omit an analysis of policy measures and an exploration of historical debates. Furthermore, the perspectives of those living in disadvantaged neighborhoods, who are most affected by social mix policies, are not explored in any depth in Indian studies. There are several key issues that need to be addressed:Where does the concept of social mix come from? What problem is social mix constructed to address? And Why does social mix remerge as a popular policy metaphor at certain times? The study also suggests that the desegregated population's lived experience is influenced by social mixing, and their social capital. Our study found that moving from a segregated neighborhood to a heterogeneous one was not always an easy decision. While some families relocated to a more racially diverse neighborhood, others stayed or moved to an area that was less racially diverse - similar to other settings. In both cases, the decision was based on perceived material and non-material benefits associated with social capital, including challenges related to stigma, which impedes integration. As polarized enclaves re-form over time, desegregation could inevitably result in resegregation in the future.

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