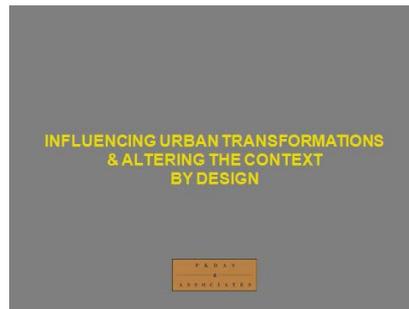


ET Bangalore Conference
“Transformations 2022”



1. Introduction:



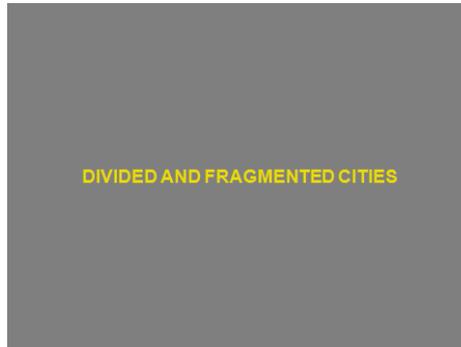
- a. I am foxed if not surprised, as much as many of you here would be, as to why design is not considered important in the development of our cities in India.
- b. Instead, development works are being continuously driven only by policies. Our political leaders and bureaucrats play dominant role in their formulation without any understanding or assessment of the impact they would have on urban form and the built environment.
- c. Impact of urban spaces on our lives is so enormous that it becomes necessary to focus on design that shape and reshape spaces continuously. As a matter of fact, design is an effective democratic tool of social change and therefore must be put to public domain and popularized in order to free it from the shackles of manifold control and exclusivity.
- d. The multiple barriers between people and development decisions that are being continuously reinforced by sophisticated policies and programs, are often leading to unacceptable and unsustainable growth with alarming social and environmental consequences.



Mumbai's Development Anarchy

- e. Through formulation of policies our decision makers, of which we as (planners and) architects are seldom a part, pretend to reflect social concerns of the public at large, but as we experience through the anarchy of built form of our cities, that it is clearly not the intention rather it is actively undermined.

2.



Mumbai's development anarchy & fragmentation of the city



Slummification of the city



Slummification of the city

3.



3.1 *Conflicts in City Development*

Mainstream planning & design ideas that predominantly reflect the political ideology and interest of a few are often in conflict with larger development interest. This has been realized through many examples world over, more particularly in the historical cases of Haussmann's plans for Paris and Moses' plans for New York and the protests that followed. Interestingly, plans for cities could otherwise be turned for exactly the opposite, i.e. to achieve social integration, as have been championed by Jane Jacob and others.

- 3.2 Another component of the many barriers that come in the way of unification of cities leading to this anarchy is the divisive and exclusive professionalization of planning & design of cities. Planning, Urban design and Architecture have been separated from one another. As a result the planners have lost their ability to visualize the built form that would emerge from their plans. Designers then pander over the sad situation scripted by the planners. Finally, architects chew the left overs of the two and boast of packaging a good marketable product. In this process we together fail in defining the architecture of cities, resulting in the anarchy that we experience across cities of India.

Planning
Planners

vs

Area Design
Urban Design

vs

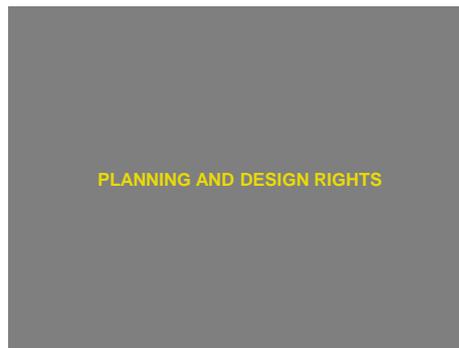
Builders
Architects

- 3.3 Today, planners and architects are caught in a web of contradictions. Evolving planning and design brief has to go beyond the confines of the market forces and their dictates and instead find new avenues to address sustainability questions and in the process changing the prevailing context. As a matter of fact these questions have to form the very basis of urban planning and design programs.

Such an approach will then lead to a paradigm shift in the understanding of cities and their built forms and structures. This shift would also mean going beyond the obsession of viewing cities only through the lens of financial valuation into integrating political economy.

Presently, in most cities around the world, construction turnover syndrome has come to occupy a major part in the financial turnover game. Under such situation, planners and architects are considered as mere service providers.

4.

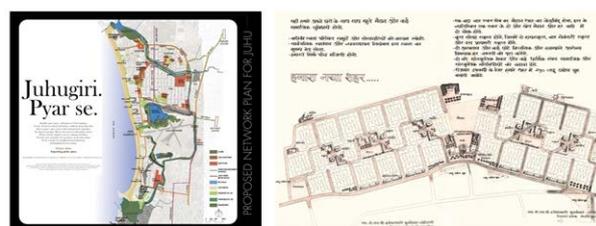
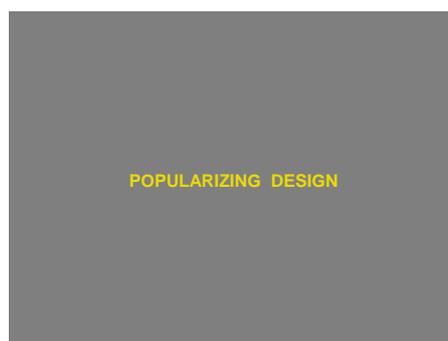


4.1 I would like to pursue an idea and put forward that as a demand that Urban Planning & Design be considered as a “Right” and brought to public dialogue. The democratization of urban planning and design would be a significant step towards the achievement of just and equal cities. Exercising this right would be an effective means for intervention to bring about the much-needed socio-environmental change.

4.2 In the context of rapid urbanization and city building effort, peoples movements in and across cities for claiming “Urban Planning & Design Rights” has therefore come to be an essential demand as much as other civic rights.

This is precisely the point I would like to make and hope we in this important two days conference discuss our way forward in influencing change our mind set and that of our governments. Plans and designs have to be prepared first followed by policies in order to enable their successful implementation. It is here that I would like to put a caveat that of

5.



Posters for a public campaigns in Juhu & Sangharsh Nagar



'Open Mumbai' Exhibition

5.1 Put design to public domain & a subject of public dialogue:

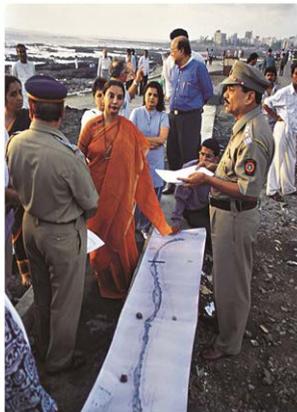
5.2 Architects and designers have to join social movements. -

To evolve new languages of public communication

In order popularize architecture

Evolve people's architecture of cities- a paradigm shift from exclusivity.

**Bandra Waterfronts plan
being discussed on the promenade**



That such plans and designs are prepared only through a participatory process, engaging people without any form of discrimination and exclusion.

6.



We have to pursue various avenues for city's development programs with the objective of significantly altering the prevailing context of fragmented and discriminatory spaces, in which we continue to build. Contextualizing our architectural endeavors to such city conditions we not only further the order of barricaded spaces, both physically and metaphorically, but also contribute to divisive and anti democratic ideas of city building.

Unification of the fragments :

Various public campaigns and a public exhibition

We have to commit to bringing together the disparate fragments of our cities that are being continuously produced and reproduced into exclusive enclaves of gated colonies. The cohesive structure of cities is being dismantled. Its public spaces are continuously shrinking as cities expand, both in terms of its physical and democratic space.

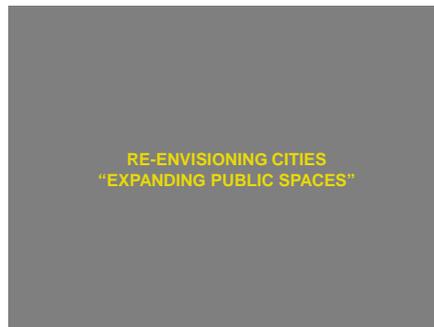
Then, How can planning and design be effective tools of much needed socio-environmental change? How can we as planners and architects utilize our knowledge and skills in evolving a close relationship with people? How can planning and design be democratized? How can planning and design be the basis of city development? Lastly but not the least, how can we collectively popularize planning and architecture and utilize them as instruments for mobilizing participation?

Certain times the opposite is effective too- i.e. to prepare plans and designs and put them to public domain for facilitating wider public engagement and thereafter evolve planning and design brief from it. It does not matter that in this process the initial plans and designs prepared to kick start participation are rejected or turned around.

This would be a time consuming and painful path, but the only way by which developments can contribute to larger public good and sustainable growth. We as professionals have to be develop higher levels of patience, endurance and persistence.

Just, equal, resilient and sustainable cities ought to be key characteristics of our transforming cities for the future. This is not easy, particularly due to the long history of polarization between design and development programs, which in turn have come to define the boundaries and ethics of our practice into many little worlds of disparate patronage.

7.



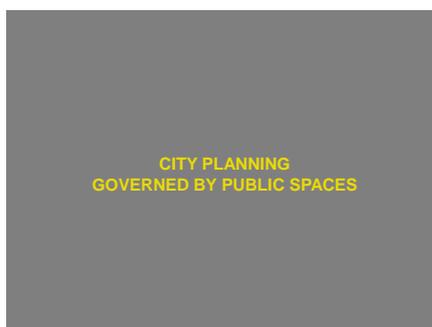
Focus on public spaces as an important area in our effort towards democratization of the city: Designs of public spaces are powerful tools of intervention.

Yet our struggle must continue to break away from these captive defines. We have to be proactive in changing the predominant views that have come to govern our practices. At this point, I will present a few planning and design experiences in this struggle for establishing a close relationship between design and people. And through such a process, evolve a new agenda for democratization of the built environment, more importantly of the public spaces in cities. This would be one important avenue by which we could successfully install planning and design as being the basis of city development plans and programs.

Public spaces to integrate natural assets from being backyards to proud forecourt:

Expand public spaces as cities grow. Arrest them from shrinking:

7.1



*Open spaces planning ought to be the basis of city planning.
Open spaces ought to be an integrating instrument of fragmented and divided cities.
Architecture of cities defined by the nature and design of public spaces:*

Re-envisioning cities: Open spaces define city plans



'Open Mumbai' Plan



Networking Plan for Pimpri Chinchwad

“Let Streams of open spaces flow across urban landscapes”:

**Integrating Neighborhoods:
Let linear open spaces flow across urban landscapes**



Iria Nullah

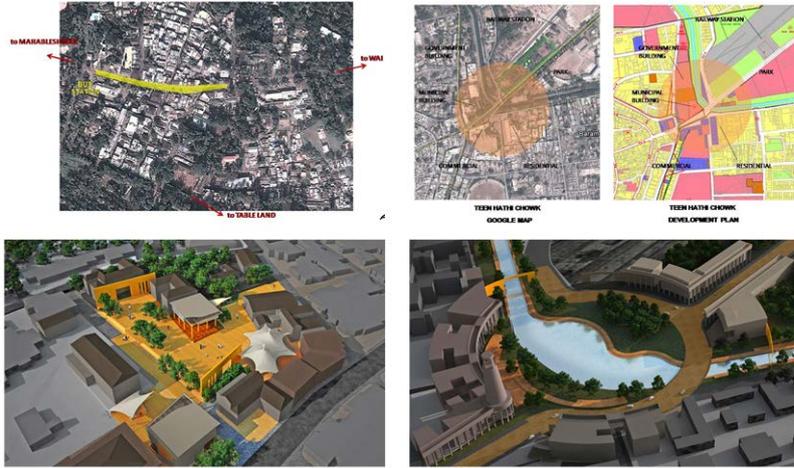


Pimpri Chinchwad Central Park

7.2.



Building a New Identity



Re Envisioning Panchgani:
A "Town Center" & Pedestrianization plan

Open Baramati :
Envisioning the Town Centre and its Public Spaces

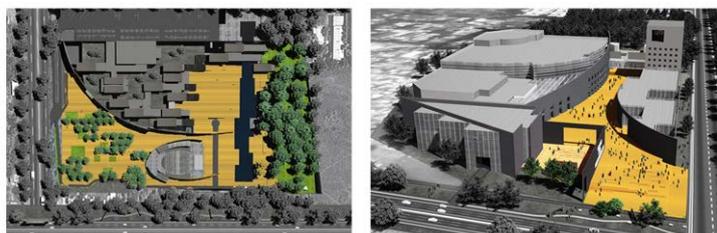
EVOLVING "NEW IDENTITIES"

7.3.

BUILDINGS
BEING PART OF THE PUBLIC SPACES STRUCTURE

Buildings to be conceived as being a part of the public spaces structure, not monolithic barricades into public spaces:

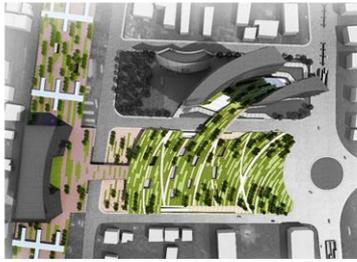
Expanding Public Spaces: buildings being part of open spaces structure



Balnagari at Pimpri Chinchwad

**Center for Performing Arts
at Pimpri Chinchwad**

Expanding Public Spaces: buildings being part of open spaces structure



**Ashoka Market and Railway Station Precinct,
Bhubaneswar**



Aquarium at Pimpri Chinchwad

Expanding Public Spaces: buildings being part of open spaces structure



Dadar Railway Station

8.

CONCLUSION

Cities are a huge depository of multiple and pluralistic ideas

Networking and unification of cities would provide space for varied expressions

Transformations through design would lead to a new architecture of cities

Cities are a rich depository of multiple and pluralistic ideas. Reducing them to single or exclusive vision would break cities down to oppressive and discriminatory order. The unification of the fragmented and disparate parts should not mean simplifying city building to monotonous repetitive blocks of buildings. That networking and unification of cities as a tenet of democracy can provide opportunity for varied community expressions in all its richness, bringing about much needed transformations through “Design, thus leading to a new “Architecture of Cities”.