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Residential crowding and urban planning: A case study of Chandigarh

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Abstract

Urban facilities behave like magnets for pulling factors of population (Functions, employment opportunities etc.) towards towns, cities and urban agglomerations. Subsequently, leading to haphazard growth of cities, and emergence of such problems as overcrowding, creation of slums and degradation urban environment due to pressure on all types of natural as well as human resources. It is usually accompanied by social ill health and disorder, characteristic feature of an overcrowded urban milieu throughout the world. This affects even planning of Cities.

Almost every city in the country has a rapidly burgeoning population of slums and pavement developers. In fact, Calcutta and Bombay are among the eight cities, which United Nations had determined as the most crowded Metropolises on the globe. Chandigarh is a planned city, planned to avoid ill effects of growth of population. Present paper is to know the nature and degree of crowding in planned city beautiful, 'Chandigarh'.

Census of India 1981 has been used to identify the crowded areas on the basis of sector wise density of population. It has been found that with the growth of population over time, population has crossed the limit of estimated population.

Keywords: Crowding, residential crowding, urban planning

Introduction

The growth of early cities had generally been governed by the availability of requisite resources and the then prevailing socio-economic organisations. The influx of the rural migrants leading to an overcrowding of the city

It was not a very strong factor for the growth of cities till the start of industrial revolution. However, this does not mean that the earliest cities were not crowded. Residential crowding has been an integral part of an urban system since the first cities came into being. The earliest example of urban residential crowding is recorded for the Greek cities, generally considered to be the first examples of planned cities.

In these cities "insula" was the abode of the common man. These structures were from four to six stories but not more than 70 feet in height. In general, the height limit was established because the buildings were dangerous, suffering from both fire and structure failure. Accounts of daily collapse of "insula" and killing of occupants and pedestrians are available. The number of persons per 'insula' are not available. However, the number of stories of each insula and their massiveness it seems that density within them must have been fairly high and the inhabitants from the poorer section of the society, could not have a afford high rents and had to risk their life by inhabiting buildings which usually collapsed or caught fire and did not have any provision of water.

These attributes also suggest that the 'insula' were also a means of segregating lower working class from the higher-ranking social groups. Another example of a similar segregation in Ancient city maybe evidenced existence of workman's quarters in Indus valley towns. However, this evidence is less conclusive than the one identified in the Greek cities (Vance, 1977) ^[16].

In India, during the more recent period, particularly the period of colonial rule, crowding was a distinct feature of only a few cities particularly those established by the British for the performance of industrial and trading functions. In the colonial spatial organisation large tracts of India function mainly as suppliers of raw materials which were collected at part of towns for further transshipment to the manufacturing centres located in Britain and markets

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located elsewhere. In return, these towns received cargo from abroad and functioned as centre of redistribution within the Indian territory. At a later stage, many Industrial and trade towns also developed near these collection and redistribution centres. The performance of urban functions of these centres required cheap labour in large numbers. The existence of such employment opportunities promoted considerable rural to urban migration which in turn resulted in an increase in the pressure on housing and lead to residential crowding.

The Independence of India was accompanied by a large scale of redistribution of population in favour of urban areas. One of the results of the partition of the country at the time of independence was a phenomenal growth in the population of towns located in North India. The independence of the country also initiated period of planned economic development. This promoted development in agricultural, industrial and transport sectors. It was inevitable that this overall economic development particularly in industry and transport should be reflected through a still higher rate of growth of cities.

The accelerating growth of urban population has been accompanied by haphazard growth of cities leading to the emergence of such problems as overcrowding and creation of slums. Almost every city in the country has a rapidly burgeoning population of slums and pavement developers. In fact, Calcutta and Bombay are among the eight cities, which United Nations had determined as the most crowded Metropolises on the globe. Slum dwellers for 38percent of Bombay population and 42percent of Calcutta live in slums (Sunday Express Magazine, 1987) [14].

An immediate victim of this overcrowding has been the quality of urban environment particularly in the large unplanned cities. It is usually accompanied by social ill health and disorder, characteristic feature of an overcrowded urban milieu throughout the world.

The enormous proportions that these problems have assumed in the short span since the independence of many of the third world countries in general and in India in particular made planning of cities almost obligatory.

Since independence several planning efforts have been made to regulate unplanned urban growth through various proposals contained in the successive five-year plans.

The first such proposal was contained in the first five-year plan, in which the main strategy was to clear the slums (India G., Five Year Plan, 1952) [5].

In the second five-year plan, this strategy continued. In 1961 in addition to the early strategy of clearance of slums implementation of a master plan for all the growing towns and cities, expansion of housing facilities LIG (lower income group) and EWS (Economically Weaker Sections) were suggested in order to check the haphazard growth (India G., Five Year Plan, 1961) [7].

The new proposals were in response to difficulties encountered in the implementation of the earlier proposal for the clearance of slums. It was found that the clearance of slum everywhere is impossible due to the limitation of resources, therefore, the new strategy was to improve the environmental conditions along with the clearance of slums in order to make an area habitable (India G., Five Year Plan, 1966) (India G., Five Year Plan, 1980) [8, 9]. These strategies were first proposed for the largest Metropolitan cities such as Bombay and Calcutta and were later extended to other cities. The Seventh five-year plan contains proposals for

small and intermediary towns also. (India, Seventh Five Year Plan)

However, the planning efforts are still at an experimental stage because:

1. adoption of a strategy for proper town planning has been somewhat late in our country
2. it is very difficult to assess the performance of planning efforts executed in the already existing towns. Such schemes have, of necessity, been operating under a pre-existing socio-economic context. The best examples of such schemes are the model towns and the urban estates established in many of the already existing towns.

One of the major areas where a fairly thorough assessment of the role of planning in the creation of better urban living conditions can be provided by those towns which have been created a new under a comprehensive town plan. One of the most well-known and extensive exercises in the field has been the creation of 'Chandigarh'.

Conceptualization of the problem

Crowding may be directly attributed to the non-availability of physical space for each individual where he can live in physical comfort.

Due to the diversity and contradictions in the characteristics used by various social scientists for defining residential crowding it is difficult if not impossible arrived at a universally acceptable definition of residential crowding as an urban attribute. However, an effort can be made by focusing on those characteristics on which there is substantial agreement, through the identification of several crowd-like attributes of some social groups and on the basis of event concepts.

The dictionary of Social Sciences defines 'crowd' as an aggregate of human beings in physical proximity brought into direct and temporary contact with strong rapport and mutual stimulation. (Gould). It would not be wrong to suggest intensity of these attributes may result in crowding. In this definition, groups not in physical proximity have a predictable organisation and groups in which do not have a proper rapport would be automatically excluded.

Crowds can develop spontaneously or through manipulation. There may or may not be a distinct objective or differentiation among the participants in feeling, behaviour and status positions.

A common sub classification based on the presence or absence of a central objective, is that of the acting crowd in which attention is directed towards some common objective and the expressive crowd in which there is no direct central focus participants engage only in excited movements. the example of this type are the audience groups and street corner crowds.

Social scientist big in consideration of crowds with similar observation. The selection of basic and Diagnostic characteristics is essential for an accurate description but then extension to other contexts frequently results in variation and confusion in the use of the term.

There is a general consensus with comment of K. Davis that "one criterion of the crowding is physical presence- without such physical there can be no crowd (Davis. K, 1949) [3]."

C. A. Rawsian and W.F. Gethys " physical proximity is not requisite to crowd formation what is necessary is that the individuals compositing the crowd must be in contact through communication (Rawsian & Gethys, 1948) [12]."

R. Brown defines crowds as collective that are congregated and polarised on a temporary irregular basis and which usually involve only temporary identification (Brown, 1954) ^[1].

But S.S. Sargent speaks of the audience as 'a highly structured group. Its members are oriented towards the speaker and performance and only incidentally toward each other' (Sergent, 1950) ^[13].

H. Cantrill defines a 'crowd' as a 'congregate group of individuals who have temporarily identified themselves with common values and who are experiencing emotions' (Cantril, 1941) ^[2].

R.N. Turner and L.M. Killian suggests that the members of a crowd maybe at various stages of development of crowd action feeling, thinking and acting quite differently, get contributing to the development of a common line of action (Turner & Killion, 1951) ^[15].

In addition to search direct contradictions definition, where is authors also list different characteristics:

R. E. Park stresses among other things the necessity of having rapport,' such a collectively becomes a crowd..... only when a condition of rapport has been established' (Park & Bingess, 1942) ^[11].

L.W. Wilson and W.L. Kolb stress the relation of the crowd to its social and cultural environment. 'The attributes are either a part of the cultural pattern of the community or they have been created alike in each individual. Thus, the crowding is a product of the community and its system ok social relations' (Wilson & Kolb, 1949) ^[17].

From these definitions it is possible to identify the following broad conditions which may be considered as comprising a crowd and conditions of crowding:

1 physical presence 2 constant contact through communication 3 congregation and identification on a temporary, is regular basis, 4 structured groups only incidentally oriented towards each other 5 congregate of individuals with temporary identification, common values and emotions, 6 A group contributing to the development of a common line of action, 7 A group with an established rapport, 8 Crowd as a product of community and its system of social relations.

On the basis of the various groups, such as (i) those registered as residing in institutional housing, namely hotels, hostels etc., and(ii) people belonging to different economic levels, qualify for being included in a study of residential crowding.

It is possible to compute the following indicators of residential crowding on the basis of different types of data:

A) Physical indicators

- Density of population in individual blocks.
- Density of residential structures in individual blocks.
- Number of households per census house.
- Number of houses persons was block.
- Number of persons per Census house.
- Number of persons per floor per building.
- Number of persons per room per house.
- Average size of floor space of living area.

B) Social indicator

social segregation, i.e., religion, class, caste etc.

C) Psychological indicators

- Residents' perception of their living environment.

- Duration of stay in the present locality.

D) Economic indicators

- Occupational structure.
- Economic status.
- Number of earning members in the family.
- Occupancy status.

Residential crowding can be defined on the basis of physical proximity of residential structures; or the number of inhabitants within each residential structure. However, in both of these, the availability of physical space where each individual can live in comfort and in conditions of rapport is basic. Its absence would contribute to residential crowding and the probability of deterioration of physical, social and culture environments.

In the present study, the number of persons per house has been taken as the basic indicator of residential crowding irrespective of the size of the house or its area and is, therefore, different from density of population.

Study Area

Chandigarh is located in the foot of Shiwalik Hills. Its adjoining states are Panjab, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana. It is capital of Panjab and Haryana and providing administrative functions. It has independent status of Union territory as well.

Objective of the Study

1. To understand to describe the nature and extent of residential crowding in Chandigarh.
2. To try to understand the role of planning in controlling or promoting or remaining neutral in such a well-known extensive exercise as the planned city of Chandigarh.

Methodology

The study is based on secondary data contained in the District Census Handbook of Chandigarh Union Territory 1981.

In the present study the number of persons per house has been computed and used as an indicator of residential crowding.

Results and Discussion

After partition, Chandigarh was planned to serve as capital of the former East Punjab. It was planned for a population of 5 lakh persons. The planning proposals were based on zoning principles, rules and regulations. In these, the basic objective was control of residential crowding, decongestion in the City Centre, a reasonable mixing of different social economic groups to avoid social economic segregation, fixation of the "floor space index" in order to decrease the vertical density and through it residential crowding.

In the present study, some conclusions regarding the extent and level of residential crowding of Chandigarh have been derived. Some of these can be summarised as follows:

"City beautiful" was designed to cater to an estimated population of 5 lakh people. It is inhabited by more than the estimated population, though Phase II includes partially developed sectors.

In Phase 1, heavy concentration of population is more pronounced in the sectors which have attracted specialised functions, such as Sector 22, Sector 17 administrative

functions; Sector 21 scooter market etc. or are inhabited by a high proportion of scheduled caste population.

The sectors 1-6 planned for high income group persons reveal a high level of residential crowding owing to annexes of the servants built up in the same plots. These sectors also contain a high proportion of scheduled caste population.

Like like other unplanned cities of India, crowding has been identified in the Karnel of the city inhabited by large proportion of houseless population such as rickshaw pullers, chawkidars, Street hawkers, etc., and bring out the position of the city model nearly the same as regarding residential crowding in other unplanned cities of India. Blocks covering a large proportion of the sectors shows a very high level of residential crowding. These are largely located in the extreme North and South of the city. Such blocks differ not only in their age of development but also in their socio - economics status.

The study further reveals that in the north there is a continuous belt while the southern belt is interrupted at two points by two blocks covering complete sectors.

It has been observed that high crowding is directly related to density of population which is further associated with low land value plots and stage of development of the area except in sectors 1-6, developed for high social economic groups reveal high residential crowding due to the construction of annexes which house servants and the functional appendages of the high social economics status group.

In partially developed sectors of phase II, high crowding has been noticed either where villages are located or in sectors which have a locational advantage.

Besides these, blocks with very high residential crowding are scattered throughout the city in various pockets, namely commercial activity, economically weaker section housing, specialised functional activity, institutional areas with high availability of Menial jobs, considerable vertical expansion or unauthorised structures (Jhuggies).

Blocks with moderately high residential crowding are distributed throughout the city not only between areas of very high and low crowding but also between very high and very low crowding areas as well.

Since, Chandigarh has not developed due to the process of urban sprawl but has come into being due to the planning efforts of planners, administrators and scientists under some guiding principles and objectives, like separation of different commercial activities socio- economic groups, different types of functional activities, like administrative, educational, industrial etc. these activities have acted as factors responsible for residential crowding. Thus, residential crowding has been observed in blocks where these activities are located.

Blocks with very low residential crowding have been identified in the newly developed sectors of phase II, In slum housing and socially backward and economically weaker section.

This is in contrast to the pattern identified in evolved cities and is related to the planning efforts.

On the whole, the phase I old developed sectors and specialized functional blocks have higher level of residential crowding except in the Industrial Area.

Sector 29, 30, 15, and 35 have experienced high growth of population due to spill over from adjacent overcrowded sectors that have either crossed the saturation point or will reach that stage.

It can be summarized that although Chandigarh was planned under very strict rules and regulations, keeping in mind the basic principles and objectives, the planning proposals have met with only with a partial success. The role of planning has remained largely neutral because nearly all principles have failed in actual practice. For example:

- Crowding is found in the core.
- Different socio- economic groups could not be successfully mixed as desired except where specific planning proposers have been implemented.
- Control on vertical density of population could not succeed despite specification of "Floor space index".
- Failure of zoning and reliance on the use of rising land values as a means of financing Urban Development.

However, it cannot be denied that in " Chandigarh", planning has played a vital role in controlling the residential crowding in industrial area so far.

It means that despite planning, factors like density of population, types of socio economic groups inhabiting an area, age of development, location of commercial activity, other facilities and amenities available nearby have also operated in Chandigarh as in other unplanned cities of India.

As in other unplanned Indian cities, emergence of crowding in Chandigarh has exerted an important influence on the deterioration of urban environment, both physically as well as socially, especially in the economically weaker sections housing (Sector 22) and unauthorised housing areas (Sector 26). It has rightly been pointed out by Balram Dat Sharma in Dainik Tribune that on both the banks of the Nala along with along with Sector 26 of Chandigarh 'leprosy of city beautiful' is flourishing. These jhuggies seem to be as if made up of shabby rags. Lanes are stinking, pigs are roaming and mosquitoes fly freely spreading malaria and other infectious diseases in healthy conditions. Only two taps for the whole population have been provided.

6. Conclusion

Failure to follow the rule of vertical expansion with floor space index, an increase in the percentage of scheduled caste population in a given area, high housing density, and the construction of unauthorised Jhuggie structures by floating populations all contribute to increased population density and consequently increased crowding. Even big plots for upper socio-economic classes are congested because helpers and Chowkidars increase the number of people living in each house. However, it is clear from the debate above that Chandigarh's planning has not been a total failure. In industrial sectors, it has proved effective. However, it cannot be denied that City Beautiful, a project designed by European urban planners in India, has failed in India, particularly in terms of residential crowding, despite the fact that it laid out some guidelines to prevent negative impacts of crowding.

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