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## **Master Thesis 2018**

**Research Master Planning and Sustainability: Urban and Regional Planning**



## **Urban Redesign In The Age Of Globalization - Creating Sustainable Identities**

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# CHAPTER 1 - GLOBALIZATION AND IDENTITY

## 1.1 Introduction

A place defines its people and is defined by its people. A place 'of the people' is defined by its people and is designed for its people. Identity is a broad term - but this paper concerns with the way people identify a place and the way people derive identity from a place. These two aspects of identity and how they contribute to the satisfactory sustenance of a society are what is focused on. The debate on identity with respect to planning and architecture have been directed at contextuality, the decline in 'vernacular' and on how we approach design in general. It makes sense to address the conservative temptation in our cognition to owe respect to the tradition and culture that we are brought up in. An insightful argument to evaluate the efficacy of that tradition in the present day context is this - know your past, live in the present and think about the future.

Sectors that are service-based, like architecture, are fighting to come to terms with their role in the greater structures (spatial, social, economic, political, etc) of society. "Modern architecture has always hung between its two poles: On one end providing a tangible service to clients, and on the other putting forward radical and often deeply political new ideas about the way we live, from housing to cities to fashion."<sup>1</sup>

In India, the political side of architecture is still in vogue. But wherever it seems too delicate to proclaim it as such, it has replaced by two forms of architecturally diplomatic terms - technology and sustainability. This helps sidestep sticky questions about politics and ethics. As a part of this subtle agenda, architecture has become modernized, to an extent where you can no longer tell which city you're in unless you're in proximity to heritage or religious structures. This may seem like a cry for attention, but in a country which houses multifarious landforms, people, cultures and languages, it is not something to belittle.

On a parallel note, 4/5ths of mankind now lives close to a city.<sup>2</sup> This is because it is not just education or jobs that draws people to cities. Living in or close to, a city is seen as being key to accessing resources that allow people to enjoy a higher quality of life. This means that cities are at risk of losing their identities. "Emerging trends in the re-inhabitation of central cities and government funding of numerous financial incentives have succeeded in making redevelopment a far more lucrative opportunity for developers over the past decade."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> (Campbell- Dollaghan, 2016)

<sup>2</sup> (TOI, 2018)

<sup>3</sup> (Bacon, 2008)

However, the redesigning process itself remains virtually unchanged. Maintaining a narrow spotlight on environmental remediation, modern material solutions and short-term market demand. Land use instead of design, drives the entire process. The approach fails to sustain and recognize that there are larger development opportunities based on local and regional context. Despite the fact that an increasing amount of public money is used to fund present proposals, development continues to overlook potential positive externalities and ignore the existing context presumably to avert risk and increase feasibility.

Hence, the idea is to evaluate an Indian city, Chennai, and evaluate what it has to offer in terms of identity. The evaluation is carried out as a comparison between various development and redevelopment projects within the city, funded and carried out by different actors and stakeholders. The problems in the selected cases will be overviewed from an architectural and an urban perspective. Examples of problems, for instance, can be the ignorance of the existing context, the preference to feasibility and overlooking the positive effects of impact assessments. Further assessment will involve the coherence and scale of the spaces, which in turn affects the respective city's identity. The ideas of land use, land design, demand, site engineering and environmental remediation are considered and the sites (examples) are examined in these respects.

## **1.2 Hypothesis And Problem Definition**

Global trends are called so because they are ideas, solutions, responses that are similar and accepted throughout the world. By design, a universal problem should have a universal solution. But this is not always the case. More often than not, issues governing cities are case specific and arise due to different kinds of problems that pertain to their respective history, culture and background. Hence the question arises - in this era of international interchange of knowledge and creativity, is it possible to create or sustain the identity of a city while making local transformations in accordance to global trends? At first sight the trend of contemporary projects in Chennai seem very modern, very globalized. The culture (vernacular, materials, occupations) that the city is proudly exporting, they themselves are not employing or applying.

As such, the hypothesis of this research paper is this - That the present identity of Chennai is neglecting its local imagery.

## 1.3 Concepts And Definitions

### Globalization

The term implies amalgamation of various cultures, styles, policies and ideas across the globe. This influence and amalgamation of cultures may lead to one of two things - the loss of local identity or the creation of a new one; it may collapse or restructure the cultural as well as traditional values of the particular area. This change may be seen as a change in the floating population over a land mass, an altered economical strength, or a transformation in the urban morphology by means of construction, networking or industrial establishments.

### Global Trends

Any idea, solution or change that affects or is found to affect cities and countries across the globe can be identified as a global trend. In recent years, this has stimulated critical thinking of universal solutions to global problems. This can be a fairly positive change although their local implications are a different matter altogether.

### Localization

In this paper, it refers to the regional and local adaptation of global terminologies, strategies and ideologies. It is a most important facet of sustaining local identity. By nature, it is unique to the context it serves and is an element of design that is often downplayed or brushed aside in the design of places, policies and practices.

### Identity

In order to allow for the comprehension and recognition of both local and global values and eccentricities of a place/ region (city, in this case), urban identity plays a fundamental role in urban life. This is due to the fact that urban spaces play a significant role in dealing with the birth, development and change of urban identity.

### Urban Transformation

Urban transformation refers to changes and improvements made in an existing urban fabric, in a manner that is both feasible as well as sustainable. It is a present hot topic as cities seek to gain recognition in international platform in an attempt to ease their financial strains and improve their international relationships. It is a matter that is influenced greatly by globalization and global trends.



## 1.4 Aim Of Study

The thesis focuses on the development of an evaluation tool, in order to guide and facilitate researchers to assess and clarify the impacts and opportunities of considering city identity in the planning process. If we can understand the elements of identity derived from the character constituents of the city, then we will understand what allows for the creation of a sustainable identity.

## 1.5 Research Purpose

The idea on selecting this area of study is to clearly map out and find loopholes and opportunities in the Indian way of handling City Planning, so that Indian cities may proudly showcase the varying diversity that defines their urban fabric. This topic is especially important to city and town planners, architects, environmentalists and the citizens at large. It is, after all, a very important thing to feel 'at home' in your own city. The research has concentrated on human-city interactions and citizen's opinions about what is done versus what must be done or what could have been done. This topic is only discussed in academic cliques, and it is safe to say that there is no hard bound information collected on it with respect to what is currently the scenario in the city of Chennai. This research aims at collecting and further conceiving and imprinting the ideas and opportunities that can be unraveled when the issue of identity is addressed.

The concept of place identity has been explored and talked about throughout the globe. Places are recognizing the necessity and value of being sustainably identifiable. As a substructure of self identity, projects that are being carried out will comprise cognitions about the physical world in which individuals live and the individualism they impart. A city can be seen as a space where memories are made and experiences felt. Since a city is a congregation of people of different styles, cultures, opinions and attributes, differently understood collective memories are made. Positive emotions associated with this memory make it favorable and transforms the idea of the city to a memorable place that is symbolic of who we are. It is very important, after all, for places to be comfortable for the people it is designed for. Urban identity can also be considered as an indicator of sustainable development as it ascertains the success of the local adaptation of the spaces in question. It is a shame to have a city with lack of representation of its own region's culture. It is important to understand 'Identity' as an aspect that can be translated in a way that reflects its real value in the communities.

We live in a time where life just speeds by; we live a fast paced life. What we need are places and spaces that help us slow down, make us look around and allow us to take in the view. We need spaces that make us realize that we're not only in it but also a part of it. We need to design

spaces that we identify with. We design our futures by designing our own living spaces; the way we create them reflects what we value and what we believe in.

## 1.6 Methodology

The research follows three steps in order to provide contextual solutions to rectify the identity crisis in cities -

**Identity :** This refers to the characteristics of the city, the features or what its known for.

**Image :** This refers to the image that the city portrays at present.

**Gap :** This refers to the difference or gap between the perceived image and the desired identity.

These three steps are used to analyze each of the identified projects/ cases. Using identifiers, the 'gap' is bridged using project specific requirements. This is done in order to identify positive solutions and outcomes of urban design on urban identity. The goals of the survey are to find out the elements contributing to positive urban identity by determining what elements the affected citizens need and want. The opinions obtained during the survey have been weighed up against the data taken from the literature study.

## 1.7 Structure Of Research

Initially, literature studies were carried out on all the subjects that are and could be involved with this theme. Then the case of the city of Chennai was analyzed, and different actors and developments that can be mapped throughout the city were chosen based on their initiative and based on their presence in social media discussions. In all these cases, the past and present are analyzed and the future scope is extrapolated based on current trends, responses and mindsets. The analysis is made based on the evolution of creative identities and its aptitude towards time and change. Interviews were carried out in both a one on one manner as well as via social media. The Chennai architect and planner is himself a product and subject of rich historical lineages and power constellations, and is a key agent in the materialization of modern structures in different locations throughout the city. The Chennai citizen has to live and deal with these forms and spaces every day. Hence, persons of interest have mostly been persons who are related to this industry and the people who are affected by it. These cases were reviewed using identifiers and aspects of identity and also from different perspectives. Then, a social media analysis, a site analysis and a comparative analysis concludes with the findings of the research - the problems and possible solutions and outcomes.

## 1.8 Limitations

The basic limitations of this research would be the misconceptions that follow the necessity, cause and effect of such a subjective field of view. The fact that this is a neglected issue that has limited research in the mentioned regions is another limitation in itself as most of the data has been obtained from newspaper articles and government information websites, which might be fairly limited. Limitations about giving solutions revolve around the face that implementation of the policies and solutions might not be efficient or effective due to political or economical constraints. Due to a continuous change in time and context, it is based on a tentative extrapolation of current trends. The research is low on geographical scope because multiple solutions need to be theorized for different locations, in order to create local identities that cater to local contexts. This research has focused on the urban environment. A number of limitations with the present approach is recognized due to the fact that this issue is subjective. Not all variables of identity (i.e. cultural background, educational level, tenure status, and so forth) have been analyzed in the scope of the paper.

# CHAPTER 2 - URBAN REDESIGN

## 2.1 Introduction

As suggested in the introduction, urban redesign that is globally influenced is very common, even more so due to the increased feasibility of development and redevelopment in certain parts of a city. The projects may tend towards being universally pleasing due to various possibilities. The present projects are designed with the idea of face-lifting the present image of the city. Often, the projects involve and use international designers, are financed by international corporations or are meant to serve an international company or service. As the city grows and expands rapidly, it creates both a challenge and an opportunity to identity. The new quarters can focus on creating newer, better and more inclusive sustainable spaces.

This research idea aims to re-examine urban redevelopment from the perspective of urban design in order to define ways in which design might offer solutions to the issue on identity and play a more critical role in future redevelopments.

## 2.2 Globalization and Identity

The influence and amalgamation of cultures associated with globalization may lead to the loss of local/global identity or the creation of a new identity; it may collapse or restructure the cultural as well as traditional values of the particular area it concerns. Globalization, by its very nature, is in a way an admission to universality in identity irrespective of patriotism, regional impulses, culture and tradition. There are always going to be similar buildings across the globe influenced by popular tradition. But it is not to say that globalization directly denounces the identity of the tradition or culture or vernacular but rather reinforces the widespread psychological globally accepted trends that we associate with at any particular time. There is also a tendency for the process of global development to be dramatically fast, resulting in a time lag for individual cultures to catch up to, and thereby modify it to bring in their own uniqueness and perspective. But in certain regions, even if the unique development does catch up, it already seems like a belated arrival to the party making it feel obsolete. This is perhaps what we experience as the lack of uniqueness in identity.

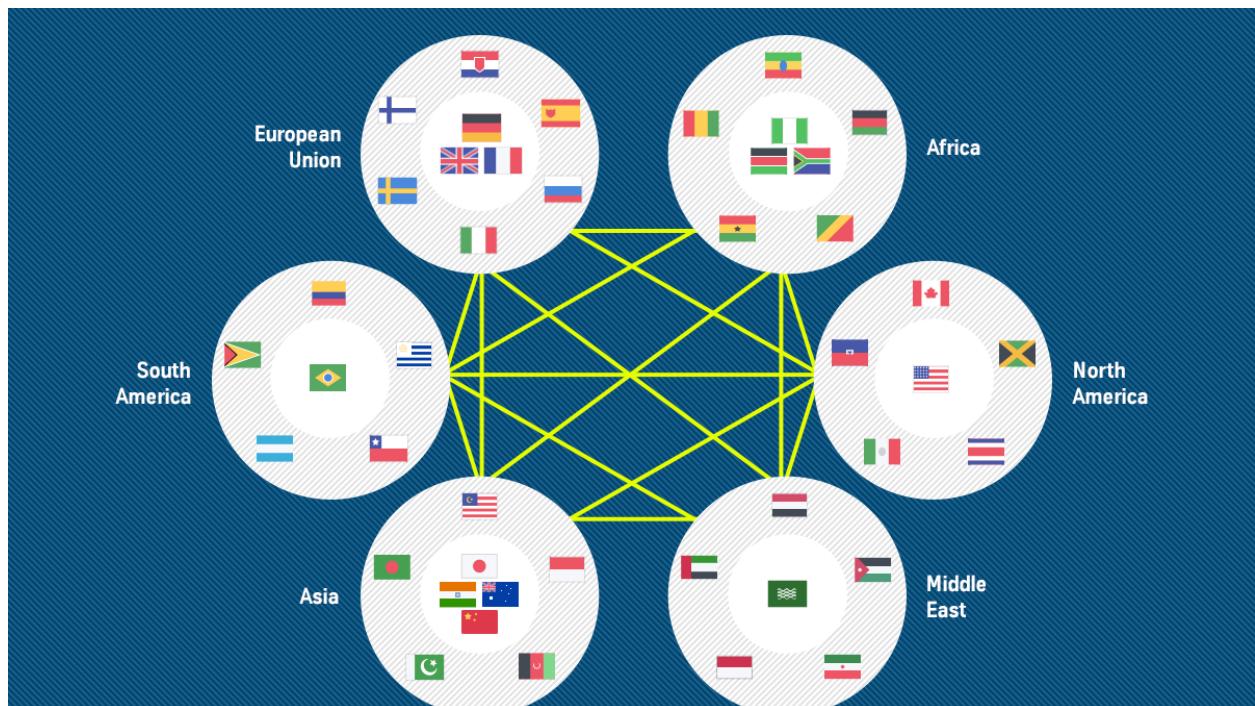


Figure 1 Today's Geopolitical Marketplace, Source : Parag Khanna, Urban Hub

## 2.3 The Identity Crisis

With the steady advancement of the human race in the age of information and globalized knowledge, these datum can easily dilute the contextual complexity that they must cater to. This happens in order to maintain the universality of the solution, such that the developed creative solutions are applicable to any city. The issue of identity in architecture and planning are long standing issues that need to be dealt with in a unique way, specific to the city/ region in question.

Globalization increases their effects on the cities by creating changes and transformations in the cities through their influence on the way of life of the citizens and the socio-economic structure of the city. Global trends create global demand of goods and services to which local markets must cater to. Furthermore, the centers that deliver these goods and services become symbolical elements describing the cities through new forms of entertainment or recreation that globalization created. However, this identifiable quality is constantly changing. Rather than their architectural individuality or their contribution to city culture and citizenship awareness or their aesthetic characteristics, the feature people truly associate with happens to be the universal need for a particular kind of space or service. User behavior should be constantly monitored, comprehended and extrapolated to suit different scenarios. A holistic adaptation is the key to true integration of solutions and systems.

## 2.4 Impact On Local Order

From the perspective of the planning profession, an increased flow of information internationally is one of the key advantages that would serve as tools to facilitate multi faceted and multi contextual strategies that may stand the test of time and change. Though there are common misconceptions that globalization has led to unsustainable, similar architecture all around the globe, there is a kind of efficiency in this idea; alternative global solutions are rampantly available. The application to context is where we lack, and this is where contextuality and identity come into play. In the case of the sustainable vernacular of earth architecture, we have the Moroccan plaster techniques that supposedly work as efficiently as cement plasters, we also have knowledge of the Venetian Marmorino that gains strength over time faster than cement. If we are not supposed to call this global influence as the positive impact of globalization, what else is this? If a certain idea is not working in a specific part of the world, it just shows the lack of research involved in implementing the same and can never be a viable evidence to denounce the idea of globalization in itself. Concrete buildings can be more ecological than earth in a location where one has to transport the earth thousands of kilometers away from the site. It is the duty of designers and planners to look into the local workability of the multifarious universal solutions that are easily available all around the world.

	Pros	Cons
Localization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting regional identity</li> <li>• Promoting a reputation for cultural authenticity, encouraging tourism</li> <li>• Encouraging traditional craftsmanship</li> <li>• Solving regional needs</li> <li>• Minimizing building costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stagnation in the technological advancement of construction methods</li> <li>• Lack of standardization across regions</li> <li>• Inefficiency in the face of swift urban development</li> <li>• Regional segregation</li> </ul>
Globalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technological advancement of construction methods can improve the living environment</li> <li>• Makes quick development possible</li> <li>• Contributes to a successful international image to reassure potential investors from global markets that their needs will be met (for example, world-class offices and luxury shopping malls)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of cultural traditions and identity</li> <li>• Regional interests and needs may be overshadowed by the economic benefit gained</li> <li>• Urban sites are used to project a positive city image rather than improving local inhabitants' daily lives</li> </ul>

**Figure 2 Pros and Cons of Globalization and Localization.** Source : The University of Hong Kong, The Hong Kong Institute of Architects

## 2.5 Redevelopment And Redesign

We live in a time when cities have become too comparable, too identical. Effectual urban design ideas, policies and approaches have the potential to reinforce local character and create places with identity. Therefore, a thorough analysis of the concept of identity is needed so as to produce an understanding on the ways through which it can be achieved without reducing the concept to a shallow aesthetic dressing. A place's feel, memory, experiences may lead to 'urban identity'. Urban identity is formed by various attributes, but its subjectivity comes from the meaning attached to it by the users of the city. This concerns elements of the built, natural and social environment. Hence, there is a need for a comprehensive approach combining ideas and intents achieved through a thorough analysis of the urban setting, and subjective opinions arrived at using user surveys. Some studies suggest that if a city has some identifiable districts and well-defined public spaces, it can be visualized as a city with strong identity even if there are weaknesses in other aspects of the urban environment.

Urban design, which is a means of shaping up urban spaces is a determining and canalizing factor in formation, change and reproduction of urban identity.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> (Karaman, 2001; Stobart, 2004; Sudjic, 2006)

## CHAPTER 3 - IDENTITY

*“If a place is meaningless without a subject, so too is a person removed from his own place is a man of uncertain identity.”<sup>5</sup>*

It is necessary to develop insights into how one can claim that a design is contributing efficiently to the construction of national or local identity. For this, we must understand the contemporary globalization of architecture and the identity of the city and functioning of its places.

Identity offers an economic value to an urban context, be it through conserving resources by utilizing locally sourced materials or by bringing international citizens to explore its cultural conviction. One cannot deny that traditions sometimes solved the harshest of problems in the simplest, most sustainable and identifiable of ways. This just goes to say that cities must primarily have local characteristics and identity so that their economic value in the world market rises and investment can be made for their further progress.

### 3.1 Sense Of Place

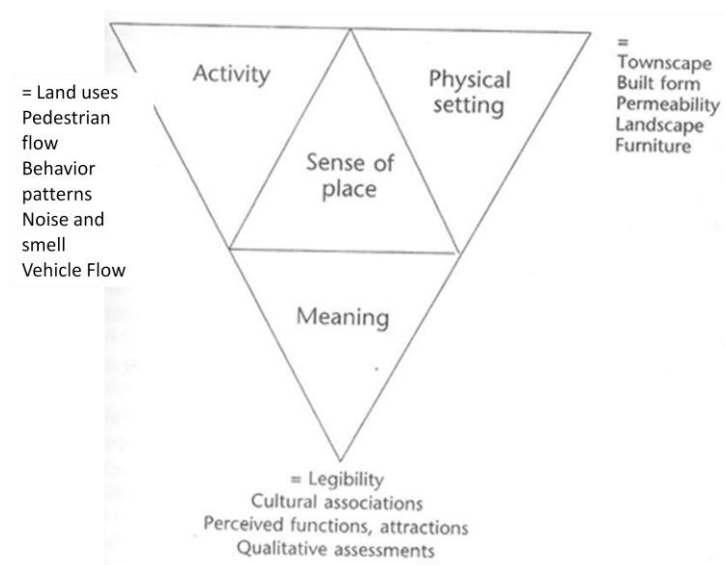


Figure 3 These diagrams by John Punter (1991) and John Montgomery (1998) illustrate how urban design actions can contribute to and enhance the potential sense of place. Source : Montgomery, 1998

Being an active part of a place encourages users to communicate and express themselves and makes them feel more involved with its affairs. The need for being able to identify a place was first highlighted by Relph (1976, 147) as follows: “A deep human need exists for associations with significant places. If we choose to ignore that need, and follow the forces of placelessness to continue unchallenged, then the future can only hold an environment in which places simply do not matter. If, on the other hand, we choose to respond to that need and transcend placelessness, then the potential exists for the

<sup>5</sup> (Cicerchia, 1996)



development of an environment in which places are for man, reflecting and enhancing the variety of human experience.”

## 3.2 Types Of Identity Of Place

As stated by Relph (1976, pp. 111-12), there are seven types of identities that a place can be associated with and that a place can be experienced as: <sup>6</sup>

### 3.2.1 Existential Insideness

*Where place is lived and dynamic, full with known meaning and experienced without reflection.* This refers to places that we traverse and explore in our everyday life i.e., the places we tend to take for granted. This is etched in our memories without giving too much thought to it.

### 3.2.2 Empathetic Insideness

*Where place records and expresses the cultural values and experiences of those who create and live in it.* This refers to public and private spaces that are associated with festivals and other such cultural congregations.

### 3.2.3 Behavioural Insideness

*Where place is an ambient environment possessing the qualities of landscape or townscape that constitute a primary basis for public or consensus knowledge of that place.* This refers to the geographical and topographical setting that defines the context of a place. It includes the landscape, the scenery and the kind of slopes and landforms that define the features of a place.

### 3.2.4 Incidental Outsideness

*Where the selected functions of a place are what is important, and its identity is little more than the background for those functions.* This refers to a functionally potent place, wherein certain kinds of activities occur and the place itself is defined around those purposes. The identity of such a place is the meaning it derives from the function it serves.

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<sup>6</sup> The text quoted from Relph, 1976 are italicized in the following text under this heading.



### 3.2.5 Objective Outsider

*Where place is effectively reduced either to the single dimension of location, or to a space of located objects and activities.* This refers to a place that is defined and identified with respect to its surroundings.

### 3.2.6 Mass Identity Of A Place

*Where an identity is provided more or less ready-made by the mass media, and remote from direct experience. It is a superficial and manipulated identity, which undermines both individual experiences and the symbolic properties of the identity of place.* This refers to places that are a product and creation of media trends. This imparted identity is preconceived by users before they experience it.

### 3.2.7 Existential Outsideness

*Where identity of place represents a lost and now unattainable involvement; places are always incidental, for existence itself is incidental.* This refers to places that offer fleeting experiences, ones that cannot be relived. For example, temporary multi use spaces.

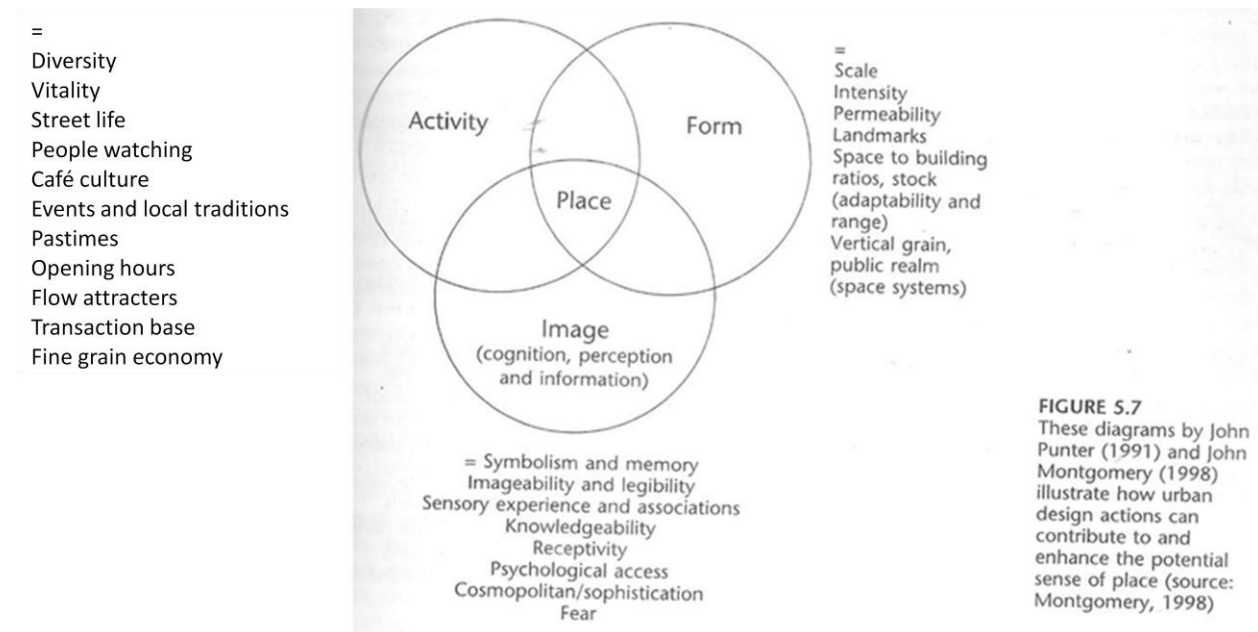


Figure 4 The diagrams illustrate how urban design actions can contribute to and enhance the potential sense of place.  
Source : Montgomery, 1998

### 3.3 Defining The Term

It is the duty of the urban planner/designer/architect to recognize and understand what makes a city unique and recognizable. This is especially important in the current context since technology and international information interchange can easily undermine the local uniqueness of a city. An instance of this is the new emerging housing developments lacking local appropriation, both in terms of architectural as well as contextual qualities, that do not seem to be able to satisfactorily influence the urban image.

Identity is defined as *'the distinguishing character or condition of a person or a thing'* (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, 1983).

It can also be defined as *'the extent to which a person can recognize or recall a place as being distinct from other places'* (Lynch, 1981).

### 3.4 Identifiers

We can say that the three previously mentioned categories (identity, image, and gap) combine together to form the scene of the space, from which 'identity' could be envisioned. That is why these elements are our objectives in this study; in addition, these elements will be elaborated upon and used as key characters when assessing the identity of the urban space.

The following aspects play a role in contributing to the spatial development and translation of identity in an area -

#### 3.4.1 Skyline And Identity Creation

Recognisability and symbolic value of any city is attributed to its skyline. History, sculpture, monument etc is widely credited for its ability in forming an identity for a given space.<sup>7</sup> The uniqueness of the created identity varies for every context. This indicator addresses the extent of the individual character created by the project.

#### 3.4.2 Cultural Aspect

This involves impact assessment on surroundings spaces, environment and users. Every project has an impact on its surrounding, which can be minimal or major. Documenting the amount of

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<sup>7</sup> (Clark 2008)

impact will help the facilitator understand the significance of the project. Every project is viewed differently and collecting data about people's perspective towards the change in attractiveness of a space, helps one understand the degree of the project's success in the making or transformation of that space. The environmental impact is always essential which helps determine its effects on air quality, soil quality, measure of noise in the area and water quality.

### **3.4.3 Economic Aspect**

This aspect looks into the functionality and feasibility of the project in question. This includes both the usefulness of the space as well as activities that organically evolve. Addition of aesthetic value to the neighborhood or the project also increases its real estate value. However, it is essential to know if the project played a role in increasing the economic value of the space.

### **3.4.4 Building Harmony And Density**

Identity is only enhanced by the presence of buildings characterized as appropriate for the urban context. This also includes the compactness of a building or a neighbourhood. Functionality coupled with attractiveness and identity, changes the quality of a space and this change can be either positive or negative. A measure of increase or decrease in the quality of a space is vital in evaluating the benefits of an urban project.

### **3.4.5 Urban Complexity**

The degree of maintenance of heritage buildings, the diversity, the relative population ratios and so on together determines the complex interactions between users and their environment. Unused spaces, empty buildings and the built environment together defines the urban complexity of an area.

### **3.4.6 Social Aspect**

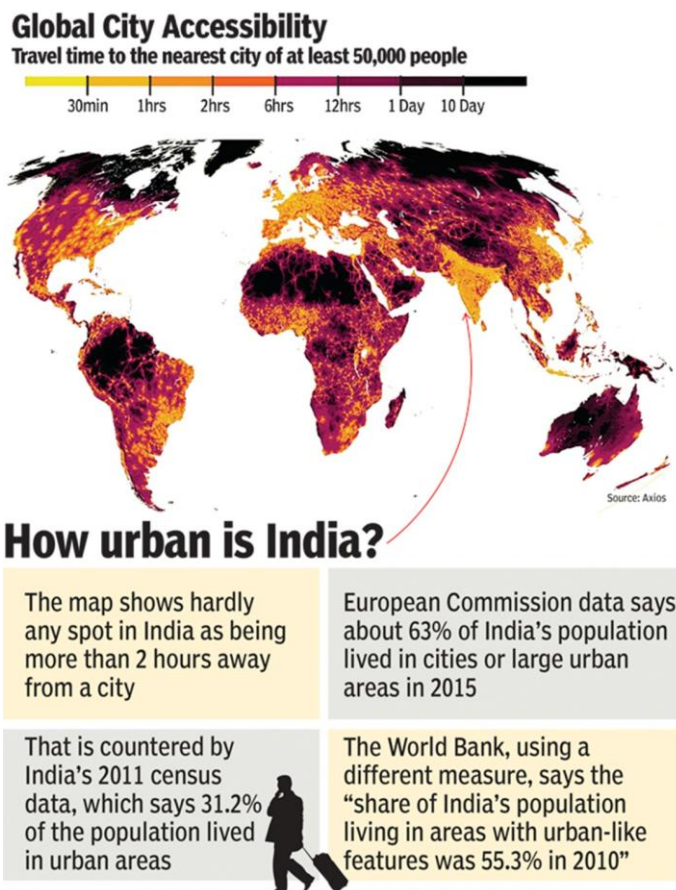
People's (subjective) opinions on any spatial transformation is one of the most important indicators of the reception of the design and intent. The quantity of activity generation is useful in gauging the positivity or negativity of the response; positive projects usually claim to increase the level of activity in an area and it is important to examine the level of activity generated by the project.

### 3.4.7 Lynch's Elements

Elements such as paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks defined by Lynch define a place physically, and enforces the memory of a place into a viewer or user. Experiences are further formed by the integration of these elements in successful permutations and combinations.

## CHAPTER 4 - THE CASE OF CHENNAI

In an era of uninhibited consumerism and commercialization, one can often hear this cry - the strive to emulate international standards and cultivate a global image of the redundant city. This urban growth for the sake of development neglects one important ideal – real human development, which is essential for the creation of homes, especially for the urban homeless, poverty stricken, low income sect of society. Physical elements are always the most noticeable and affective of elements to its citizens, though the quality of its effects varies from one person to another according to personal principles and differences.



Cities sometimes contribute to the "bigger picture" wherein identity is a key ingredient, affecting the quality of life of its citizens (stakeholders) both directly and indirectly. Users of a place must ideally feel comfortable and involved with the spaces they deal with on an everyday basis, but this is not always the case. Urban development, which plays a major role in imparting this sense of belonging to its people, can often be tempted and swayed by the vast array of "universal" solutions easily available in the market today.

The massive population that resides in Indian cities means that identity becomes an even harder asset to protect. It is very easy to neglect the local imagery in such a vast expanse of culture and population. In the case of Chennai, whose city limits are continuously expanding, thereby

Figure 5 Urban India. Source : The Times of India, February 2018

increasing the need to address the issue before it gets out of hand. This paper aims to identify strategies, if any, that are designed to eliminate key barriers to redevelopment, in terms of identity.

## 4.1 The City Of Chennai



Figure 6 The Chennai Skyline. Source : VectorStock

Chennai, the fourth most populous metropolitan area in India, is the capital of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Located on a water body known as the Bay of Bengal, it is one of the most significant cultural, economic and educational centers in India. The city, along with its continuously expanding adjoining regions, makes it one of the largest most populated cities in the world. As a growing metropolitan city in a developing country, it confronts substantial pollution and other administrative and socio-economic problems, apart from being known to house one of the largest expatriate populations in India and becoming an increasingly popular tourist destination.

In recent times, the government has been embracing a strategy of redeveloping strategic parts of the city. As in many other cities, such projects are driven by an international economic transition towards a service and leisure economy. These became key spatial and symbolic markers of a 'rediscovery' of cities as places in which to work, live and play.<sup>8</sup> The city is witnessing a major transformation in its approach to urban design, especially in the sector of transport planning. Some big improvements that the city's almost 8 million inhabitants will see in the coming years includes new housing infrastructure, pedestrian friendly footpaths, vibrant pedestrian plazas, protected cycle tracks, and a variety of public transport options including cycle sharing and BRT.

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<sup>8</sup> (Moulaert & Rodríguez, 2003; Salet & Gualini, 2007; Van der Cammen, de Klerk, Dekker, & Witsen, 2012)



The Chennai Metropolitan Area is one of the largest city economies of India and is known for various functions and aspects and hence nicknamed accordingly. Names include "Education Capital", "Automobile City/ The Detroit of India" and "India's health capital". The city is also famed for its Tamil (Kollywood) film industry. It is one of the highest contributors of per capita GDP and has been selected as one of the 100 Indian cities to be developed as a smart city under the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's flagship Smart Cities Mission.<sup>9</sup>

The projects and sites that have been picked up and analyzed have been chosen in order to directly illustrate the advantages of the strategic framework design process over the conventional, use-based redevelopment process. It shall be analyzed and observed how the Smart City stance, the issue of Chennai's hawkers has been resolved and how other street transformation policies are affecting/going to affect the city and its image. The idea would aim at arriving at optimal guidelines and references to develop this city, which is diverse and overpopulated. The result is a realistic, practical, and innovative blueprint of action that presents an already tried, coordinated, comprehensive approach to redefining the city in the Chennai context by redeveloping parts of it.

## 4.2 Sampling Redevelopment Projects

Case studies are examined in order to tease out misgivings of globalization processes when it serves a local context and also to identify the quantity of global dialectic that is accepted by the people. These projects have been chosen keeping in mind the various and different kind of stakeholders and citizens involved and affected by them. The case studies mentioned throughout the paper are internationally linked in some way or the other. Hence, their influence in the production of new urban spaces is credible. It is to be noted that these spaces are often designed (at extraordinary expense) with the intention of symbolizing or portraying a global urban 'utopia' for the 21st century. With the Madras High Court's orders of support, the developers and owners of Tamil Nadu



**Figure 7 Mapping Case Studies.** Source : Adobe Photoshop, Abilasha Moorthy

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<sup>9</sup> (CNN-IBN, 2016)

Housing Board apartments find that the path has been cleared for their easy re-development.<sup>10</sup>

## ACTORS and STAKEHOLDERS

S.No	Department	Works
1	Public Works Department	Desilting, demarcation & fixing boundary stones and bio-metric survey
2	Greater Chennai Corporation	Solid waste removal, fencing, boom deployment, developing parks, cycle tracks and walkways
3	Commissionerate of Municipal Administration	Solid waste removal, fencing and providing children parks
4	Directorate of Rural Development & Panchayat Raj	Solid waste removal, fencing and vegetation
5	Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply & Sewerage Board	Laying interceptors, installing modular sewage treatment plants & UGSS
6	Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board	Resettlement & Rehabilitation
7	Chennai Rivers Restoration Trust	Mangrove development, flora plantation, community education programmes and monitoring of project implementation.
8	Private Investors - Project specific (ITDP, Real Estate Developpers, Private design agencies and organizations)	Various - formulating designs and mediating between CMA's Masterplan visions and contextual requirements of the site in question.
9	Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation	Promotion of tourism and development of tourist related infrastructure.

Table 1 Actors and Stakeholders in the following projects and cases studies

### 4.2.1 Road Clearance

#### BRIEF

This project, cited in multiple locations, is predominantly detailed and carried out by the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy and funded by the Corporation of Chennai. All the concerned locations are busy homes to many commercial institutions. However, in contrast, these localities also aim to offer a calm residential location. Though the development was strategized after a thorough analysis of street conditions, the application of international standards on the activity mapping of the streets failed to recognize the all year round humid and

<sup>10</sup> (Balaji, 2013)

hot weather of the city. Thus, the act was seen more as a city beautification scheme and not really an issue addressing one.

### LYNCH'S ELEMENTS

This allowed for roads to be seen as usable by more than just vehicles. Street and building interaction has also been revamped. Hence, Lynch's ideas of paths and way-making has been considered.



Figure 8 Before and After Images - Road and Pavement Modification Projects. Source : ITDP, New York



## 4.2.2 Pavement Modification

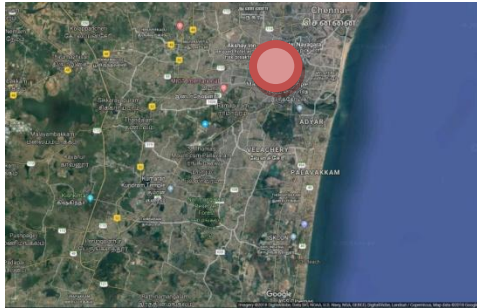


Figure 9 Site map. Source : Google France

### BRIEF

Kodambakkam Master Plan, in and around Alwarpet in Chennai, aims to improve the existing infrastructure of certain higher middle class areas. It also aims to accommodate the expected rise in city population. It aims to develop the area as one of the urban centers of the city.

What has been done is the increase in the pavement area of the streets, which altered the nature of the streetscape in two ways. Firstly, the street can no longer be used for illegally parking scooters and cycles due to the elevated nature of the pathways. Second, it has increased the comfortable walking of the respective residents.

### LYNCH'S ELEMENTS

Since this has been carried out in a predominantly well off locality, the identity of the locality has only been further embellished. It has only been identified as a district level intervention beautifying selective neighborhoods.

## 4.2.3 Redesigning Public Spaces

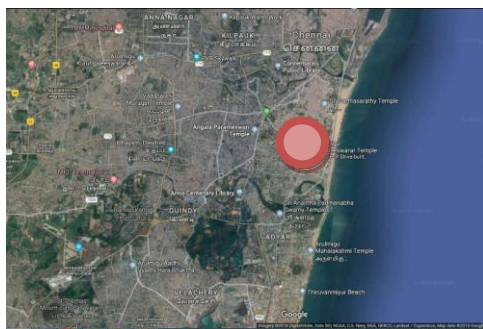


Figure 10 Site map. Source : Google France

### BRIEF

The transformation of the city's streetscape, public spaces, open spaces and circulatory paths have been carried out by both Government agencies and international agencies. It is also under the scheme to build good quality pedestrian footpaths, protected cycle lanes, pedestrian plazas, and greenways. The cultural attributes associated with the way things were designed and the citizen's characters were not proficiently looked into.

## LYNCH'S ELEMENTS

Apart from adding to the aesthetic component of the locality, it increases the usability of the spaces. Its landmark quality might arise from its functionality.



Figure 11 Before and After Images - Projects aiming to redesign public spaces in Chennai. Source : ITDP, New York

#### 4.2.4 Rejuvenating Environmental Hotspots

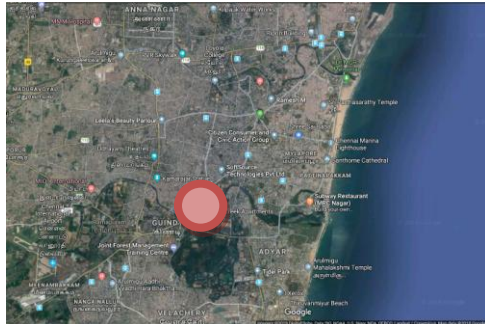


Figure 12 Site map. Source : Google France

##### BRIEF

The eco-restoration of Adyar Creek and Estuary is to be carried out with the help of the Adyar Poonga Trust set up by the Government of Tamil Nadu. It has become one of the lungs of the city and contributes greatly to the flora and fauna count of the city.

It was an especially positive development due to its contribution to the water drainage basins of the city, actively allowing for the drainage of flood water. The problem lies in the fact that the species grown and growing in the area are not all indigenous and it is subsequently those species that are destroyed during such calamities.

##### LYNCH'S ELEMENTS

It automatically becomes a node - not just environmentally speaking, but also socially, culturally and in terms of education. The roads and streets around it not only gain advantage from the quality of air and temperature, but also derive identity from a green landmark of the city.

#### 4.2.5 Hawkers Displacement

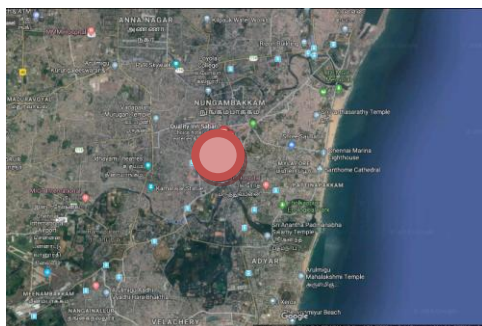


Figure 13 Site map. Source : Google France

##### BRIEF

Tnagar's redevelopment proposal consisted of a pedestrian plaza and the displacement of the vibrant street hawkers of Pondy Bazaar into a commercial complex. This was only recently successfully implemented but not well received by the displaced or the city's street bargainers.

It is to be noted that street vending is legalized in Chennai, as per the National Policy on Urban Street Vendors 2009. Even so, they were evicted for obstructing traffic and other shops. The solution did not account for the loss of the generations old traditional street shopping and bargaining culture that is rampant all over the country. It was also to be noted that this plan was



carried out by local authorities and the solution was a global response to what a shopping space should look like - i.e., a complex.

## LYNCH's ELEMENTS

Street-building interaction has been revamped and roads are finally functional. However, the lost 'landmark' and 'identity' of the place has not been made up for in any way.

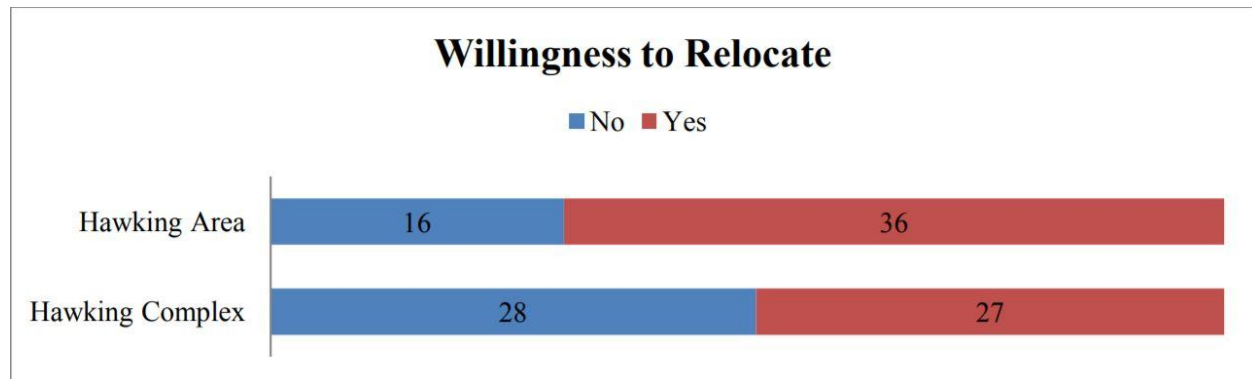


Figure 14 Hawker's Responses to Displacement. Source : IFRM Research Centre for Development Finance

## 4.2.6 Elawn Initiative

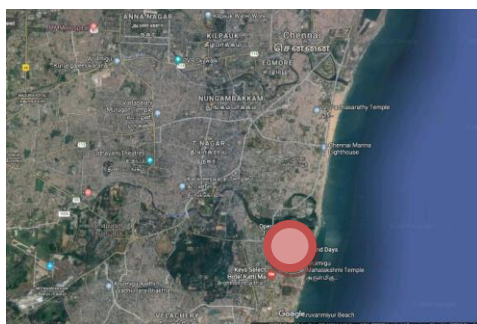


Figure 15 Site Map. Source : Google France

## BRIEF

The aim was to transform various sites across the city into multi use, socially beneficial, well connected, environmentally sustainable, economically feasible and culturally acceptable spaces. These appendages to the quality of life is improve its unique abilities to effectively reintegrate sites with surrounding context, accommodate potential adaptive re-use/interim use scenarios, allow for short-term private development as well as avoid long-term uncertainty.

## LYNCH's ELEMENTS

Apart from adding to the interactive component of the locality, it increases the multi-usability of the spaces. A landmark quality might arise from this multi- functionality.

## 4.2.7 Development Of Semmanchary

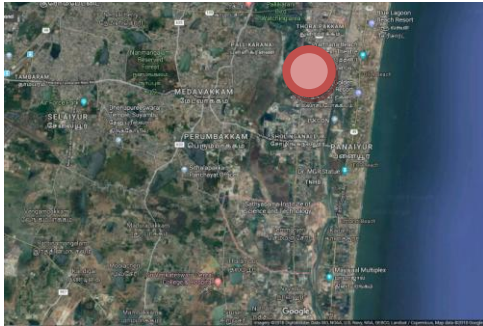


Figure 16 Site Map. Source : Google France

### BRIEF

“CMDA (the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority) is taking up studies through consultants to suggest master planning models to make the city more sustainable. The authority is also looking for newer areas for Greenfield development to reduce the dependency on established and congested areas of the old city.”<sup>11</sup>

Semmanchary Master Plan 2026 provides traffic and transport modifications and improvements in the city to provide greater connectivity and circulation within the city.

### LYNCH'S ELEMENTS

The nodal qualities are driven by the strong presence of the educational institutions. Landmarks are perceived similarly. The paths that traverse this area are presently in the process of improvement.

## 4.2.8 Affordable Housing

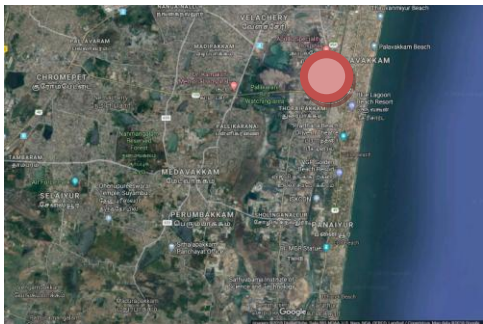


Figure 17 Site Map. Source : Google France

### BRIEF

Marginalized residents of Kannagi Nagar, a predominantly low income group neighborhood, who were originally displaced into a neighborhood of criminals are being separated into wards based on locality to help provide sufficient amenities and reduce caste discrepancies and conflicts. This large housing complex (two or three-storied buildings) was developed by the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board for slum dwellers

evicted from different places in the city, in order to make way for infrastructure projects or due to their location on objectionable and unsafe sites. It also accommodated many victims of the December 2004 tsunami. Lack of adequate facilities in the colony and limited access to urban resources have been critical issues. Yet, without solving these infrastructural problems, the TNSCB is constructing additional flats increasing the density of the already dense and under nourished region.

<sup>11</sup> (Shivashanmugam, 2013)

## LYNCH's ELEMENTS

Its future sees more neatly laid, cleaner roads and trees. The development of this area has begun with its definitively improved pathways and this contributes largely to its image.

### 4.2.9 Aspirational Development

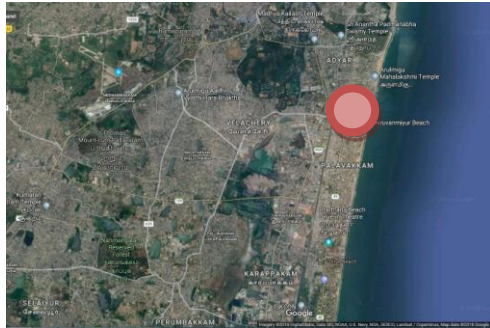


Figure 18 Site Map. Source : Google France

#### BRIEF

In Thiruvalluvar Nagar, Government officials have initiated the Integrated Cooum River Eco-Restoration Plan by The Adyar Poonga Trust. The aim is to rejuvenate the riverine system and Chennai River Restoration Trust has been entrusted with the effective implementation of the ambitious initiative of the project.

The advantages are made possible because the design strategies fundamentally focus on the organization of landscape in order to accommodate incremental and diverse development. It is, however, to be noted that this work is still ongoing. The past errors have been analyzed and the future of this undertaking seems to be well received.

## LYNCH's ELEMENTS

The project attacks the defunct edges of the area and hence Lynch's edge development strategy can be assumed to be satisfied in this case. Also, as in the case of the Adyar Poonga, this area also develops into a landmark due to its environmental value.

### 4.2.10 Metro Station Design

#### BRIEF

The plan was to encourage legal street art to promote local culture and tradition - an idea that is valid throughout the globe. Transportation waiting areas are treated like exhibition spaces giving its users a small insight into the ethnicity of the people they are amidst. Design distinction of various stations are proving to be an effective and useful street marker/landmark. Areas around the stations have also been revamped and facelifted in order to blend in with the smart technology.

## LYNCH's ELEMENTS

These designs develop and generate the image of the city, being a mobility hub it immediately assumes a nodal position in both activity and function. Circulation spaces and services change and develop around it.

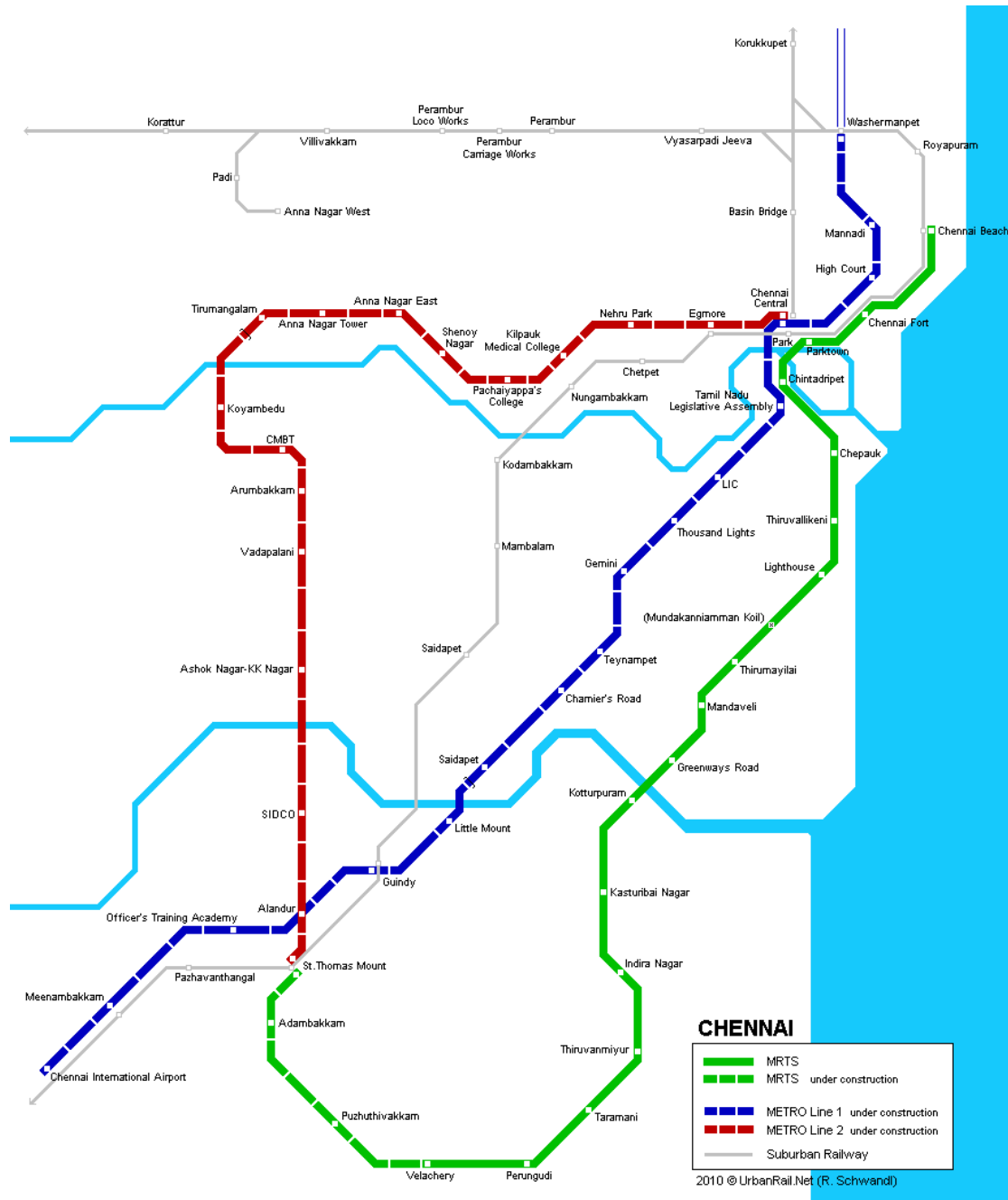


Figure 19 Chennai Metro Map. Source : UrbanRail, 2010

#### 4.2.11 Bourgeois Environmentalism

##### BRIEF

What started in Delhi with the closure of all polluting and non-conforming industries in the city has progressed onto other cities like Chennai where upper class standards are applied to urban spaces. It includes privatization and commoditization of water, with rainwater harvesting being absorbed by the agenda of 'bourgeois environmentalism' in the near future.

##### LYNCH'S ELEMENTS

Though it considers the physical elements of Lynch's imaginability, it fails to satisfy its socio-cultural requirements because of which it loses its credibility.

#### 4.2.12 Public Cycle Sharing System

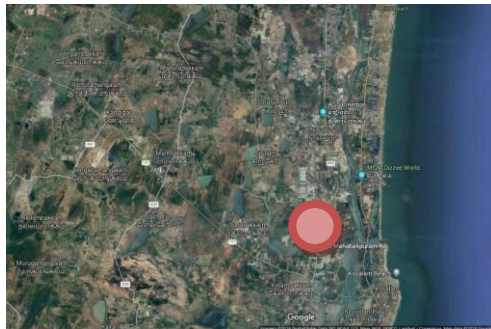


Figure 20 Site Map. Source : Google France

##### BRIEF

Institute for Transportation and Development Policy is helping the city with the introduction of a public cycle sharing system. Plans are also present to modernize cycle rickshaws and in developing an optimal BRT system. This has been introduced as one of the objective to help transform the city into a 'smart' one. With assistance from ITDP, COC has initiated the process of creating a Non-Motorized Transport Policy.<sup>12</sup> The policy aims to strengthen the city's commitment to non-motorized

projects in the design and management of city streets. It was adopted in October 2014 to make walking and cycling its priority. It aims to arrest the current decline in walking and cycling in the city by creating safe and pleasant walking and cycling infrastructure.

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<sup>12</sup> (Institute for Transportation & Development Policy, 2015)



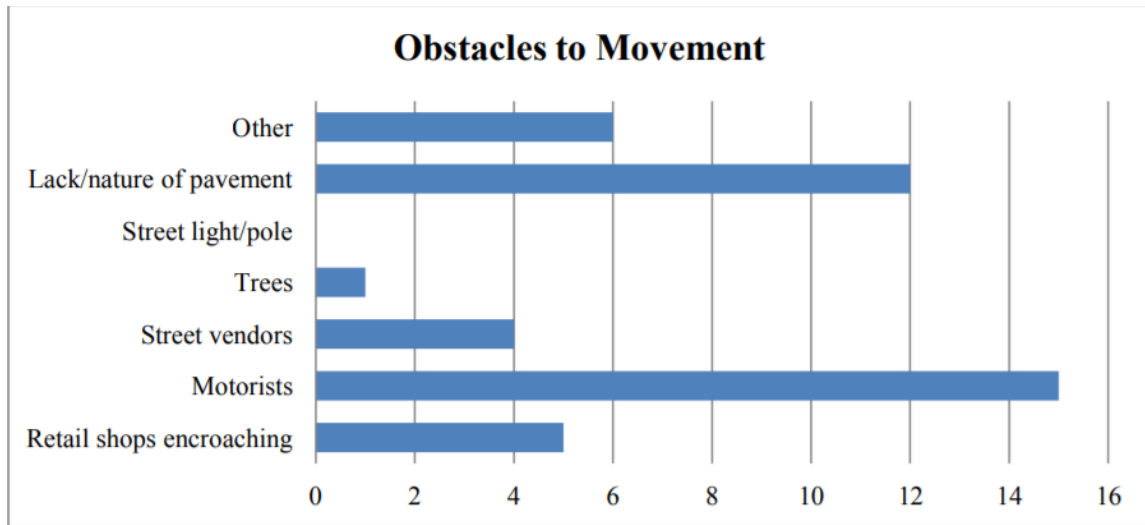


Figure 21 Obstacles to Circulation. Source : IFMR Research Centre for development Finance

## LYNCH'S ELEMENTS

Cycling stretches are usually along scenic roads of the city, thereby refining the circulatory paths and making them easily recognizable. Furthermore, the development of cycle sharing stations will create nodal points as well.

### 4.2.13 Tourism

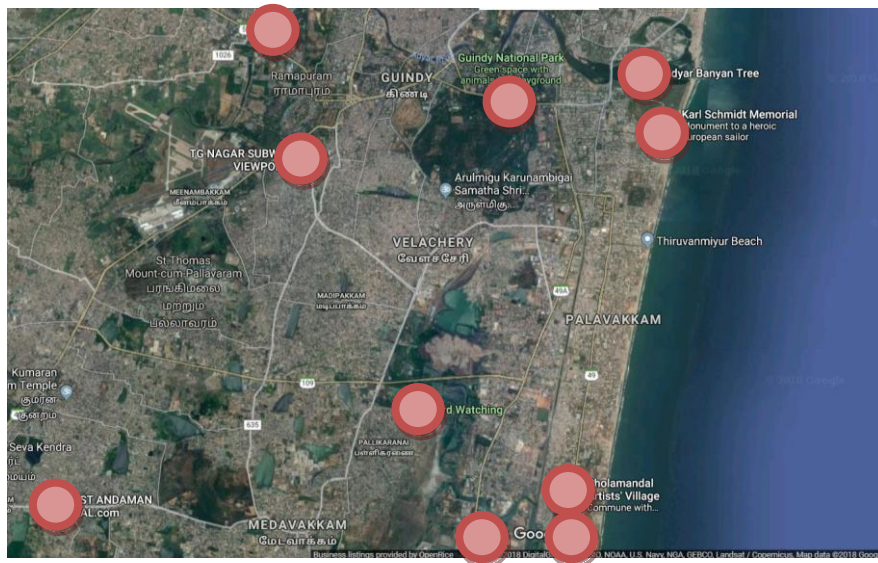


Figure 22 Sites Map. Google Map

## **BRIEF**

The promotion of tourism and development of tourist related infrastructure - such as temple front redevelopment and hosting exhibitions in locations such as Island Grounds is a part of the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development's strategy to increase State income. It contributes to the development of hotels, transport and fairs. Apart from spending on the maintenance of monuments, this scheme also aims at revamping the areas surrounding them.

## **LYNCH's ELEMENTS**

Tourism on itself is a landmark marketing strategy. This just adds to the overall identity value of the city itself. Apart from this, it also becomes an economic, cultural node thereby inviting activity and income.

### **4.2.14 Conversion Of Land Use**

## **BRIEF**

Low income and affordable housing is being developed predominantly targeting the lower middle class. The sites are spread strategically throughout the city. Those exempt from Housing Welfare Schemes are being compensated by new policies that have been brought by the Corporation and Government in order to provide opportunities to those displaced and homeless by other Government redevelopment Schemes. This Scheme is a direct result of the increasing population of the Chennai agglomeration and the decentralization of the city into polycentric nodes.

## **LYNCH's ELEMENTS**

Residential townships themselves are recognized as landmarks due to their sometimes extravagant adornations and infrastructural erections. The routes to these places have also been developed as part of the previously mentioned Transport Schemes.

## CHAPTER 5 - ANALYSIS

The results of the media study, surveys and on site analysis denote that the majority of the citizens, users and respondents consider the recent urban design works to have affected the identity of the city in some way or the other. These responses have been classified based on the kind of analysis done in the following text and then compiled to conclude the results and the expected/ extrapolated future outcome. Urban design and urban spaces reflect the character of the designer, employer or the institutions or individuals involved in the process of urban design such as their cultural preferences and expectations among others. Urban spaces serve as tools for the communication of certain messages rooted to the elements used in those spaces or according to their functions. The idea is that these messages are accepted by a certain part of the community and condemned by the rest. However the stakeholders of urban design, due to the professional education they had, are capable of scrutinizing such aspects in depth.

An overlap appears to exist between the evaluation of these projects by the people and their assessment as to whether the urban development or redevelopment is well designed or not. This shows that the people's positive or negative evaluations on the resulting urban spaces is important in their perceived image and the generated urban identity of the place.

The identity and image overlap is seen as a positive evaluation of the project space and its success in conveying the intentions of the designer to the people who use it. Similarly, a vast difference/ gap in the identity and image is recognized as a negative evaluation of the project realization or that it has failed to design a useful space.

### 5.1 Social Media Analysis

Social media analysis is gathered by reading social media responses and acknowledgements in popular media circles such as Twitter, Quora, Facebook, informal journal articles, newspaper articles and so on.

In this case, the policies and projects of road clearance and pavement modification are both highly discussed on social media but it is seen that they have opposite opinions on the matter. Road clearance schemes are seen as reinventing street design, activity and character, whereas pavement modification schemes are seen as class partial policies aimed at improving the already well to do quality of life of the upper middle class and the rich section of society. Bourgeois environmentalism is also seen in a similar light. The economic advantages that projects give its users are important for its proper reception. This can be seen directly in the cases of Kannagi

Nagar and Semmanchery. Even metro designs would be received better if it was more economically feasible and accessible to all income groups. Transport improvements have been encouraged greatly by the Government of Tamil Nadu in an attempt to reduce pollution levels and the dependence on non renewable resources such as petrol and electricity. The ideas of rejuvenating public spaces has not gathered enough momentum or attention on social media as there are only factual instances provided. It can be seen that the social media and networking has a great impact on society at large. It gained momentum especially after the first Chennai flood in the past decade (in 2015) where social media enthusiasts exchanged and gathered information on media platforms and provided relief and supplies to those in need. The influence is also seen to shape the present policies on urban design as people have relatively become more involved and more aware in the urban planning policies and procedures. Some media enthusiasts go as far as saying that the positive reforms carried out in recent years can be attributed to strong social presence. These claims may have some truth to them since there are increased informal gatherings to discuss important ongoing matters in many public spaces throughout the city. Chennai is also becoming well known for its widespread non violent protests against political, social and cultural injustices carried out against even the most minor of sects and communities. Public participation in the planning process can only be considered a positive and welcome change, since the results of the newly passed policies have been well received.

An example collage of the social media analysis done for the case of the Hawker's displacement from the Pondy Bazaar area to the built Government commercial complex is shown below.

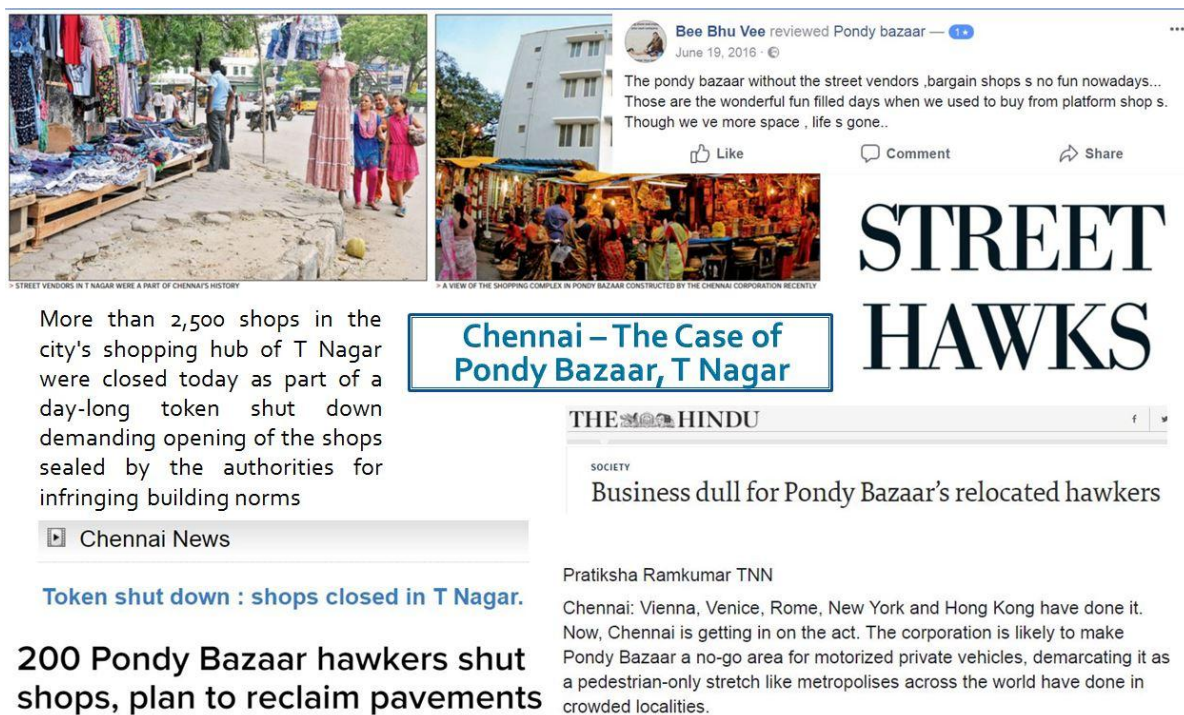


Figure 23 Newspaper Collage, Adobe Photoshop by Abilasha Moorthy



Chennai: After a ruling by the High Court in 2013, Pondy Bazaar's street hawkers were relocated to a Corporation Complex to reduce traffic congestion in T-Nagar. Fifteen months later, the complex wears a more deserted look than the desolate streets.

Monday, February 10, 2014

## Vendors Relocated in Pondy Bazaar Hawkers' Complex lose patrons

Urban Jungle: Street vendors get a raw deal

Courtesy :newindianexpress.com

## Problems of Pondy Bazaar hawkers ahead of deadlines

## Pondy Bazaar: the lost charm

### THE BEAT REPORTER

Frustrated shopkeepers draw analogies between the complex and a slum board building, a jail or even a hospital. Some like 52-year-old bag-seller, Ashraf Ali, say "It is like Mumbai's Dharavai, I have seen pictures of it."



Figure 24 Newspaper Collage, Adobe Photoshop by Abilasha Moorthy

### THE TIMES OF INDIA CITY

News » City News » Chennai News » Civic Issues » Pondy Bazaar empties out as street vendors leave

## Pondy Bazaar empties out as street vendors leave

"Since the shops have been allotted by draw of lots, those that sell flowers are positioned next to garment shops. There are 16 shops selling flowers and we have asked that all shops selling flowers be bunched on one side. We routinely sprinkle water on flowers and it could damage goods in the neighbouring garment shop. Besides, there is no provision for water to drain. The arrangement for garbage disposal too is inadequate," said Rajendran, a flower vendor. Flower vendors have at present occupied the front yard of the complex.

### "Evening shopping"

Most convenient time to shopping in this Street is in the evening. Shops are open from 10 am to 10...  
[read more](#)



Reviewed yesterday

Dilshan M, Colombo, Sri Lanka ☐ via mobile

### "Shopping street."

I love this place nice shopping street you can find almost every here. From dresses to food. Street...  
[read more](#)



Reviewed 2 weeks ago

Sandra N ☐ via mobile

## Bargaining at Pondy bazaar: What the mall kids of today know nothing about!



Chitra Narayanan  
@ndcnn

No more pavement shopping at Pondy Bazaar! Can't imagine the market without the roadside temptations!  
[thehindu.com/features/metro...](http://thehindu.com/features/metro...)



Figure 25 Newspaper Collage, Adobe Photoshop by Abilasha Moorthy

## 5.2 Comparative Analysis

The following tabular columns highlight how the different development and redevelopment projects fare in comparison to each other -

TYPE OF INTERVENTION	ECONOMIC ASPECT	CULTURAL ASPECT	SOCIAL ASPECT + NETWORKING	BUILDING HARMONY & DENSITY	URBAN COMPLEXITY
Clearing Roads for Traffic	This allowed for a larger pedestrian and the possibility of providing circulation for bicycles.	This was done after a dust analysis of roads, which helped analyze unused spaces on roads thereby allowing for modifications to make it contextually acceptable and usable.	Highly debated in relevant institutional discussions and lectures, not widely discussed as an introduced policy intervention.	Buildings that started out at the street or road edge were given a consequential setback, thereby making it more aesthetic and looking less dense.	The improvement in the kind of traffic that could be introduced, subsequently lead to an improved efficiency of the roads.
Widening Pavements	The economic benefits of this is still not evident but it has caused some problems in places that depended on streetside vehicular parking spaces.	This was done in order to improve the quality of pedestrian movement and circulation through the city. This allows for more 'coincidental' social interaction and human contact.	Discussed in educational platforms, especially alongside present examples of adopting principles of new urbanism.	Giving an offset from the street helps clearly demarcate the street from the plots of land and this has both aesthetic and efficiency benefits.	Different levels of walking gives people a sense of boundary, safety and the comfort of traversing through a pathway.
Redesigning Public Spaces	This allows for an improved quality of outdoor spaces, which means more people will be comfortably paced in the city, which is highly required of the city.	The cultural setup is constantly changing as people get more in line with global ideas of comfort and quality. The modern idea of providing passively cooling designs to facilitate outdoor interactions has been considered.	There are many opinions on the subject, but no discussions on the actual situation.	The street section becomes more engaging and harmonious and spill out spaces become more comfortable and consequently more usable.	It increases the complexity in terms of population diversity, allows for development of organically functional spaces and diversity in terms of street sectional forms.
Rejuvenating Environmental Hotspots- Adyar Poonga	The economic benefits of this scheme come from the fact that there is a dense preserved bio-sanctuary within the city that can be utilized for educational as well as recreational purposes. Though this project does not do justice to its aim, it is a trial in the right direction.	The cultural significance of indigenous species of flora and fauna are vastly under estimated. Studies now show of the significant impact they could've made during calamities(floods and cyclones). The recognition of this aspect is itself a positive direction on city development.	Highly debated in relevant institutional discussions and lectures and widely discussed as an introduced policy intervention.	It gives a vast open area with great environmental value to the city. It also serves as a 'lung of the city' which translates to the site's translation into a breather spot in the city.	It vastly contributes to the urban complexity of the city as it offers a different, more natural diversity within the monotony of the city.

Table 2 Comparative Analysis Part 1. Made by Abilasha Moorthy



TYPE OF INTERVENTION	ECONOMIC ASPECT	CULTURAL ASPECT	SOCIAL ASPECT + NETWORKING	BUILDING HARMONY & DENSITY	URBAN COMPLEXITY
Hawkers Displacement	The eviction of street hawkers has reflected poorly on their businesses. People less often take the trouble and find the shops inside the new complex. Big shop owners are however relieved due to the absence of hindrances to their shop entrances.	The reduction of the human-human interaction and human-street interaction, congestion and traffic reduction, clearance of shops and illegal vehicular parking from pathways for hygiene and circulation. An important loss is the destruction of the culturally prosperous street shop bargaining.	Highly debated in different forms of media in view of its iconic and popular past.	Buildings are actually visible for the first time in decades. In this case, a visible generic street elevation does not necessarily indicate a positive change. The loss of street character and activity has led to the loss in a sense of place.	The chaotic beauty of Pondy Bazaar has been lost after the displacement. Though problems were solved to modern standards, local culture calls for the opposite. Street hawkers formed the identity of Pondy Bazaar and their absence has taken the charm away from the area.
	This aspect is well accounted for since it creates points of generation of income. The flexibility of spaces can thereby be stretched. This also encourages future developments to be of similar nature.	Green Bazaars, organised by The Alternative.in, is keen on promoting sustainable lifestyles. In 2014 and 2015, several such bazaars showcased local activities of people and groups in organic farming, food, kitchen gardening, composting, recycling, etc.	Not enough information is available to the public and hence not discussed or is not evident on social platforms, but it is predicted to go viral since such initiatives have been well received in the past.	It gives a dynamic outlook to the building harmony. Activity brings about more interaction, and in this case the interaction is culturally valid. Also, the activity being occasional causes a synergy between buildings and the spaces around/ associated with them.	The build up of appropriate spaces in the city with a view to triggering a discourse on alternative pathways to urban sustainability is heralding the city towards creative intents.
Semmanchery - Developing area	This development intends to reduce the dependency on established and congested areas of the old city. It contributes greatly to the real estate of the city, housing both affordable living areas as well as universities.	Plans involve the development of social infrastructure around commercial and residential sectors.	Local home owners Welfare Associations along with assistance from Corporation officials helped in implementing strategies to develop flood mitigation. It has been acknowledged in social media and newspapers.	Being a Housing Board dominated area, it is extremely both mundane as well as dense. Roads are both unsafe and untraversable. Infrastructural developments are ongoing.	The area is known for its mass housing, with lack of proper drainage facilities and bus services. Hence its urban design and contribution has been obstructed.
Kannagi Nagar - Lower income group	The deplorable conditions (inadequate water, ration shops, schools, malfunctioning drainage, streetlights and a lack of supplies) are being transformed into livable environments. The concerned authorities have called for allocating more funds for their sustenance.	Perceptions about the community outside are very negative. This initiative was taken up in order to change this misconception and integrate it into society.	Discussed in news and educational platforms, especially in discussions relating to crime, poverty and social segregation.	Housing in this area will constitute majorly those provided by the Tamil Nadu Housing Board which will probably be just as mundane as it is dense. Issues have been noted and solutions are being sought and tried.	For a city to functional optimally, there has to be a balanced proportions of workers with proper access to affordable housing within city limits. This allows for an optimal complexity in terms of urban services and quality of life.
Tiruvalluvar Nagar - Aspirational development	Public space is very important for comfortable community living. It is these spaces that can easily transform into entrepreneurial spaces. Economic diversity is important.	The project aims to thwart the direct impact of polluted anoxic stretches, as well as erase existing public health and odour concerns. If the river front within urbanized areas is developed, then its potential can be further explored.	Highly advertized and discussed in several national as well international articles, especially in platforms that seek out issues and solutions regarding the environment.	Densely populated urban areas contribute greatly to the Cooum pollution. Regulating building, activity and people in areas to prevent their overuse and exploitation.	Allocating spaces for creativity generates its own rewards, and it's very important to design city spaces with area that can be used multi functionally, can house creative think tanks, etc.

Table 3 Comparative Analysis Part 2. Made by Abilasha Moorthy



TYPE OF INTERVENTION	ECONOMIC ASPECT	CULTURAL ASPECT	SOCIAL ASPECT + NETWORKING	BUILDING HARMONY & DENSITY	URBAN COMPLEXITY
Metro Station Designs	There is a lot of concern over the expensive nature of the metro rides themselves and no smart solutions such as single card ticketing, etc have been incorporated. However, it has drastically reduced transportation time.	These designs have been further personalized by students and artistic communities in their respective local stations. Graphiti and other art have been drawn and painted and these various stations have become landmarks in themselves.	Is not only seen across social media, but also experienced by majority of the commuters in the city.	The idea of taking a part of the metro line underground was to preserve the skyline of the city. Stations designed near heritage structures were revised if they were not adequately sympathetic with their surroundings	Afterall, landscapes are given meaning, shape and form with reference to people. (Sharma, 2002)
Bourgeois Environmentalism	Thousands of working class homes have been driven to the ground and taken over for construction, road-widening and other 'public purposes'. Most people live with persistent insecurity about losing their homes.	As an aspect of this intervention, water, which has long been associated with politics is seen to have more optimal utility. Any improvement that is reflected can and will make a huge impact on Chennai's water statistics.	It has been acknowledged in social media and newspapers, but water as a commodity has been viewed more as a political debate than in terms of altering or affecting city planning.	The implications of marginalised design can be directly sensed in the quality of the projects and their insensitivity to the community at large. The lack of density is a direct indicator of the lack of thought put into the bigger picture.	Upper class concerns on aesthetics, leisure, safety and health will significantly shape the disposition of urban spaces. Chennai, known world wide for its high index of working class citizens, is no longer catering to the basic necessities of a predominant part of its population.
Public Cycle Sharing System	Over 50 km of the city has already been transformed into cycle friendly stretches. Apart from the health benefits, the money saving mode of transport is just gaining momentum as one of the first non motor traffic policies in the country.	It promotes and reunites man and street. Apart from being a sustainable means of transport, this mode also diversifies road traffic.	It is being increasingly addressed as positive additive to our present modes of transportation. It has yet to be implemented, so the comments base purely on theoretization.	It does little to affect the built form and open space of existing spaces. This project is achieved by optimizing the available roads and pedestrian paths to introduce this new facility of transport. It increases accessibility to streets that cannot be traversed by autos and taxis.	It will change the streetscape of Chennai. A new element will be added to extend the notion of the street. It is visualized to be a component that bring together various economic and ethnic groups.
Tourism	Multifarious kinds such as eco, allied, rural, medical, adventure, pilgrimage and so on have been initiated and have successfully been implemented.	The well-being and satisfaction of citizens and visitors are strongly influenced by the image of a city or place, to which monumental or iconic buildings have a great contribution.	Tourism is gaining momentum only recently and is not seen as a very important topic of discussion that needs immediate attention.	Tourism aims to maintain places of cultural and historic interest and develop modern infrastructures keeping in mind the creative harmony of the city's skyline.	It aims to periodically increase the temporary footprint of a place. This makes it a multi functional space developer; developing spaces that cater to people from all walks of life, from all over the globe.
Conversion of Industrial/commercial lands to residential	The targeted groups are often not officially recognized and hence exempt from social welfare schemes and housing allowances.	The migration of population into the city limits have pressurized government agencies to increase the percentage of land use being assigned for residential purposes. More residential areas translates to more service requirements, utilities and places of leisure and worship.	It is highly debated. The discussions often arise as a solution to the growing population and also to create multiple centres within the city to ease up the stress on transport, land and utilities.	The Housing Board designs are fairly harmonic and repetitive in nature. It is also dense in terms of occupancy and diverse (diversity in background and occupation) in terms of people.	In order to avoid redundancy, land use and services are revatued according to the income groups and sects they accommodate. The present trend of skyscraper buildings are for example only applied when catering to a demand from the higher middle class.

Table 4 Comparative Analysis Part 3. Made by Abilasha Moorthy



## 5.3 Site Analysis

Chennai is indeed struggling to transform itself. While there are various issues marring the city, unavailability of large land parcels in established areas of the city is the biggest hindrance in its transformation into a sustainable city, according to the industry stakeholders.

1. The Corporation of Chennai (COC) recently initiated its plan to develop wide, continuous pedestrian footpaths along all of the city's arterial streets.<sup>13</sup> A few local architects along with the New York based organization, ITDP joined hands to design streets that comply directly to the needs of its citizens. This national international alliance led a participatory design that was striving for non motorized streets that put pedestrians over cars. Footpaths were extended to meet international standards and elevated against floods and illegal parking. Protected cycle tracks, a well planned bus stop map and many more developments were made and planned according to site specifications.
2. Nowadays, the terms 'Identity' and 'Culture' are interchangeable. In recent times, many strategies have been followed by cities, particularly those with perceived problems concerning image and identity. One of policies implications has been the designation of 'cultural quarters', as areas where a 'critical mass' of culture-related activity is seen as providing the basis for further related uses.<sup>14</sup> 'place & identity' to the ways that locale is imbued with personal and social meanings. This was the case in Pondy Bazaar, where the cultural chaos of the road side shopping all came to an end. Street furniture was added in its stead and walkways were widened, streets cleaned and access routes planned. Pedestrian zones were created in a place which did not really call for it.
3. In the case of historically and culturally vibrant Mylapore, policies were devised so as to decongest and streamline traffic. Since it is an especially sensitive site, consisting of the iconic Kabaleeshwar Temple, alternate traffic patterns were considered so as to reduce or remove completely the vehicles in and around the narrow inner streets. This was considered because the streets were too narrow for easy and fast vehicular movement and also pedestrian movement was obstructed. A new pedestrian plaza was envisioned to create a dignified entrance with a designed frontage in order to heighten the experience of engaging with the magnificent architecture of the Temple. A recreational plaza is proposed along Wallajah road, connecting Anna Salai and Marina Beach with wide footpaths, segregated cycle tracks, ample landscaping, organized carriageways, and minimum on-street parking.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> (ITDP, 2015)

<sup>14</sup> (McCarthy, 2005)

<sup>15</sup> (Institute for Transportation & Development Policy, 2015)



**Figure 26** Wide good quality footpaths replace the old narrow, obstructed footpaths on Scheme Road. Source : ITDP India

4. The planning of the present city took into consideration the local culture and lifestyle of the neighborhoods, but this design was not flexible enough to accommodate the future needs of the same people with changed ideas. The problems started occurring when there was a change in how the locals use the place. The localization force of the neighborhoods is much stronger than the force of globalization. The locals change the use of the place to fit their own culture and lifestyle.
5. If you allow people to retain traditional local businesses, work along redeveloping the main avenues as an old Chennai street, while emphasizing historic buildings, it lets you work well with the existing spaces while renewing and repairing the old. This leaves more spaces for public housing, in order to meet the need for inexpensive housing.
6. In case of Bourgeois urbanism, the structures and spaces are considered failure not because they lack aesthetics, but because they lack too many other important aspects. The things that need to be considered other than the aesthetic value while designing include public interests and social needs, identity value of the buildings and the site, economics, the sustainable development value and environmental concerns.
7. Slum resettlement and rehabilitation is planned taking into consideration nothing but the budget of the project. It is carried out without the proper concern and participation of its occupants in the planning process and the dwellers are seldom consulted on their needs.
8. Chennai has the lowest per capita availability of water among large cities in India, i.e., 108 litres per capita per day (lpcd) compared to other states.<sup>16</sup> However, this average supply figure says nothing about the wide disparities in water supply and access between

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<sup>16</sup> (Roumeau, 2012)

geographical zones in the city and between income groups. The poorest and least sustaining residents suffer most from the water shortage. This is sometimes because they have less opportunity to find alternative affordable sources of water. The fragmented nature of water governance (it being characterized by a large number of stakeholders, both public and private) makes it difficult to regulate and interrupt its supply.

9. The operating mode of some welfare NGOs are that they provide social services to small sections of the colony. They do not necessarily coordinate or cooperate amongst themselves, creating further divisions in the community and consequently curbing collective action. Fieldwork suggests that the impact of the NGOs' actions is felt more when the people who are served are more ignorant of their entitlements. People in subjugated communities do not speak out in the fear that they might get into trouble if they confront government bodies about their rights.
10. The Chennai Corporation is very serious in its endeavor to create a successful non motorized policy, therein creating 378 bicycle stations that are to be set up throughout the city. It is the first ever government body in India to introduce the policy of non-motor traffic. In accordance with these visions, the Corporation has been laying the pavements on various roads including T.Nagar, Pondy Bazaar and Egmore Pantheon Road to enable utmost pedestrian comfort. As a follow-up, they are set to implement the bicycle-sharing scheme. Once this system is established, it is expected that gradually, several groups or sections of persons travelling in autos and taxi-cabs will reduce greatly leading to a substantial reduction in the traffic as well. As the smoke emanated from the vehicles will be lesser, it will ensure environmental protection also. A great advantage is the cycle can be used to access even the streets where autos and taxis cannot drive. The locations of the cycle stations will cover important schools, colleges, metro railway stations, bus terminus, and parks.
11. The government also wishes to develop the city to project an international image for tourism, IT and health. The urban planning of 'the modern city' is not fulfilled as per the expectation and standards set by western counterparts. There are various issues apart from street dwellers, poverty, litter and crimes against women. The city is lacking in terms of effecting general planning policies competently - stores of same merchandise accumulate instead of one of each kind as planning by the government, cattle lounge and tread on the street, vendors of daily utility accumulate on the sidewalks and planned communal spaces are not made use of.

Globalization is not necessarily the best solution for urban planning, especially in regions that have strong local cultures and traditions. Standardized international ideas may not always suit the needs of the local regions. Urban development should take local people's lifestyle and traditions in account without blindly manipulating an alien international style. The people, however, feel positive and are hoping that the urban development will evolve to a condition that suits the needs for the local people.

## 5.4 Results - Review Of Cases

Using the surveys and the information available online, data has been collected and graphically represented in the following graphs:

Graph 1

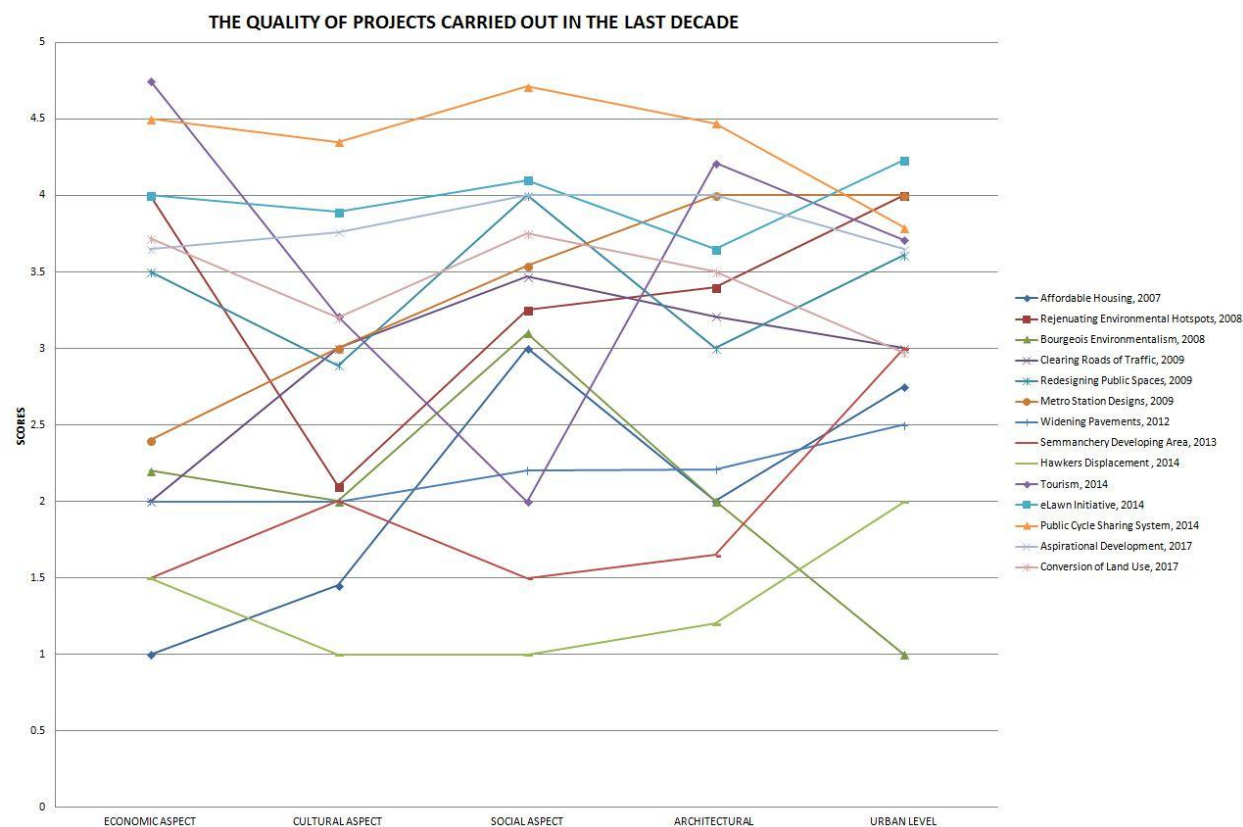


Table 5 Quality of Projects carried out in the Last Decade. Source : Abilasha Moorthy

Graph 1 has been mapped in order to determine the results of the assessment of the development projects that have or are carried on in the city of Chennai. The quality and therefore level of identity is gauged using the above chart (Table 5). It is clear from the graph that the density of the lines above the score of 2.5 is more than that below the 2.5 score. As we can see, a little over half of the projects have scored over 50%. This means that there is a slight deviation from the hypothesis. The Chennai urban development scene is not completely ignoring its local imagery and needs. Though the results do not look too positive, it is promising that the identity of the city has not completely lost to globalization and that the adoption of global trends does not supersede local necessities.

Graph 2

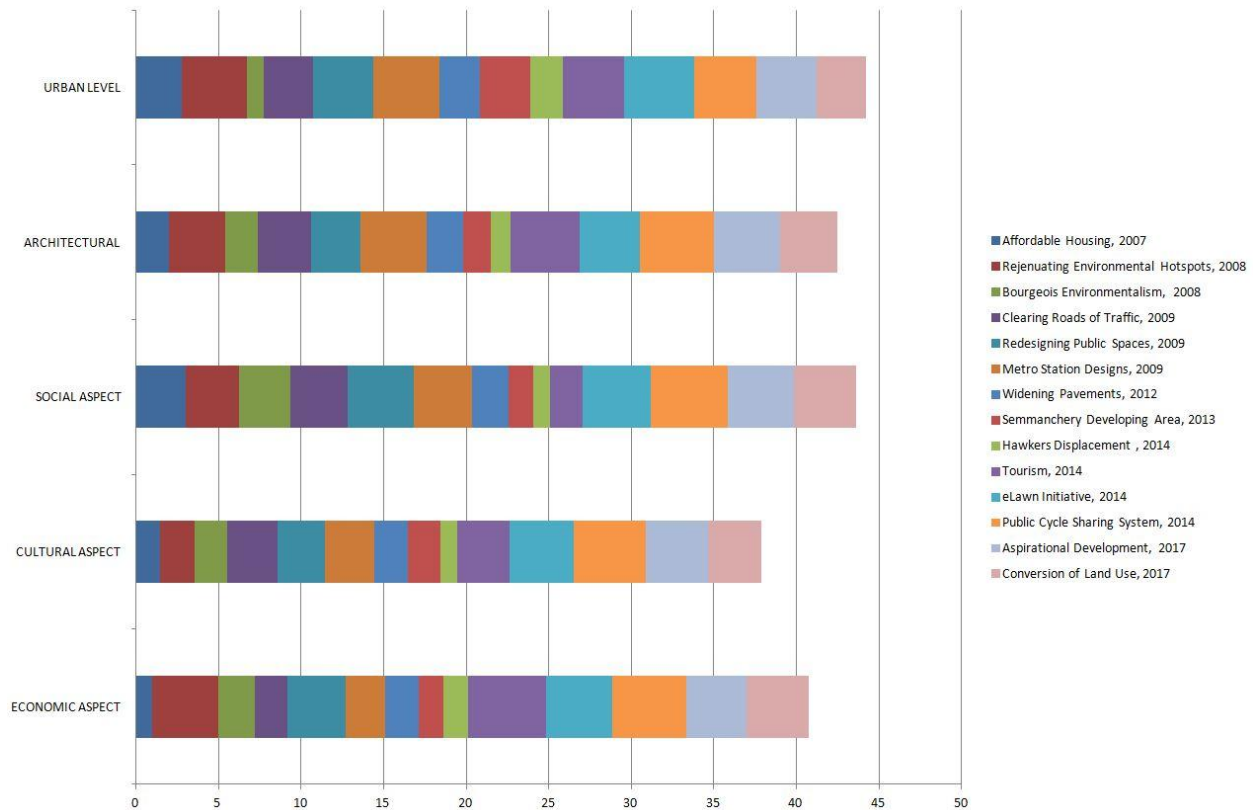
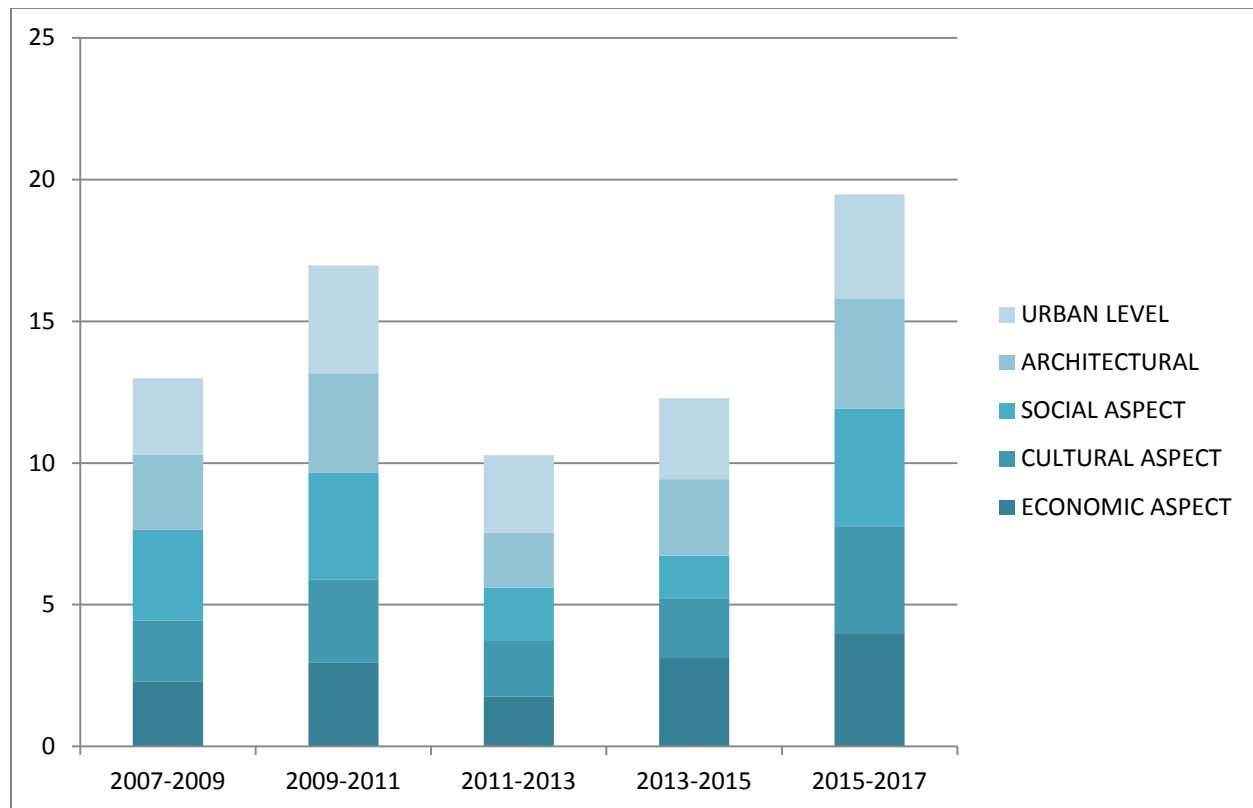


Table 6 How the aspects of Identity fare in the Urban Planning of today. Source : Abilasha Moorthy

This graph corresponds to the overall grading of the aspects of identity in all the projects and cases analyzed. It is evident that all the aspects have been scored somewhat similarly as there are very slight variations in the outcomes. It is, however, surprising to see that the cultural aspect is the lowest rated, followed by the economic aspects or advantages as felt by the consumers. This means that people are least satisfied with the cultural translation of design and do not feel that the diverse culture of Chennai shines through these projects. Economic returns and advantages are what people usually look for in terms of policies and spaces provided by the Government and its hired agencies. It is disappointing to see that this is not the case in terms of Chennai. It is also not surprising to see that the social grading of projects in Chennai is high. This is basically due to community spirit, which especially developed after the floods of 2015, wherein social media made entirely possible many of the relief mechanisms. The Chennai community is known to be open to new ideas of spatial design such as the concept of co working spaces and so on. This flexibility has allowed them to adapt to and utilize new spaces efficiently.

Graph 3



**Table 7 Growth and Decline of Projects designed with Sustainable Identities.** Source : Abilasha Moorthy (From Questionnaire)

Graph 3 showcases the evolution of the considered and evaluated case studies over the past decade. This is done in order to map out the growth or decline in the consideration, accommodation or creation of sustainable identities in case of the city of Chennai. The growth of this positive behavior is gradually increasing in the recent years, and this is a reason for celebration in itself. This means that we can expect better schemes and policies in the near future, if this trend keeps up. About half a decade ago, this kind of progress declined suddenly. This sudden decline could be the cause of a sudden wave of globalization and the predominance of contemporary and modern art and architecture. However, as mentioned earlier, around the time of the Chennai floods of 2015, social media took over and ever since, the Chennai youth have been unstoppable sources and distributors of information. This has revamped urban design in various levels, especially since the public forced their participation into the designing process. The active voice of people and their commitment and passion to work for their future will come a long way in terms of sustainability. It is important to localize innovative views within authorities of planning and executive bodies and activate the private sector as well. This is done in order to encourage inventive and resourceful locals to play an active role in the formation of the civil character of modern cities.

## OTHER FINDINGS

1. Cities can gain identities imparted to them from their functions. General conversations with citizens itself are quite indicative that Chennai possesses identities according to its functions such as “service city”, “health care city”, “automobile city” and “education city”.
2. With regard to environmental movements, it is found that it is naive to assume that the entire content of emerging environmental issues and movements is necessarily progressive.<sup>17</sup> This is found true especially in the case of the Adyar Poonga, where communities were displaced but not compensated enough in the name of environmental regeneration.
3. Care has been taken that actors of different nature were a key part of the development process in the case studies. But it was quite surprisingly to see international actors involved in almost all projects to some extent or the other. The nature of key actors and stakeholders include public, private, government organizations; transport development agencies, real estate developers, NGOs and so on.
4. As is evident, identity has both material and non material aspects. The customs, culture and social dialect of the people who live and use these sites largely aids in its perception. Thus, these too have been added as part of the research analysis.
5. Cultural Aspect – There is a lot we can learn from in the present stance, pride and uplifted attitude of the Chennai population - solidarity in facing floods, public non violent protests about important issues etc. Their strive against ignorance and the unification for a cause is something that has to be reflected in the spatial planning of the city.
6. Social Aspect – The boom of the IT sector and popularity of social media among the millennial generation has greatly altered the social sphere through the years. It will continue to affect the social relationships and interactions between people and places.
7. What works better is the approach to look at what is already there, listen to the people and through various design studios find out what is important to the various stakeholders rather than big plans which are subsequently executed down to the very last detail. It’s a change which is not only noticeable and usable in the approach to existing neighborhoods, but it will be especially useful in redevelopment projects and the restructuring process along other parts of the extended city limit. Private individuals as well as collectives are now given the opportunity to self-build, thereby playing an active part in the development process. Today’s society has a large group of highly educated people who want to have a voice in debates around important issues and themes such as urban sprawl, segregation and affordability, programming and facilities, services and infrastructure, the development of public spaces, road safety and accessibility, air quality, local care services, energy and food supply. It the local government fine tunes itself to this kind of approach of leaving decisions to market forces and citizen participation, a

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<sup>17</sup> (Sharma, 2002)



clash of contradictory interests is bound to occur. The conflict between short term profits versus long term quality of home environments, the value of property and a pleasant living environment is never ending. But it is easier to change and modify ideas based on popular views rather than change the design after it has been built or executed due to it being largely disliked. The role of the local government should focus on two key aspects: involving all the different parties as equal stakeholders in the process and translating the outcomes of this process into a vision for the city.

8. Since the turn of the century, the city's urban development has been run along two lines, one bottom-up, the other top-down. These two approaches can sometimes counteract, but they can also complement each other. Top-down urban planning looks for the connections between the whole and its parts, between the city and the region, always with the big picture in mind. The local council can play a vital role in finding the right types of urban environment for the different infill sites – each with its own context and cultural heritage. On the one hand, the council can take the lead, bring together different parties, start up discussions and give information while on the other hand, it can lay down the frameworks, ensure consistency and continuity, and make sure it is actually executed.
9. Surveying, public participation, proper segregation of a city's planning council, experimenting new strategies, introducing incentives for self build opportunities, planning for contradicting scenarios and settings within an urban fabric to satisfy different user groups - all these and more can be learnt from the example of our western counterparts. It is also the key lacking in Chennai's planning policies.
10. The Chennai government is also making sure not to concentrate on upper class urbanism in the presence of more pressing issues. The National Highways Act 1956 and rules governing projects of the National Highways Authority of India provides for relief and rehabilitation of project-affected persons. For instance, in the Chennai Port-Maduravoyal elevated expressway project, the relief package includes construction of homes for 7,400 encroachers along the Cooum river. The Tamil Nadu government is funding 50 per cent of the total cost of this project. Another such Bill, the Relief and Rehabilitation Bill, 2011, which is pending before Parliament and has been amended to include relief and rehabilitation since it was introduced in 2007. It has provisions for compensating even tenants. In the war of "how much is done for the people who need it?", visual aesthetics is often not considered at all. Participatory strategies can become a catalyst for image-led regeneration of city squatter settlements.

### 5.4.1 Key Problems

The move to create 100 new smart cities in India, comes at a time when measures to elevate other urban problems still progresses at a sluggish pace, if at all. Some of the key problems to achieving a sustainable identity would be -

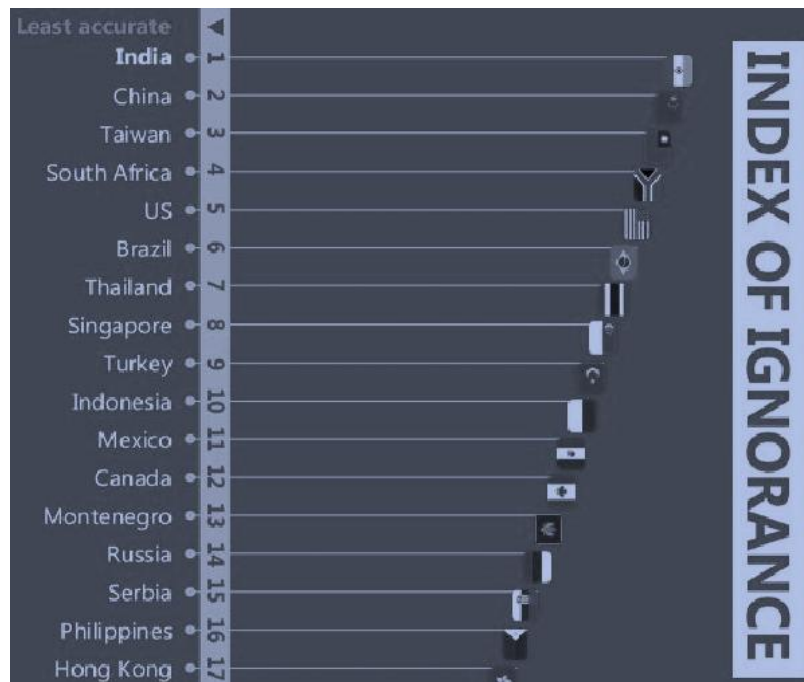


Figure 27 Index of the countries most ignorant of their problems. Source : Independent, UK

#### **Ignorant Citizens**

India is high in the index of people who are ignorant of their various problems – be it religious discrepancies, gender biases, poverty, ignorance of the middle class sector, homelessness and so on. Ignorance cannot feature in a society which is trying to bring its public into its decision making process. It does not do well to be at the top of the most ignorant cities list and be expected to make informed decisions.

#### **Poverty**

The urban poor are considered to be significant only in terms of the benefits they provide for the economic sector. They are used and accepted as an army of cheap labour. They are nothing more than an invisible workforce to the average citizen and it is this invisibility that does the most harm. The lack of a definite ‘home’ excludes them from most social welfare schemes; they are relegated to the sidelines even in the matter of their own relocation programmes and forcibly executed by the local authorities. Rehabilitation crusades blatantly disregard the dependency of the homeless on the immediate context for survival. This is why forced eviction fails – it separates them from a context they are irrevocably tied to. It moves them to places alien to them, and unable to find employment they revert to the original conditions in the core of the city.

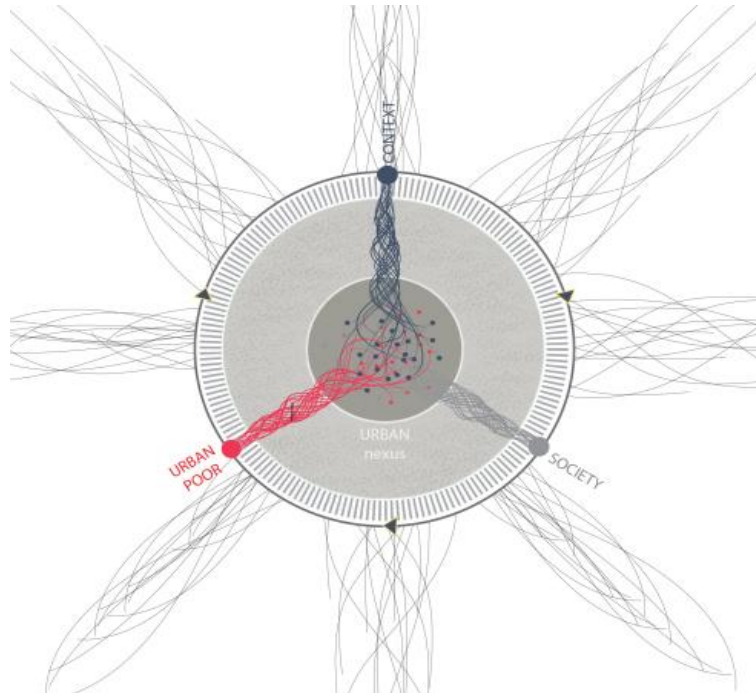


Figure 28 The urban nexus between the urban poor, society and context. Source : Hashtag Urbanism

The urban poor have a complex, inseparable relationship with the society and the surrounding context - an Urban Nexus. Slums, squatter settlements and the countless homeless people who survive on the streets of the city are testimonies to the harsh realities of life, against the backdrop of ceaseless “growth” in some parts of Chennai. The anti-poor character of bourgeois environmentalism has already been brought to the light in this paper. This movement is deeply rooted in the ambitions of creating a clean green environmentally viable city, which is quite naive and unlikely if there has been no agenda set aside to satisfy the displaced.

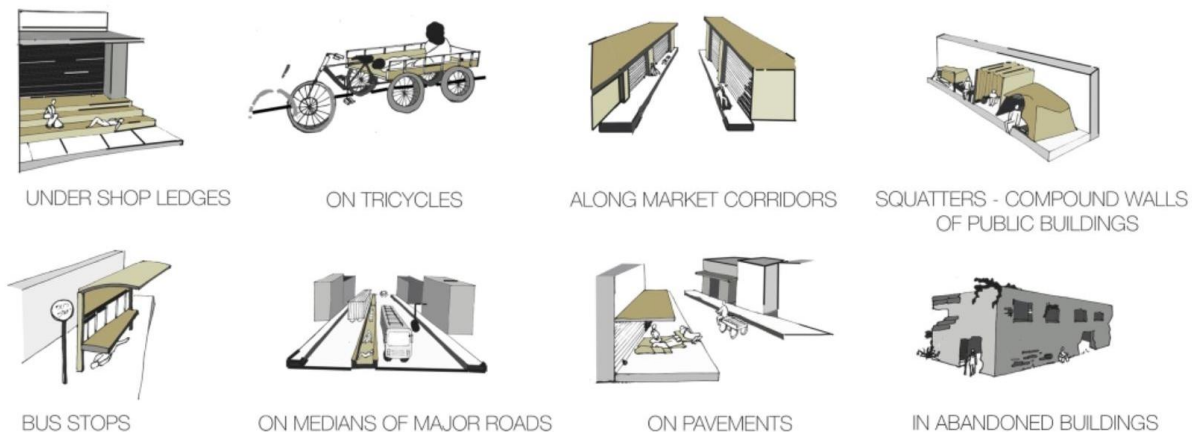


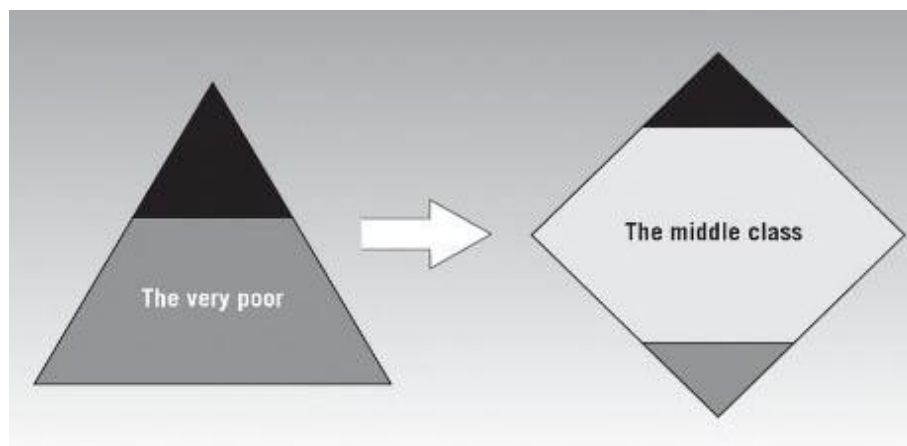
Figure 29 Settling Pattern of Homeless along Urban Fringes. Source : Gsen Trophy, National Association for Students of Architecture, India, 2013

## Housing

The biggest challenge to the prospect of affordable housing is the availability of land in the Chennai Metropolitan Area. Unless sufficient space is made available, creating homes by the millions may be a distant dream. Affordable housing is at the center stage of India's real estate movement. Slum evictions are followed by in-situ development and reconstruction followed by rehabilitation and resettlement. The Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board is responsible for building compensation homes for the dislocated. It has been one of the first agencies to construct in situ houses for the slum dwellers. However, in the recent past, TNSCB has hinted that it is facing issues in the implementation of in situ development as well as reconstruction schemes because of lack of adequate open space in the urban areas for planned housing initiatives'.<sup>18</sup>

## Rising Middle Class

India's middle class will reach 583 million from the current 50 million by 2025.<sup>19</sup> The middle class will expand from 50 million to 583 million, leaving only a fifth of Indians in the bottom household-income bracket, earning less than \$2,200 a year.<sup>20</sup> It is to be noted that in all of the aforementioned case studies, none of them were aimed at the middle class. It is often easy to miss the centre of the economic triangle in the process of satisfying the rich and the poor. What makes this blatant ignorance unfair is the fact that the middle class pays the most taxes. It also account for a dominating portion of the society and population. If the needs of such a large contribution to the societal framework is largely unanswered, then the city can no longer form an identity that is respectable to its citizens.



**Figure 30 Expansion of the Middle Class. Source : The fortune at the bottom of pyramid (Book) by C.K. Prahalad**

<sup>18</sup> (PUCL, 2010: 12)

<sup>19</sup> (McKinsey Management Consultancy)

<sup>20</sup> (The Economist, US)

## Rich Solutions

It is obvious that most of these projects correspond to international templates of metropolitan infrastructures meant to enhance the city region functioning, but they are not necessarily well adapted to local conditions. For example, the costs for running the desalination plant are such that the treated water is much more expensive than average, in addition to requiring large amounts of electricity in a State prone to power scarcity. These kind of non- feasible solutions must be avoided at all cost.



Figure 31 Rich-Poor Discrepancies. Source : Hastag Urbanism, George Town

## Compensating the affected

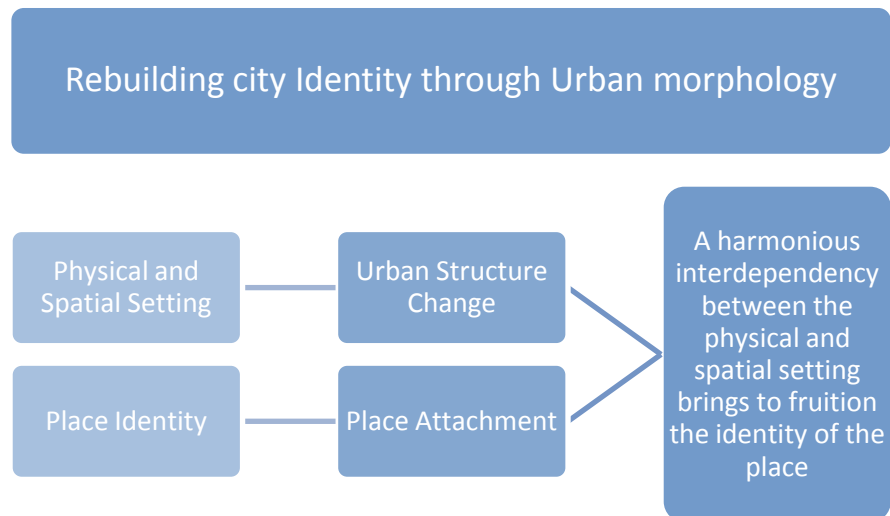
Land acquisition by different agencies is governed by Acts including the Land Acquisition Act of 1894, the Tamil Nadu Highways Act of 2001, Land Acquisition for Industrial Purposes Act and the Tamil Nadu Slum Areas (Improvement and Clearance) Act, 1971 among others.<sup>21</sup> But only those who own lands or buildings would be compensated under these Acts. Hawkers and encroachers would not be provided any relief and rehabilitation. Such persons who do not own property would just be forced to move elsewhere. When the Taramani Link Road was widened by the State Highways Department with World Bank funds, hawkers and even tender coconut sellers were compensated adequately. This is because the global funding agency has stringent norms pertaining to providing compensation to project affected persons. Such policies should be refurbished in order to cement the loopholes in its framework.

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<sup>21</sup> (The Hindu, 2012)

## CHAPTER 6 - CONCLUSION

*“A city can be successful in a failed state, but there is no viable country without a viable city.”<sup>22</sup>*



**Figure 32 Rebuilding City Identity. Source : Abilasha Moorthy**

Designers, through their designing process, are always seeking to meet ‘Man’s’ needs by providing him by a feeling of involvement and interaction with the space, and consequently a feeling of love to that space. All the previous could be achieved by focusing on ‘Identity’ as a key element of the design process. Strong visual identity has been developed by introducing “variety and diversity” to the design through various manufactured and imported images, which are not only in harmony with each other but they also create a landscape of visual identity, called a ‘scenographic variety’ according to Crilley (1993).<sup>23</sup>

The analysis thus far is suggestive of the half hearted nature of the intentions of the key actors in retaining, developing, modifying or contributing to the identity of their respective projects in their respective sites of interest. With the pretense of improving the local imagery, globalized influences often fail to relate to, identify and truly integrate the idea and reasoning behind local imagery. For instance, in the case of temple front redevelopment, the area has been cleared and landscaped. This was done taking into consideration the present frenzy of taking pictures for social media. It aimed at amplifying the quality of the place, but the fact remains that its highly un-contextual. Firstly, the densely built localities around the temple were built to constantly shade the area all through the day. Also, the closer you go up to it and look from below, the taller

<sup>22</sup> (Khanna, 2014)

<sup>23</sup> (Madanipour, 2013)

and more close-to-the-heavens it seems. Secondly, Indians dress very modestly in religious institutions. This fact coupled with the blazing all-year-round heat and the fact that footwear is not permitted within the premises, points towards one thing – ignorance. We never required a large open space in front of the temple – it serves no purpose, not even for congregation since people socialize and congregate within the temple walls. The following features should be considered and adopted while considering the development of Chennai -

## Pedestrianization

The city has set for itself ambitious goals: by 2018, build safe and continuous footpaths on at least 80% of all streets, increase the share of walking and cycling trips to over 40%, and, most significantly, eliminate pedestrian and cyclist deaths.<sup>24</sup> The Corporation aims to achieve these goals by mandating various measures through this policy. The Corporation of Chennai recognizes walking and cycling as major modes of transport. With assistance from ITDP, COC has initiated the process of creating a Non-Motorized Transport Policy.<sup>25</sup> The policy aims to strengthen the city's commitment to non-motorized projects in the design and management of city streets. It was adopted in October 2014 to make walking and cycling its priority. It aims to arrest the current decline in walking and cycling in the city by creating safe and pleasant walking and cycling infrastructure. A new Car Free Sunday initiative is engaging more residents to explore their city on foot. These are responses to the city's requirements, which mandates



**Figure 33** Parking space occupies the same space as an affordable housing unit. Source : ITDP

commitment to creating safe streets that consider the needs of all users. It is to be noted that the pedestrian survey revealed that the major obstacles to movement are not the street vendors, but motorists and traffic.<sup>26</sup>

## Integration with the Context

First, it is imperative to understand that the urban poor have a complex, inseparable relationship with the society and the surrounding context. This interconnected nexus dictates their lifestyle and status in the urban

<sup>24</sup> (ITDP, 2014)

<sup>25</sup> (Institute for Transportation & Development Policy, 2015)

<sup>26</sup> (IFMR, 2012)



fabric. Contextuality is the key to survival for the urban poor. Providing surface level interventions might produce an interim solution but in order to create a lasting effect, all rehabilitation measures need to devise frameworks that integrate the poor with the existing urban context, making them more acceptable in the society.

The Tamil Nadu State Finance Commission suggested Community Participation Law with area sambas represented by Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs), self-help groups (SHGs) and NGOs to meet twice a year to review the budget and scheme implementation. The city's strategy of bringing larger areas under the Corporation may not lead to efficient participation in the long-run though it might increase the overall revenue of the Corporation due to an increase in the property tax base.

### Poverty alleviation

Slum mapping and preparation of action plans for slum redevelopment must be carried out and this information should be used in the design process. On the other hand, residential areas were and still are the core of probability because of their important effect on 'Personal and social meanings'. The first step of eradication the ailment of poverty is to provide them with a shelter that they can call home. Just evicting and relocating them is not enough, and integrating them into the context is the next step. Their lifestyle, economic status, etc should be considered and it is important to inform them of their rights and engage them in community welfare schemes.

### Affordable housing

In 2015, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the 'Housing for All by 2022' scheme targeting two crore homes to be built across all urban locations over the next five years.<sup>27</sup> As a result of policy thrust and financial support, more developers are keen on making inroads into the segment. Government funding and aid in this case has made the prospect of house construction a lucrative opportunity for developers and real estate agents. In the case of providing parking; one must remember that parking spaces are like magnets that attracts more cars. Providing more parking is not the solution to tackle this problem. Alternative parking solutions should be explored.

### Dealing with identity

Multi use co-working spaces and adaptive reuse structures are essential in increasing a city's urban complexity and enhancing its cultural appeal by nurturing a social-spatial contextuality.

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<sup>27</sup> (RoofandFloor, 2017)

Urban areas that had been developed not long ago should envelop within its scope the addition and introduction of new landmarks, nodes, edge treatments and symbols into the urban streetscape. Special care is to be taken while designing or redesigning public spaces, as they are the largest collective imparters of identity. Even designs for affordable housing need to address issues of individual and communal identity within a social group that has been marginalized and neglected for years. The way forward is in not just providing housing on a silver plate; it is in empowering the poor. Enabling and empowering the poor and creating opportunities to break the vicious cycle of poverty is paramount to the success of any rehabilitation scheme. Spaces dedicated to expression of self, social interaction and bonding with the community will generate a form of social capital, a unique asset to the creation of cohesive cities.

### **Change and resilience**

New spatial knowledge is always produced through citizen participation processes. Transparent Chennai's initiative called 'Map Your Bus Route', which uses My Tracks Google Android platform, allows volunteers to report on their phone and progressively build a map of Chennai's bus lines, a facility that was not hitherto available. This approach of data, information and knowledge production challenges the lack of accurate and updated public information in the city. It makes it possible for Transparent Chennai to criticize the data and maps provided in-house or through consultant reports used currently by CMC and others producing geo-referenced information, who fail to incorporate and disseminate to the general public accurate and up-to-date geospatial information. Information produced and made available by Transparent Chennai can also be used to evaluate and monitor government actions and investments. It pays to create competing strategies and interests shaping social and spatial patterns in the city. The IT Corridor is a compelling case study to illustrate how the particular natural hydrological topography of this area has been almost completely erased by the artificial landscape of water infrastructure, 'urbanized' to synchronize with the mega-infrastructure project as well as private-led property development. The launching of 'Sustainable Chennai Forum' that occurred on the World Habitat Day also illustrates a shift towards the inclusion of climate change aspects in the debate on sustainability. It is meant to be a platform for enhanced dialog and information.

### **Middle class consideration**

Transparent Chennai (TC) is a leading local NGO that collects and disseminates data and research on urban planning, governance and civic issues. It has four main fields of work involving public participation and advocacy: 1) participative and voluntary web-mapping where citizens can introduce information like grievances or where community collected information can be diffused; 2) reporting on public hearings, planning activities, organizing community meetings and conference and advocating a more inclusive, pro-poor and participative city in the

press; 3) conducting, with a network of NGOs and volunteers, its own surveys on civic issues (garbage collection, sanitation, public toilets, right to walk, neighborhood planning...); and 4) leading participatory mapping in low-income neighborhoods concerned by upgrading or resettlement, including through the conception of a toolkit for slum community mapping.<sup>28</sup>

### Encouraging Local Tendencies

Mapping exercise should be undertaken to identify natural markets for street vendors – both existing and potential. The focus should be on improving the existing amenities for street vendors. The condition of basic amenities for street vendors in most areas is abysmal. The street vendor survey clearly showed that the income of these sellers keeps them entrenched in poverty. The government must be cognizant of this fact while creating policy. The emancipation of the poor is the leading principle for any government, and street vendors must be recognized as belonging to this category. The best way for the planners to address this issue is to formalize the street vendors by issuing licenses. This will go a long way in giving these workers a space within the legal framework, as well as easing the regulation of street vendors for the government itself. Finally, it is necessary to recognize their rights as citizens and provide basic amenities for them to carry on a livelihood that significantly contributes to the working of the Indian economy. A dedicated marketplace will not only help in removal of encroachments by the vendors from the localities, but also help these vendors to expand their trade.

*“Developing social infrastructure around commercial and residential sectors also plays a key role. Facilities like dedicated marketplace for whole-sellers, schools, hospitals, police station, fire-station, all are very important if a city is to become self sustainable.”*<sup>29</sup>

### Participatory strategies

Social media is one of the easiest ways to involve public opinion and inspire creative solutions. Interactions on sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Quora are already paving the way by providing a platform for the exchange of ideas and knowledge between companies, agencies and the public. In terms of community-based initiatives using and producing ICT-GIS-based information and knowledge, Transparent Chennai is the best known example. It has crowd-sourced information on issues important to citizens in Chennai (to some extent oriented towards

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<sup>28</sup> <http://www.transparentchennai.com/that-thing-calledcommunity-participation/>

<sup>29</sup> (Navin Ranka, SPR Construction)

the middle class), has mapped them, and uses the information gained in negotiations with local (government) organizations to improve the situations found.<sup>30</sup>

## **Mobility**

Chennai's Street Design Project was selected as the best solution in the Danish think tank, Sustania in 2015 for transforming Chennai from a car-centric to a people-friendly city and addressing safety concerns and air pollution in one go. Chennai's non motorized transport policy is gaining international recognition for its comprehensive approach to achieving sustainable transport.

## **Micro-planning**

Micro-planning can be a better way to redevelop older cities than macro-planning. Local area planning at district level is where plan and idea implementation is possible and this must be facilitated by the concerned authorities. If we are to make Chennai a sustainable city, every element of has to be equally emphasized upon and a balance between established areas, wedges (middle-areas) and peripheries must be created if we are to create a city which has a shell-life of more than 50 years.<sup>31</sup> The use of ICT-GIS based systems has further deepened the knowledge base of urban and regional planning. CollabLand is one such software used for digitization and mosaicing of survey maps, developed by the National Information Center.

These infrastructure projects, practices and intentions aim to transform Chennai into a global city region, by providing it with the attributes of a 'world class city'. It might even increase the feasibility of the project in the cultural and economic spheres, where it was found lacking. With its host of innovative projects and new paradigms in urban quality of living, Chennai has the opportunity to set a benchmark for Indian cities in its ability to improve mobility, accessibility, and livability for all citizens. In this most subjective field of study, people are easy to jump to conclusions and claim their opinions and opportunities of and from the projects respectively. Each claim may come from, impact or shape one part of the city, or one aspect of a place, and the interaction among these claims and counterclaims shapes the complex web of people and places. Despite all efforts, it is always a possibility that the traditional authority and status of a place may be undermined by the growth of population around it and the expansion of places and activities.<sup>32</sup> This means that there might be a future when this hypothesis might be proved. In order to prevent that, the various aspects and policies mentioned above should be incorporated into any future plan/ scheme.

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<sup>30</sup> (cf. Pfeffer et al 2013)

<sup>31</sup> (Brand Connect initiative, 2017)

<sup>32</sup> (Shawket, 2016)

## 6.1 Recommendation For Future Research

With rising populations and incredible diversity, cities will become even greater driving forces of globalization. An urban design and designer must also have the mission of orientating not only the physical environment but also the social phenomena like social culture, levels of taste and consciousness affecting the urban identity. Take for instance an opinion given two years ago, in 2016, that is already turning into reality; taken from this excerpt by the Urban Hub:

*New building concepts and materials are inspiring architects and planners to consider what will happen to a building or structure when it is no longer needed. Many architects are embracing recycled materials for construction and designing buildings that can later be more easily dismantled and re-used. Another related trend is the development of “nomadic” structures that can be completely repurposed at another location. This kind of end-of-life recycling of a building, however, demands dynamic, flexible city planning – planning that is constantly in flux. There are increasing instances of “pop-up” or adaptable buildings and structures that move with the flow and changes of the city.*<sup>33</sup>

However, identity is not so simple, there is always the issue of gaining a sense of command over space in order to feel a positive sense of self-identity; the issue of using, arranging, or decorating that space in order to create a psychological comfort. There is also the issue of maintaining significant structures or even entire places of the past, so that sense of control and identity experienced at an earlier age gets supported by reproducing the essence of a significant past environment.<sup>34</sup>

Planning and architecture are features that define their respective regions and are indicative of the circumstances of people's lives at different instances in time. But planning and architecture are not the only things that define a city's identity. Other important indicators include culture, social standing, context, creativity, and so on. So, if we are to say that identity gets described in culture and tradition, then the architecture based on today's culture and traditions is the architecture with identity.<sup>35</sup> Thus, culture and community-led strategies could very well become a vital part of city development. This system, if efficiently employed by future design decision makers, can surely strive to give optimal solutions and a voice to all its users.

The idea is to foster the city's identity in such a way that it is capable of supporting, catalyzing and accommodating the future visions of a city. This kind of identity is that which pays homage to the past, is in line with present societal standards and is flexible enough to house the future. Chennai, a thriving South Indian metropolis and the capital of the state of Tamil Nadu, is at the cusp of turning into one of the world's megacities. Until recent times, it had the image of being

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<sup>33</sup> (Urban Hub, 2016)

<sup>34</sup> (I. Altman, 2012)

<sup>35</sup> (Ettehad, 2014)



somewhat insular, however, the Chennai of today is a cosmopolitan hub where the old meets the new. One can only hope that urban design, which is a public service, must be carried out with a consciousness of social responsibility under an urban strategy. It should be done such that there is both a compromise, as well as a collaboration of all professional disciplines which can contribute to it. This approach would make important contributions to the city, the citizens, city culture and to urban design which could have positive effects on its urban identity.

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# APPENDIX

CITY IDENTITY. CHENNAI CITY CREATING SUSTAINABLE IDENTITIES		URBAN PLANNING : SURVEY				
		<b>NAME OF PROJECT/ CASE STUDY :</b> <b>DATE :</b> _____/_____/_____ <b>AGE :</b> Adolescent / Adult / Senior <b>GENDER :</b> Male / Female / Other				
1. Please tick the most suited evaluation to the following questions. 2. Scores are out 5. They indicate the following - 1: Negative 2: Slightly Negative 3: Both 4: Slightly Positive 5: Positive 3. Please refer to the brief for simplified descriptions of the concerned project/case study.						
		1	2	3	4	5
1	How would you rate the cultural implications of this project?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2	Do you think there will be economic gains due to this proposal?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3	How does the architectural contribution of this project fare?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4	Do you think this project can be considered and contribute to an urban level change?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5	What will be the nature of the social involvement and response to this proposal, in your opinion?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1. Please answer the following questions. 2. Remarks would be much appreciated.						
1	Are you involved in/affected by the project? If so, how?	Select an option that describes your role.				
2	Do you reside in this locality? If not, how far do you have to travel?	<input type="radio"/> Local community <input type="radio"/> Local Authority <input type="radio"/> Urban Planner <input type="radio"/> Architect <input type="radio"/> Tourist <input type="radio"/> Other public				
3	Do you believe this projects adds any value to your quality of life?					
4	What is your mode of transport to the site?	Do you think this is a positive/negative change? Why?				
5	Have you used a platform - social media or otherwise to voice your views on this matter?	Remarks (if any) :				
6	Can you still identify with the place?					

# Urban Redesign In The Age Of Globalization - Creating Sustainable Identities

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## **Abstract :**

The aspirations of communities evolve and change with the requirements and development of their individual societies. Cities are places that cater to a variety of cultures and to the quality of life of their respective communities in our diverse world. Across the globe, people are seeking to envisage creative ways by which they can use resources to reinvent the way they deliver services. Hence, universal solutions are discovered and developed. Case specific city solutions and consequently identities are thereby lost to the global cause. City identity, its development and maintenance is a relatively new concept in India. There is little to no research or consideration given to the complex communal bonds shared between the citizens of one of the most diverse countries of the world. This research aims to clarify and evaluate the stance of 'identity' in the case of the city of Chennai in India. In order to prove that the present identity of Chennai is neglecting its local imagery, development and redevelopment projects across the city are analyzed in order to identify their contribution to and consideration of Chennai's image and identity.

## **Keywords :**

Sustainability, Identity, Global Trends, Participatory Planning, Urban Transformation, Contextuality

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