Can Urban Management
Lead to a Just Society for
All Classes?

Climate Justice

Supportive Governance Model

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COVER STORY

Introduction:

Access to affordable housing is a fundamental human right, yet millions of people around the world face significant challenges in finding and maintaining a stable, affordable place to live.

About 2% of the world's population is homeless which constitutes at least 150 million people till 2021. The question rises, are homes a government responsibility or an individual's burden to bare? What is meant by affordable? And why should we care if we already have one? Well our expert, *Ms. Toccarra Nicole Thomas Director of Smart Growth America* an organisation actively advocating for affordable housing, does have an interesting piece of brain to share.

Ms. Toccarra Nicole Thomas
Director of Smart Growth America

Question 1: What is the most difficult aspect of navigating the affordable housing landscape in your community?
- Is it the high costs, limited availability, or something else?
- How do you believe that these challenges can be overcomed?

The affordable housing crisis is multi-faceted, reflecting a troubling perception of morality surrounding homelessness. Many people believe that those who are homeless must have done something wrong, a mindset shaped by cultural stereotypes.

Historically, the closure of mental health institutions in the mid-20th century led to a surge in homelessness, reinforcing the idea that homeless individuals struggle with mental health issues or personal failures.

At the same time, housing laws primarily support the construction of single-family homes, limiting supply and driving up costs as demand increases. Over the last couple of decades, the perception of housing as an investment rather than a basic need has gained traction.

This view treats homes as commodities, sidelining the essential need for affordable living spaces. Everyone deserves a place to live that is affordable for them, regardless of how "affordable" is defined.

Question 2 : What do you think are the root causes of the affordable housing crisis on a global scale?
Is it a lack of government investment, the influence of real estate speculation, or something else?
How do these factors interact to exacerbate the problem?

The affordable housing crisis stems from a mix of factors, including insufficient government investment, real estate speculation, and restrictive zoning laws. In the U.S., the conversation is becoming more urgent as high housing costs impact many families.

Restrictive zoning limits development to single-family homes, reducing the availability of affordable options. The "5 L's" theory—Laws, Labor, Lending, Lots, and Lumber—highlights key challenges: outdated laws hinder new construction, a labor shortage affects skilled trades, financing is difficult to obtain, lumber costs are rising, and suitable land is scarce.

To address this crisis effectively, a shift towards policies that prioritize humanitarian needs over purely economic considerations is essential for creating sustainable housing solutions.

Question 3 : In your opinion, Has capitalism been instrumental in driving people to streets?
Has capitalism exacerbated challenges in advocating for affordable housing?

I would say it is very substantive to the last portion of it. One can do anything with money and there not much flexible and readily accessible funding and the laws in the books that constrain what we can and can't do. I would also add that with affordability to a greater extent comes resource hoarding at all levels.Every community, every country. Even with climate there is resource hoarding of water, if one already have ,they will access more and take more resources. And I think it is valid for housing in general.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear gentle readers,

The planning season is up and the world is abuzz with new innovations. It is only reasonable to talk about the ever increasing need to focus on the dimensions of implementation and Justice in this vast paradigm of Planning. There has been no corner of the world where homelessness, poverty and suffering has not expanded its reign, an unfortunate and questionable reality which unnerves many tinkering minds.

This issue of NEWSPlan Vol. 9 Issue 1 tends to unearth the illusions of justice by being an apostle of "Justice In Planning, For Planning and By planning", with housing and land management being the principle topics of discussion. Housing for all , equitable distribution of lands, poverty alleviation , desiderata of future idealised and jargonized in the ever more secular and liberal words yet a delusional development agenda in place. Many questions will be asked , many will be answered and some will be left for the readers to question.

This issue also includes a special section of open editorial for the experts and pupils to pen down their wandering thoughts and opinions for the benefit of expression, we have also attempted on cataloguing a broad section of best practices towards redemption of current impediments in achieving just and equitable development.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the entire NOSPlan Publication Cell and the enthusiastic students who took up this initiative to bring together this piece. We are very grateful to all the experts who volunteered for interviews and discussions. It has encouraged us to work even harder in our coming publications. Lastly the support by all unit councils and the executive council has been very instrumental in the overall development of the newsletter.

On an ending note, I urge all the readers to Keep Expressing! There are no wrong answers to the right questions :)

- Raavee Vats
Editor in Chief

Mr. Hitesh Vaidya
Former Director, NIUA

1. How can urban management practices contribute to creating a just society that serves the needs of all classes?

Urban management is a powerful tool for creating equitable and resilient cities. Adopting holistic and inclusive approaches can ensure all residents' well-being and build a sustainable future. Local solutions tailored to global goals foster ownership and pride, while data-driven technologies and sustainable initiatives inspire optimism. Equitable resource allocation, like India's PMAY scheme, ensures that essential services reach all and promote mixed-income neighbourhoods, making the audience feel included and part of a diverse community. In Singapore's model, integrated and spatial urbanisation prioritises balanced growth and inclusive development. Citizen-led decision-making, facilitated by platforms like "MyGov," empowers individuals and ensures diverse perspectives shape the urban environment. The transition to a circular economy and equity-centered design, supported by initiatives like "CITIIS," minimises waste and promotes resource conservation. By embracing cultural heritage and leveraging innovation, urban management can create vibrant, livable spaces that cater to diverse needs and aspirations.

2. What are the challenges and limitations of current urban management models in achieving societal justice?

Current models fail to achieve societal justice due to overemphasising economic growth. Top-down decision-making excludes marginalised groups, resulting in policies that fail to address their needs and exacerbate existing inequalities. Financial constraints hinder progress, as insufficient funding for social programs and infrastructure perpetuates disadvantage in underserved areas. Climate change vulnerabilities disproportionately impact marginalised communities, posing a significant challenge to equitable urban development. Informal settlements, lacking basic infrastructure and services, further exacerbate existing inequalities. Limited capacity and expertise in urban planning and management at the local level, coupled with a lack of streamlined processes for citizen input and accountability, hinder effective governance and community participation. Finally, a lack of political will due to vested interests and resistance to change impedes implementing policies that could redistribute power and resources more equitably.

3. What innovative approaches or governance models can help bridge the gap between urban efficiency and equity?

Innovative approaches are reshaping urban governance for efficiency and equity. Streamlined processes, emphasising city readiness, citizen input platforms, and measurable goals, enhance responsiveness to community needs. Data-driven urban planning and digital solutions empower evidence-based decisions, fostering an inclusive digital economy. Participatory budgeting allows communities to allocate city budgets directly, while public-private partnerships (PPPs) leverage private sector expertise and resources. Investing in sustainable infrastructure, such as green buildings, energy-efficient services, and nature-based solutions, promotes equitable development. Community land trusts and social impact bonds are innovative tools fostering community control and aligning financial incentives with social goals. Shifting towards evidence-based, inclusive, outcome-oriented, and dynamic planning processes ensures that urban development adapts to changing needs while prioritising efficiency and equity.

4. What role can individual and group initiatives play in shaping just cities and societies? This question is not just a query but a call to action, inspiring us all to consider our contributions to improving our cities and societies.

Individual and group initiatives are the lifeblood of just cities and societies. Citizen-led design mandates co-creation in urban planning, ensuring cities reflect residents' needs and desires. Collaboration and convergence strengthen frameworks for diverse urban patterns and mainstream sustainability, ensuring every voice shapes the city's future. Community-led environmental action empowers citizens to create a cleaner, greener, healthier city through grassroots movements advocating for equitable policies. Social entrepreneurship tackles social and environmental challenges through innovative businesses and organisations. Activism and advocacy raise awareness of social injustices and mobilise support for change. Social networks provide essential support and resources to vulnerable community members, especially during crises. Together, these initiatives empower individuals and communities to drive meaningful change, ensuring that cities and societies are shaped by and for the people.

5. What emerging trends do you see in urban management that could impact social justice?

Emerging trends in urban management hold the potential to impact social justice significantly. The shift from norm-based to evidence-based planning allows for more tailored and practical solutions, ensuring that policies address ground realities and desired outcomes. By embracing inclusion, urban management ensures that the needs of all stakeholders, including marginalised groups and communities, are considered, fostering a more equitable city. The transition from a regulatory to an outcome-oriented approach emphasises achieving goals like improved livability, reduced pollution, and enhanced sustainability, focusing on the tangible impact of planning decisions. A shift towards dynamic planning creates a flexible framework that adapts to changing needs and evolving challenges. Finally, promoting well-regulated mixed-use development fosters vibrant and self-sufficient neighbourhoods, integrating residential, commercial, and recreational spaces. These trends together pave the way for a more just, inclusive, and sustainable urban future.

CAN URBAN MANAGEMENT LEAD TO A JUST SOCIETY FOR ALL CLASSES IN THE SOCIETY ??

RESHMA (SPA VIJAYAWADA)

" Urban management can be a double-edged sword. It has the potential to create a more just and balanced city, but there are real challenges to overcome.

As someone from Tamil Nadu, I think our urban management has had its ups and downs. The Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board (TNSCB) has done a great job with affordable housing in places like Kannagi Nagar, Chennai. Families there moved from slums to much better homes. But, not everything's perfect. For example, the IT corridors in Chennai have pushed out some villages without fair compensation, which isn't right. On a brighter note, restoring water bodies in Coimbatore has been a success because it involved the local community, which is super important.

Eco-friendly projects like the Chennai Metro Rail are awesome for sustainability, and industrial growth in places like Hosur has created jobs and boosted our economy. However, we still face issues like gentrification and displacement. In the end, urban management can definitely help create a fair society for everyone, but it needs to be done right. We need to tackle issues like displacement and make sure everyone gets a say in the process. If we focus on sharing resources fairly and sustainable development, we can build cities where everyone feels included and benefits.

We can definitely do better! "

PRAVIN MICHEAL S. (SPA VIJAYAWADA)

" In my opinion, urban management can help make society more equitable for all social classes, but it cannot guarantee social justice on its own. A lot of urban management models primarily depend on market mechanisms, which can exacerbate already-existing economic inequality. For instance, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) intends to use PPPs and land sales in the Bandra Kurla area to finance the majority of its infrastructure spending, which totals one trillion rupees ($22 billion) over five years. With this strategy, major investments in urban infrastructure should be made possible. By strengthening essential services like water, sanitation, and transportation, this enormous investment may be able to raise living standards for people of all socioeconomic classes. However, a strong reliance on market mechanisms—such as public-private partnerships and land monetization - may disadvantage low-income communities in favor of wealthier areas or commercial interests. Prioritizing the development of a more equitable society means addressing the needs of lower-class groups in particular and putting in place fair, market-driven policies and strategies that ensure affordability and accessibility for everyone. If we want to prioritize building a more equitable society, we should specifically address the needs of lower-class groups and implement balanced, market-driven policies and strategies to guarantee accessibility and affordability for all. "

MADHURI WAHDRE (SPA BHOPAL)

" In reality ,Social classes can never be identical in terms of the basic criteria for class differentiation such as wealth, education, and occupation. As urban planners, we can only try to reduce inequality within societies. Even in ancient civilizations like Egypt and Mesopotamia, social divisions were prevalent, and complete equality remains unproven even in Indus Valley civilization with advanced infrastructure.

Economically, the Netherlands and Denmark achieved low-income inequality with a Gini coefficient of 0.28 in 2013, below the OECD average of 0.321. These countries prioritize progressive tax systems, ensuring higher earners contribute more. They also levy taxes on inherited wealth to mitigate intergenerational gaps. Robust social safety nets and targeted income transfers further narrow the divide. Their success can serve as a model for other nations.`

To address these challenges, we can impose water usage fees, promote a greener environment, and transition to renewable energy sources etc . There are plenty of ways. Achieving these goals requires robust government support. But we can only address these inequalities once basic needs are met, but many in the country still struggle with essentials like water and sanitation. "

ADITHYA N. (SPA VIJAYAWADA)

" Urban management, generally, aims to control the development of a city in a way that is proficient for all social classes. But in the real world, it seems like these fancy development projects mostly benefit the wealthy folks, leaving everyone else out in the cold. Take gentrification, for example. Rich people move in, fix up the rundown neighborhoods, and then the folks who lived there for years get pushed out, cause they can't afford the new prices. It's not all doom and gloom, though. Public transportation, for instance, is usually priced decently and accessible to everyone. That's how it should be! We need fairer, more effective urban management across the world. Resources shouldn't just go to the rich; they should be distributed equally. Maybe if there are more people in planning, it might contribute different opinions and perspectives over the development projects. Imagine policies that prioritize social justice and make sure everyone has a shot at a good life in the city, no matter their background. That's the kind of city living we should all be striving for! "

URBAN MANAGEMENT: SHAPING A JUST SOCIETY OR ADJUSTING A SOCIETY?

TULIKA G - DELHI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Urban management practices significantly contribute to the creation of a just society that serves the needs of all classes through several key strategies:

1. Equitable Resource Allocation

Implementing policies and practices that ensure fair distribution of resources such as housing, healthcare, education, and infrastructure across all neighborhoods and communities, regardless of socio-economic status. For example, in Pune, the city has implemented the "Pune Slum Rehabilitation Scheme" to provide better housing options to slum dwellers. The scheme ensures that slum redevelopment projects include affordable housing units with access to basic amenities like water, sanitation, and electricity. This initiative aims to reduce disparities in living conditions and promote social equity by providing better housing options to lower-income groups.

2. Affordable Housing

Developing and implementing policies that promote affordable housing options for low-income families and individuals within urban areas, preventing displacement and fostering socio-economic diversity, such as the "Chief Minister's Housing Scheme" to address the housing needs of low-income groups in Bengaluru. Under this scheme, the government launched several initiatives for financial assistance to economically weaker sections and lower-income groups to purchase or construct houses. This helps promote affordable housing options within the city and prevents the forced eviction of vulnerable populations.

3. Inclusive Urban Planning

This involves participatory planning practices that take into account the voices of marginalized groups and vulnerable populations. Jaipur has adopted inclusive urban planning practices through the "Pink City Rickshaw Company" initiative. This project aims to empower women from marginalized communities by training them to become professional rickshaw drivers.

4.Access to Services and Amenities

Ensuring that all residents, regardless of income level or social status, have access to essential services such as healthcare facilities, public transportation, parks, and recreational spaces. Chennai has focused on improving access to healthcare services through initiatives like the "Chennai Corporation Health Care Centres." These health centres provide affordable healthcare services to residents, including those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

By enhancing access to healthcare, the city aims to improve overall health outcomes and reduce health disparities among different socio-economic groups. Similar initiative is the Mohalla Clinics in Delhi.

5.Sustainable Development

Promoting environmentally sustainable urban development practices that not only minimize environmental impact but also benefit all residents by improving quality of life and reducing disparities in access to clean air, water, and green spaces. Again, example of Bengaluru can be seen. "Namma Metro" system not only enhances public transportation but also reduces carbon emissions and traffic congestion. By promoting sustainable transportation options, the city aims to improve air quality and create a more livable environment for all residents, regardless of their socio-economic status.

6.Job Creation and Economic Opportunities

Supporting local economic development initiatives that create job opportunities for all residents, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, thereby reducing inequality and promoting economic mobility. Let's take an example from Ahmedabad where "Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project" has not only revitalized the riverfront area but also created job opportunities for local residents. The project involved infrastructure development, landscaping, and construction activities, which provided employment opportunities to a diverse workforce. By creating jobs, the city aims to boost economic growth and reduce unemployment rates among disadvantaged communities.

7. Social Integration and Cohesion

Encouraging social integration and cohesion through community-building activities, cultural events, and programs that foster interaction and understanding among diverse social groups. Hyderabad has fostered social integration and cohesion through initiatives like the "Haritha Haram" program. This environmental initiative encourages community participation in tree planting and urban greening activities. By engaging residents in environmental conservation efforts, the city promotes social cohesion and a sense of community ownership, bridging social divides and promoting a shared sense of responsibility towards urban sustainability.

At last, one cannot forget one of the most crucial parts of Urban Management- Responsive Governance: Establishing transparent and accountable governance structures that respond to the needs and aspirations of all residents, promoting social justice and equity in decision-making processes.

By integrating these urban management strategies, cities can create more inclusive environments where the well-being and prosperity of all social classes are prioritized, fostering a just society for everyone.

'BLUEPRINTS FOR JUSTICE: REDESIGNING CITIES FOR EQUALITY

- Manish D ,SPAV

Since the dawn of human civilization, human beings have planned their dwellings efficiently for their time period in the interest of the monarchy or religion or military or for occupation.

But a community with a broad population and economic range ought to make plans for everyone, yet some choose to prioritise the wealthiest members of the society through capitalistic means. For instance, in the United States, the government improperly used the "Law of Eminent Domain" to seize land from low-income African Americans under the guise of urban renewal redevelopments. This was done to evict them from areas where their presence was not wanted by wealthy white neighbours, and the land was later used to construct highways that further physically divide the already racially divided city centres.
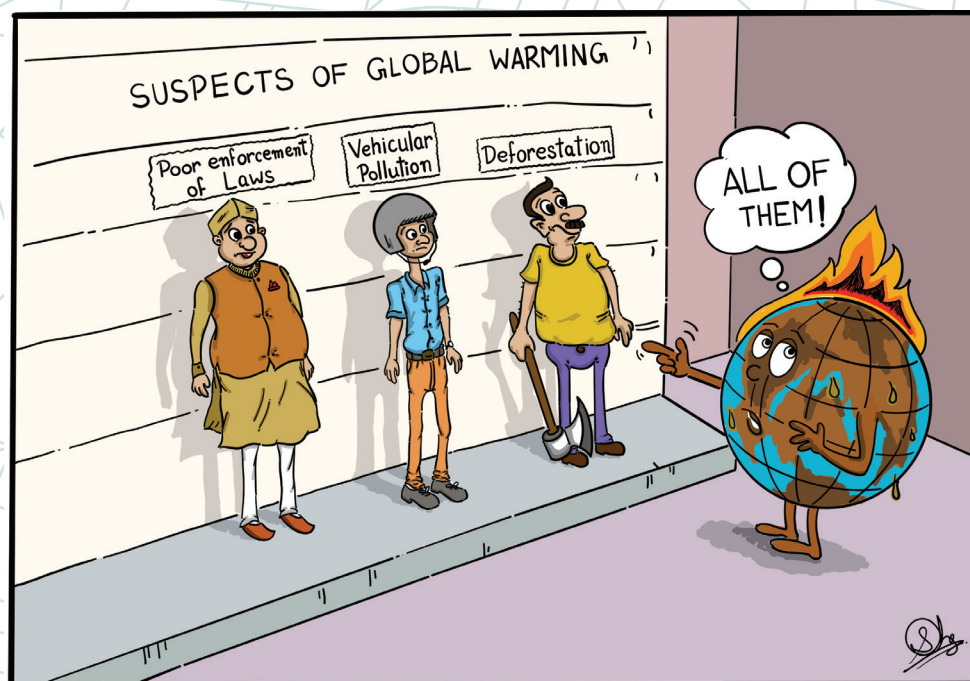
The conventional rationale for the inclusion of justice in spatial planning is that it integrates the public interest into land development by discouraging self-serving behaviour and coordinating a variety of activities.

In order to overcome the bias in the favour of wealthy and powerful social groups, adopting a comprehensive and inclusive approach to urban planning can help to create a just society that satisfies the interests of all classes. Urban planners shape the destiny of cities by balancing community requirements with sustainable resource utilisation. By placing equal access to resources like housing, healthcare, and education across varied neighbourhoods as a top priority, urban administration may promote a just society. Policies that support the development of social infrastructure, reliable public transportation, and affordable housing are essential. Diversity of opinions is ensured in decision-making processes through inclusive governance and community involvement. The living conditions of all inhabitants are improved by environmental sustainability initiatives. Social fairness is further supported by accessibility to healthcare, economic opportunity, and safety precautions. Urban management strategies are essential in building a just urban environment that meets the requirements of every socioeconomic strata and fosters prosperity by addressing these factors.

For instance of Just City concept in use,
In the 1970s, New York City exclusively unveiled its master plan. The plan performs best on diversity out of the three criteria of equality, diversity, and participation by advocating for mixed-use and mixed-income development.

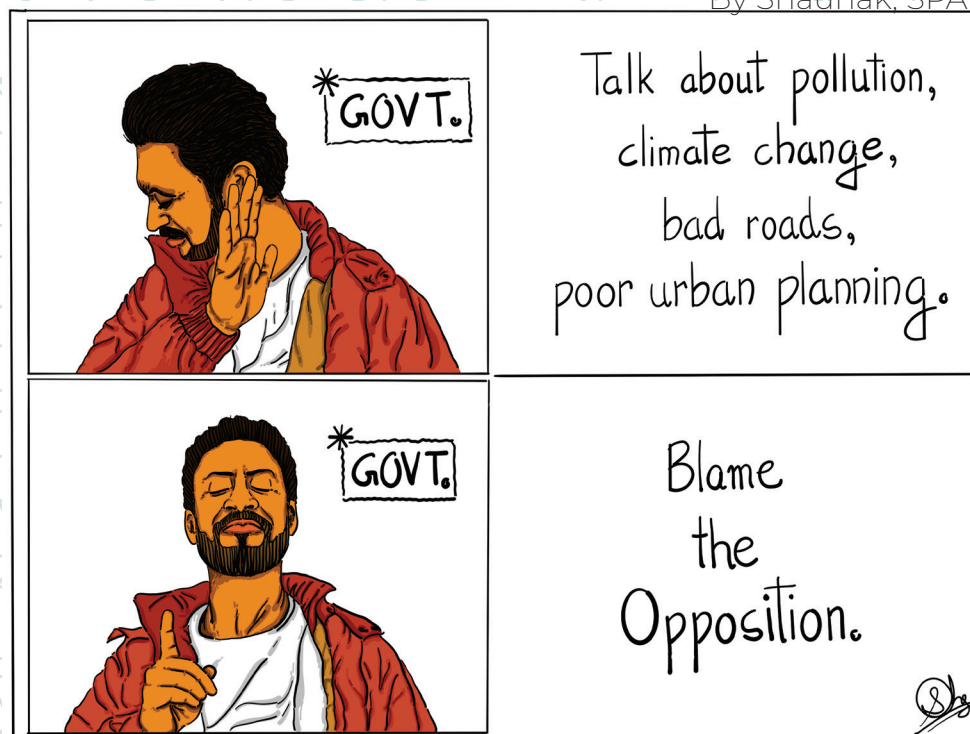## It's a team effort in global warming.
By Shaunak , SPAV

Addressing equity, the plan urges for more parks and waterfront access in underprivileged areas, encouraging growth in all five of the city's boroughs, and neighbourhoods.

The London Plan was released by the Mayor in 2004 and later approved by parliament. It promotes controlling development and mandating the building of homes to match anticipated population expansion, it also addresses discrimination, affordable housing, and policies related to community services, health, safety, education, and skill development. It is therefore aimed, at least in part, at social as well as physical difficulties.

All things considered, the just city concept is utopian since it contradicts the unequal distribution of power and resources found in contemporary capitalist economies.It is an effort to refocus the conversation around spatial planning in order to give underrepresented groups (especially low-income minorities) a greater advantage in the uses that land and the built environment are put through.

Just blame the opposition.
By Shaunak, SPAV

SUPPORTIVE GOVERNANCE STRATEGIES IN URBAN & TRANSPORTATION PLANNING- SEOUL

- Krithik Abhinav ,SPAV

Faced with increasing public opposition to urban development, Seoul could have taken the easy way out. Fortunately, the city chose to face its challenges and developed its most extensive public engagement processes yet, culminating in the remarkable Seoul Plan 2030 based on co-ordinated double track achievements.

Seoul's democratization in 1995 led to increased citizen participation in local matters, as a result of conflicts between interest groups, NGOs, and the public sector. This led to decentralization and the establishment of a planning authority, which is crucial for the 2030 plan with a symbiotic relationship between planning and democracy. Unlike mere political propaganda, Seoul's urban planning prioritizes people-friendly infrastructure.

Unlike planning of towns without any valid reasons like in the case of political propaganda, the transportation system is unified, with a single pass granting access to buses, trains, and shuttles. Pedestrian and cycle tracks are well-connected to railway stations, making it easy to navigate the city. The data system is also unified, allowing for efficient handling of citizen data as a result of the government's coherence with data collection
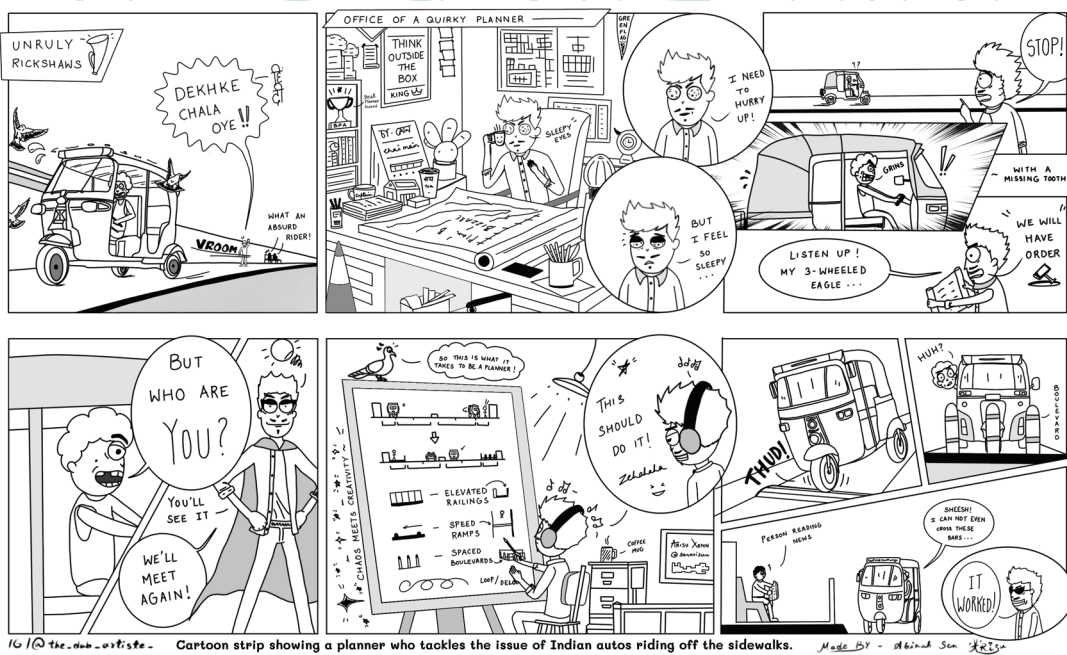
The Cheonggyecheon Project is a prime example of effective planning. Led by Mayor Lee Myung-Bak, the project scrapped an aged expressway which earlier covered the Cheonggyecheon stretch as a result of rapid economic war development. This termination made way for flow of water after long years, reviving the area's aesthetic look and improving air quality for the people who settled in Seoul after the war. The stream, now supplied by the Han River and groundwater, has become a popular tourist spot and a peaceful oasis in the urban landscape.

The project's success demonstrates the importance of decentralization, citizen participation, and effective planning. By prioritizing natural beauty and citizen needs, Seoul has created a sustainable and habitable city. The Cheonggyecheon Project has also improved mobility and reduced congestion with new corridors, showcasing the potential of urban planning to transform cities.

I guess I could eat in the meanwhile
By Shaunak, SPAV

The project's focus on natural beauty and citizen needs has created a harmonious blend of urban development and nature. The stream's restoration has also addressed environmental concerns, making it a model for sustainable urban planning. By prioritizing citizen participation and effective planning, Seoul has created a thriving city that balances development with natural beauty alongside encompassing sustainable development along Urban plots with controlled pollution.
People in Korea who could even run rails on roads dropped the habit of riding their bikes due to the hum of the stream as it's more affordable for their pastime to spend time in the waters than struggling for a long drive to reach somewhere and lose their wallets. Thus, the plan discourages private vehicles which is the main motto of transportation planning.

"The day the sidewalk fought back."
By Abinab, SPAD

BEST PRACTICES
FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Housing – Beijing, China

Project Overview
The Baiwan Jiayuan social housing project in Beijing is an innovative approach to social housing.

Key Features
Prioritizes low-income earners, efficient design, open neighbourhood, and ample sunlight.

Success Stories
Enhanced irrigation in Ethiopia, empowered communities in Ghana, and proven model for sustainable rural development.

Climate Adaptation in Global Cities

Sara Hughes' Project Analysis: Climate Adaptation Plans in Delhi
Highlights capacity issues and discusses the political economy of poverty in Delhi's climate adaptation plans.

Delhi's Climate Change Adaptation Challenges
Limited funding and exclusion of vulnerable groups hinder effective adaptation.

Alternative Approaches
In contrast, a study on Mumbai by Paroma Wagle and Kavita Philip emphasizes connection between climate and social justice, advocating for inclusive and just adaptation strategies.

Gender Sensitive Mobility - Kochi and Surat , India

Policy Impact
Kochi and Surat's policies promote women's participation and empowerment in urban transport.

Initiatives for Change
Workforce integration, safe public transport, and equal employment opportunities address low female labor force participation.

Improved Outcomes
Women's safety, security, and overall empowerment in urban mobility are enhanced, demonstrating the potential of a gender-sensitive approach

Ecologically Sensitive Riverfront Surat , India

Sustainable Revitalization
Frankfurt's Main River banks revitalized, prioritizing sustainability and biodiversity.

Nature-Friendly Design
Green spaces, pedestrian paths, and recreational areas integrate with natural habitats, native vegetation supports local wildlife.

Community Benefits
Project fosters environmental awareness, enhances quality of life, and serves as a model for harmonizing urbanization with nature conservation.

Local Economic Development, Hiedelberg

Economy Modernization
Heidelberg diversified its economy through industrial upgrading and creative industries, beyond tourism and academia

Innovation Ignited
Partnerships with international institutions, including Heidberg University, sparked innovation, driving growth

Sustainable Growth
Establishment of Technologiepark Heidelberg and cross-regional cooperation enhanced resilience, making Heidelberg a model for economic diversification and sustainable growth.

Justice In Planning

F. Stephy Jenifer

*2nd year, School of Architecture and Planning,
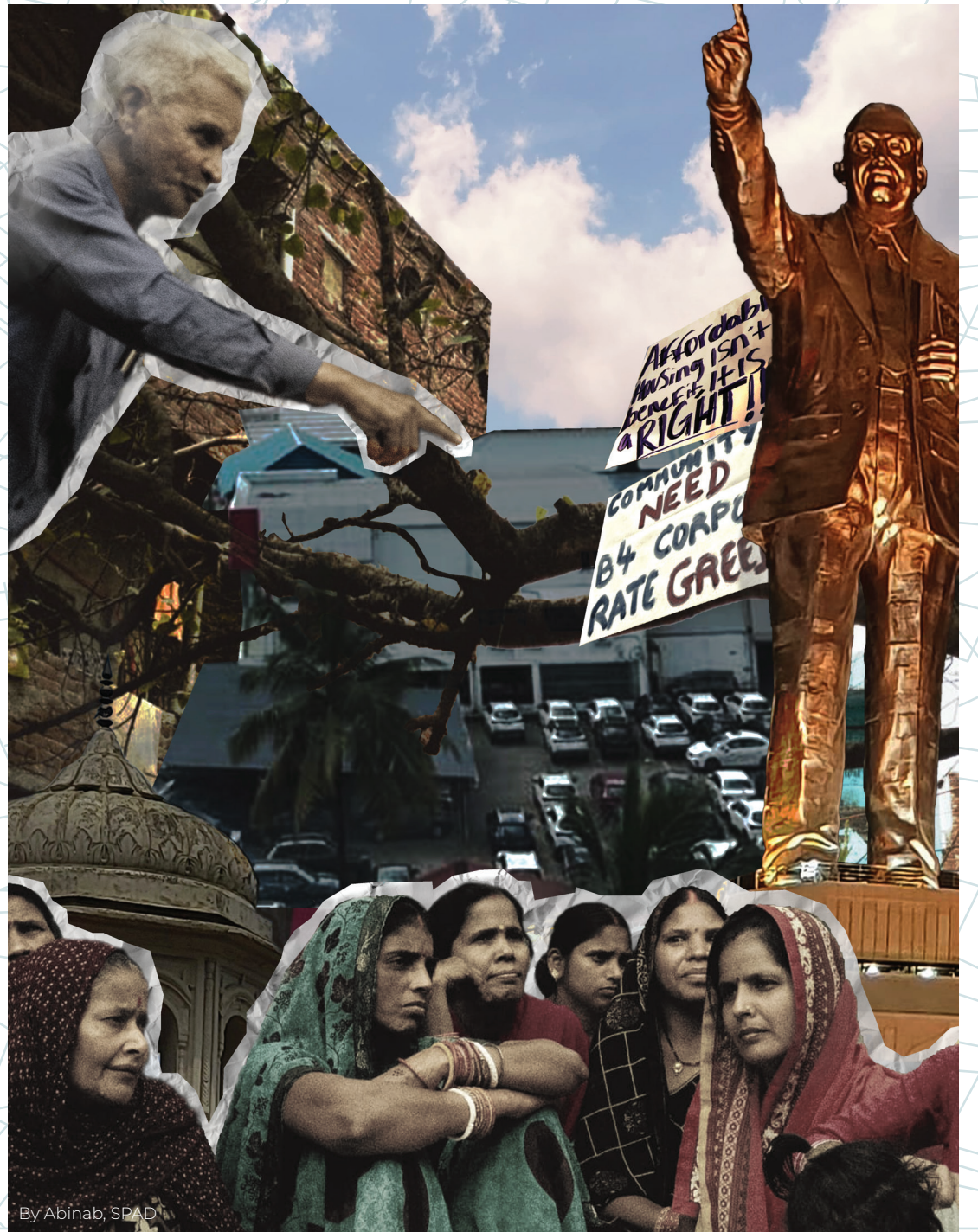Anna University, Chennai, Tamil Nadu.*

In the heart of a nation, where progress takes flight,
Contracts are signed, and leaders stand bright.
Money flows in, the city's life speeds ahead,
Buildings rise tall, and hope starts to spread.
The economy grows, fueled by wealth's steady beat,
But the gap between rich and poor runs deep.
The wealthy prosper, their fortunes shining clear,
While the poor are left in the city's silent rear.

Few linger by roads, some in slums confined,
Yearning for land, in life's struggle entwined,
Unhygienic grip, their daily strife,
A cry for justice in the urban life.

Loss and crime haunt their narrow lanes,
Where has governance fled, in what remains?
Voices muffled, drowned in the fray,
Yet from the silence, movements find their way.

People rise, reclaiming their due rights,
In slums, hope ignites, dispelling nights,
Politics shift, incentives find their place,
Public's voice heard in planning's embrace.

Now justice dawns, a new day unfurled,
Towards sustainability, a world transformed,
In the tapestry of progress and care,
Where every soul finds dignity to share.

By Abinab, SPAD

Abin Shan

Beebi Fathima

Adithya N

Kartikeya Mishra