

Local Accessibility Plans for Indian Cities

Project Concept

World-over, there has been a paradigm shift to making cities more reliant on modes like walking and cycling, shifting the focus in transportation planning from mobility-oriented analysis to accessibility-based analysis. In face of this, existing Indian lack urban and transport planning systems that are bottom-up, participatory and dynamic– both at the city and local area level. Although there have been attempts at the national level to mainstream CDPs and CMPs, these are not integrated. While there is a need to develop planning mechanisms that integrate land-use and transport at the regional and city level, it is important to integrate local plans. While the focus of city level plans should be mobility and infrastructure development, the local area plans should focus on accessibility and basic services along with area improvements. Ideally, both plans should feed into each other from time-to-time to create continuous planning activities. Urban areas in India lack such an approach, of integrating top-down planning with bottom-up aspirations and efforts.

Furthermore, such plans have no meaning unless integrated with institutional and financing mechanisms. Thus local plans should be linked with the 'participatory planning' and 'participatory budgeting' activities at the local area/ municipal ward level. Linking planning and budgeting at area level would make budgets more target-oriented and plans more realistic and easily implementable.



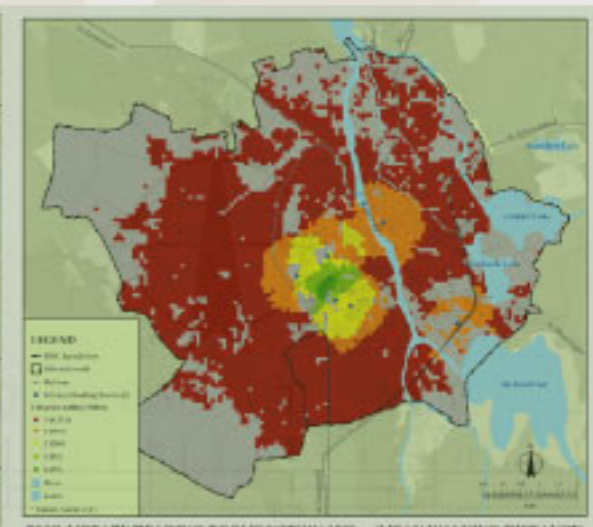
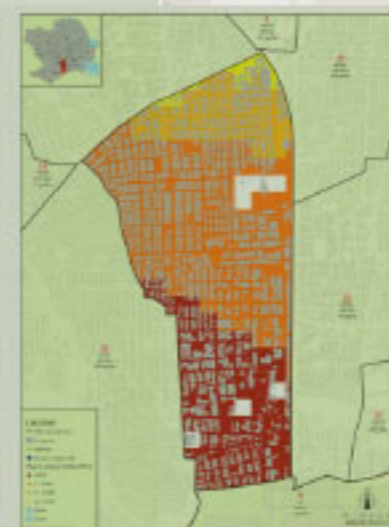
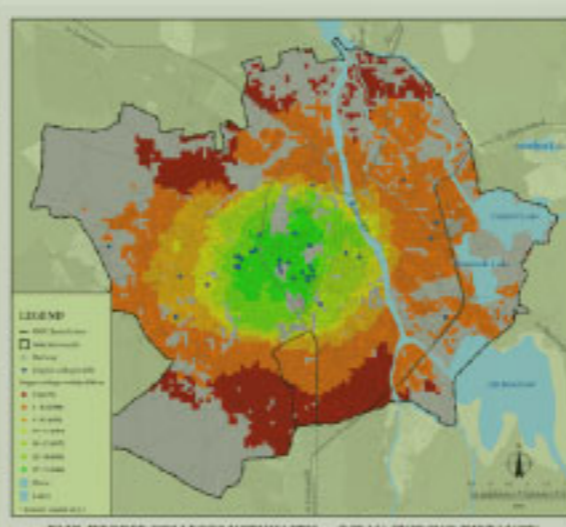
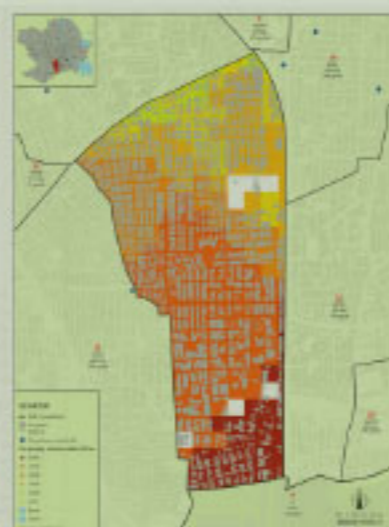
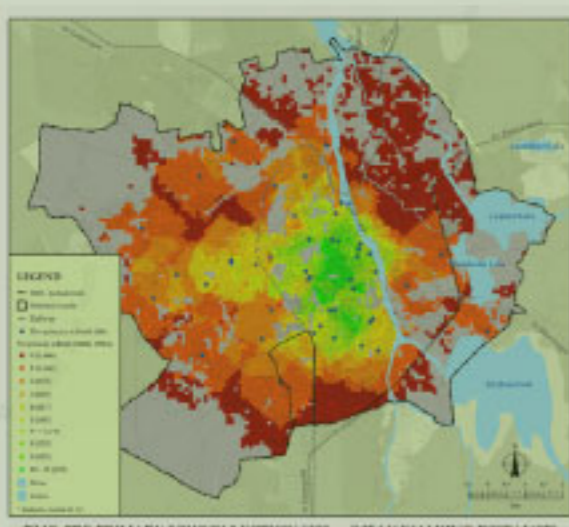
Participatory session with LIG women



Participatory session with Elderly LIG men



Participatory session with children





Accessibility to opportunities plays an important role in the wellbeing of urban populations. However, the connotation 'accessibility' can have different definitions depending upon 'for whom' and 'to what' and 'for what', it is measured. The Centre of Urban Equity, CEPT University in a study funded by Shakti Foundation, India has undertaken the task of devising a methodology for a Local Accessibility Plan (LAP) as well as showcasing it in one ward of Rajkot. Although the methodology can be replicated for other Indian cities, Rajkot was chosen as a city to showcase the plan, on account of data availability and city government support.

The proposed approach combines accessibility analysis (technical) with participatory analysis (fieldwork). Accessibility to four sectors - education, healthcare, socio-cultural amenities and safety and security services were analysed through the use of spatial analysis components of ArcGIS and FlowMAP software. This information was presented to the residents of Ward 20, Rajkot in the form of maps along with a questionnaire. The participatory analysis was conducted through techniques such as transect walks, participatory mapping and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), so as to identify demand-side deficits from the users' perspective. Based on the inputs of residents as well as insights from fieldwork, a land-use plan and a list of identified projects has been prepared.

Overall, this project has addressed the twin agendas of equity and rationality in infrastructure provision at the local level. In addition, it has provided a tool to empower the citizens to take charge of the planning decisions made at the local level; in tune with the spirit of the 74th Constitutional Amendment.

Research Team

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