Subversive Urban Development in India:
Implications on Planning Education

Darshini Mahadevia
Rutul Joshi

December 2009

Centre for Urban Equity
(An NRC for Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India)
CEPT University
Subversive Urban Development in India:
Implications on Planning Education

Darshini Mahadevia¹
Rutul Joshi²

December 2009

Centre for Urban Equity
(An NRC for Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India)
CEPT University

¹ Faculty of Planning and Public Policy & UPA Cell, CEPT University, darshini@cept.ac.in
² Faculty of Planning and Public Policy & UPA Cell, CEPT University, joshirutul@cept.ac.in
This paper was presented at the 10th Congress of the Association of Planning Schools of Asia (APSA), held in Ahmedabad, on 24-26 November, 2009, organized by CEPT University, Ahmedabad.

Disclaimer

The comments and opinions in this paper are of the authors and not of the Centre for Urban Equity or CEPT University.
1.0 INTRODUCTION

Exclusions as a consequence of urban planning and development processes has become ubiquitous across Asia since these countries have embarked on the project of globalizing their cities or what is called Making of World Class Cities. The story of exclusions, expulsions and marginalizations have come through from the cities of number of Asian countries in the last decade and a half (See articles in Mahadevia (2008) (ed.), including in India. Not just the informal settlements, but large parts of many cities in India qualify for demolitions because of the Urban Planning paradigm, mainly the Master Plan approach to Planning. Urban Planning has come to be closely linked in India with unachievable plans, highly regulatory approach, consequently resulting in rent seeking by the State and hence a section of urban population, whom we would call ‘elite’ capable of subverting the Master Plan itself, ironically with the help of the State, capturing the urban space. The cities develop through subversion of Urban Plans. The poor in the cities subvert the Planning through political patronage - commonly called the ‘votebank politics’ - and some ingenious methods of survival such as ready to face multiple demolitions in life, ready to come out of it every time, often with ‘flying colours’ now glorified as coping strategies, high perseverance to sustain in hostile urban environments and then over one generation or so stabilize and integrate in ‘urbane’ life. The planning approach and processes as of now have neither any way of including spaces for living, working and mobility of the bottom half of the city populations nor any participatory processes built into the system to include their aspirations. Clearly, everything else rather than the Urban Planning helps the poor in stabilizing in the urban system and hence other socio-political processes emerge as the paradigm of urbanization in India and not the Urban Planning.

Consequently, in many cities of Asia, the decisions about the major activity locations are taken outside the City Master Plans. For example, after the location decision of Beijing Olympics was taken, the Beijing Master Plan was redone to include the Olympics Greens, which by then was already planned. In India, the projects envisaged under the first major national urban renewal programme since independence, namely Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), is implemented through the City Development Plans (CDPs), which are essentially city level capital investment plans, prepared largely independently of the city’s Master Plan. This is because the City Master Plans, as they are made, do not have any financial plan attached to them and have very poor reflection of socioeconomic concerns on one hand and hence integration of these concerns on the other hand. The Master plans have nearly no relationship with the governance structures. Hence, the City Master Plans have very poor implementability. In essence, preparation of City Master Plans become a statutory exercise that freezes lands and makes them unavailable for development and by that declaring large parts of city activities and large parts of city population ‘illegal’ or ‘informal’.

The Planning Education post-second World War, in wake of national independence of number of developing countries, drew from the pre-second World War period. This is because, the newly independent developing countries embarked on the project of modernization. While the modernization project was based on liberal philosophy of individual rights and democracy, the institutional structure for this project was bureaucratic (in Weberian terms), making individual rights and enjoyment of democracy dependent on the notion of ‘legality’. The urban planners and therefore the urban planning professionals, idealizing and ruminating on the pre-modernist city planning efforts as by Haussman and so on, adopted the pedagogy of ‘Control’
in planning education. The pre-modern and modernist paradigms merged to create deterministic on one hand and visionary statements on the other about cities, forgetting that the cities are living organisms, habitats for human beings, to be managed in a way to support the notions of equity and sustainability. In other words, the Urban Planning has essentially come to represent a Top-down approach to urban development. These philosophies together have profoundly influenced the planning education.

In the context of western capitalist economies, the dominant urban planning paradigm, called the ‘Rational Planning’ or Comprehensive Planning or popularly know Master Plan, has been challenged and literature is available on the six other paradigms of Urban Planning. There is very little discussion available on the paradigm of Urban Planning in the developing countries and governments and the planners continue to pursue ‘Rational Planning’ and the city developments continue through subversion. India too has been afflicted with this deficiency. There has been no discussion on the role of Urban Planners in the given context of India and hence, there is a real disconnect between the Urban Planning world and the real world. This has resulted in the Planning Education pedagogy being lost in between these two worlds, one real and one surreal (of the Planners).

Taking example of India, this paper attempts to build this strong critique of the present urban planning practices and processes and argues that the responsibility of such a state of affairs lies with the planning education system itself, that has narrowed its scope to just allocation of urban space, with false notions of comprehensiveness using the positivist methodologies, that result in unjust urban spaces. The planning education has laid more emphasis on providing top-down solutions than on detailed enquiry of urban processes. The second section describes at macro level the processes of exclusions, subversions and insurgency (to a very less extent however) in the Indian cities in general. The third and fourth section goes into the details of urban planning processes in India, narration of urban realities in Indian cities, explaining the disjunction between the planning, governance systems, urban fiscal realities and aspirations of the bottom half of the urban population. Lastly, the paper argues for situating the planning profession and hence planning education within the present Indian urban reality.

2.0 THE URBAN EXCLUSIONS, SUBVERSIONS AND INSURGENCY

The urban development paradigm in India in the last two decades have been accused of being rooted in the neo-liberal development paradigm (Banerjee-Guha 2009). At the centre of these arguments are the observed processes of exclusions, marginalizations, reduced rates of absolute poverty reduction and slow progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Studies have shown that the infrastructure-based urban development approaches have created vulnerabilities because economic growth though the former has in many instances resulted in displacements of traditional livelihoods and shelter options of the poor (Benjamin et al 2008, Mahadevia and Naryanan 2008).

Urban poverty is now accepted as independent phenomenon and not just spill over of rural poverty (UNFPA 2007). Over time, urban employment has informalized due to pursuit of flexible labour markets in the context of globalization, leading to increase in vulnerability. In absence of comprehensive social protection measures in Asia, a large population is vulnerable to falling in poverty. Countries continue to remain hostile to the new migrants (UNFPA 2007) and thus the poor among the new migrants face innumerable road blocks in getting urban citizenship. Urban planning paradigm- policies, tools and practices
One important link of urban planning with poverty reduction is the shelter security. Mahadevia (2009a) has attempted to link shelter security for comprehensive social protection and Gazdar et al (2009) have attempted to link property rights with transformative social protection. There are many studies that have pointed out the differences between the formal and informal tenure status (Mahadevia and Joshi 2009, Doeble 1987), tenure mobility (Payne 2002), role of actors in tenure and tenure mobility (Payne 1989), difference between property rights and occupancy rights (Chung and Wolfe 1992), and customary land rights and tenure in the urban areas (Chung and Wolfe 1992). There has been no attempt by the formal planning systems to address the question of land tenure, either giving of formal property rights or enhancing perceived security of tenure.

The second important link of the urban planning with the poverty is the spatialities of informal employment, whose spaces have been encroached upon by the projects under the formal planning practices. There is no attempt to study the dynamics of informal markets, their locational characteristics and their spatial requirements in a city. There are a few examples of planning informal markets available in Indian cities, for example, by the Youth for Voluntary Action (YUVA) in small towns around Mumbai metropolis, but, which are stuck in the formalities of the Master Plan, and hence have not been implemented as yet (Mahadevia et al 2009).

The third important link of urban planning with the poverty in India is through the role the transport system which plays in preventing or enabling the poor to access urban resources for their activities. Their mobility practices are a complex trade-off among residential location, travel distance and transport mode to minimize their social exclusion. In cities of India, they are dependent on public and human-powered transport modes which are constantly being degraded with the proliferation of private car usage (MoUD and Wilbur Smith 2008). Deficient mobility and inadequate transport infrastructure affect the urban poor disproportionately (Badami et al 2007). On the other hand last few decades have seen a shift towards ‘sustainable transport’ paradigm discarding the conventional paradigm of ‘increasing supply’ by formulating policies and implementing innovative ideas like the bus rapid transit systems. The question here remains of whether this paradigm shift in the urban transport works for the poor everywhere or it is being lost in ‘translation’ in the cities of India. Badami (2009) has argued that among all the options for public transport, enhancing pedestrian accessibility is the beginning and most equitable approach for ‘sustainable transport’ approach in Indian cities. This obviously means that the poor need to find space within the cities near their place of work.

Based on the first few decades of Urban Planning in India, it was pointed out that the Master Plans were too high in standards and had no place in the informal sector (Sarin 1982 from experience of Chandigarh) and that the norms and standards propounded by the Master Plans infact perpetuated certain hegemony and supported wealth amassing interests of a section,
namely the real estate operators (Mahadevia 2009b). It has also been argued that the interventions in space in the ‘name’ of Urban Poor have created situations where the subsidies, such as the housing subsidy, have been captured by the non-poor (Kundu 1993). The lands allocated for the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) housing in the Master Plans have not been used for the purpose and bizarrely, if these have been encroached upon by the poor, such housing had not been regularized because of the legal provisions of the Master Plans (Mahadevia and Joshi 2009). Thus, what has been demarcated for the urban poor has also not reached the poor. It is also known that the Master Plans have been used more to destroy shelter and livelihoods of the urban poor than to assist them to build them. And, it has been easier to destroy than create, sustain or enhance them, says Phillip Amis. There are also some evidences, for example in India, where the urban elites have wielded the ‘Planning Tools’ to capture urban resources, often by displacing the poor (for Mumbai see Mahadevia and Narayanan 2008, Roy 2009). Roy (2009) argues that the urban planning has been subverted by the rich and the powerful through deregulations that suit them.

But, the urban poor have created their own lives, which have been constructed through subversions of the Master Plans, through mobilization or in some cases even insurgency. Volume of literature is available on how poor struggle and survive in the cities of the developing countries (Davis 2004). Literature is also available on negotiating housing tenure security through patron-client relationship and play of various actors in the urban space (Payne 1989, Benjamin et al 2008 for Bangalore). John FC Turner had pointed out in the 1960s itself of such a process of ‘housing by the people for the people’, which is also called the ‘incremental housing’. Hansen and Williams (1988) have elaborated on four stages of incremental housing, called progressive housing by them, from stage zero to stage three, indicating importance of mobilization or public policy to extend public infrastructure in the informal settlements that would consolidate them in urban space. While, the process of incremental housing has been mentioned, there is very little information on what has been its interface with the existing Master Plans. In other words, there is no information available on whether subversive housing created thus has been formalized and how the provisions of the Master Plans have been negotiated. In the recent literature, albeit rarely, discussion on urban insurgencies for shelter rights can be found, for example, Bhide (2008) for Mumbai. Literature is also available on Community Mobilization for shelter rights, for example, on Slum Networking Programme (SNP) in Ahmedabad (Joshi 2002), on Slum Redevelopment Scheme, Mumbai (Mukhija 2003). These are examples of how the poor have survived the hostility of the Master Plans, through political support, community mobilization or devising their own strategies. But, none of these mention whether the legal provisions of the Master Plans have been negotiated or not and if so how? And, thus, the role of Urban Planner has not been mentioned in the literature.

Not just the poor, but even the non-poor have subverted the Master Plans in the developing countries, which tend to get regularized over time. The ‘entrenched’ (in the language of Holston 2009) or the ‘legal urban citizens’ or the middle classes and elites subvert the Master Plans. In India, they have been observed to subvert the Master Plan through project interventions, for example through the JNNURM and increasing middle and elite class engagements with formal politics and urban planning systems (Coelho and Venkat 2009). The public spaces created in the name of the general public or middle class are the flyovers, highways, hi-tech religious and nationalist theme parks (Srivastava 2009), which disproportionately benefit the urban rich than the urban poor. In fact, the state assists the non-
poor in subverting the planning policies and its implementation in various ways. There is very little literature available on this except the emerging literature on Special Economic Zones (SEZs).

Thus, there are three types of subversions observed in urban space: one where the poor subvert as an outcome of exclusions, two where the non-poor subvert to push their own interests and in reaction to overregulation under the Master Plan and current land legislation regimes, and three where the state subverts in favour of the vested interests, causing the capture of urban resources. The Indian State, often to abide by the international pro-poor discourse, enacts pro-poor policies and even sometimes an implementation structure but in course of their implementation subvert them in favour of the vested interests. Example in India is of urban planning through land pooling and readjustment called Town Planning (TP) Mechanism practiced in state of Gujarat, where certain land parcels are declared as reserved for the urban poor does not reach them as the local state panders to the vested interests. The means adopted for subversions are the stringent application of the legal procedures and passing on the responsibilities game played between the various tiers of government and multiple planning authorities, when the question of reaching out to the poor is concerned. Another example in India is of the federally conceived National Urban Housing and Habitat Policy (NUHHP), 2007, which is implemented locally as per the state and local level political economies. One more example is the Urban land Ceiling and Regulation Act (ULCRA), 1976; the way it was framed is an example of how the State itself subverted a good legislation and assisted the rich in amassing wealth through urban real estate speculation. Third example is of a new town in Mumbai, called the New Bombay, was constructed to force the land prices up in the prime locations in Mumbai City (Banerjee-Guha 1995).

3.0 WHY DEVELOPMENT/ MASTER PLANS DO NOT WORK?
The development plan (DP) incorporates various proposed uses of land in the form of zoning, reservation of land for public purpose uses, earmarking roads and railway network, schedule of implementation and development control regulations. The time frame for a development plan is for 20 years with the provision of revision in every 10 years. The Development plan preparation process includes several surveys covering social and environmental aspects such as – demographic, socio-economic, traffic and transportation, industries, water bodies, soil composition, geology, ground water prospects etc. Proposed land use in the D.P. puts each parcel of land under a specific land use category. It also acts as a legal binding for development of a particular land parcel for a particular category of land use.

After development plans are prepared and approved, the town planning agencies have to initiate implementation of plans and construction of basic infrastructure in the area. Since different town planning agencies in different states follow their own Act, there are different mechanisms adopted for urban land development in the country. Urban land development mechanisms followed by different government planning agencies are divided into two categories of land acquisition mechanism and land pooling mechanism. The land acquisition mechanism enables a government agency to acquire any land in the country for public purpose against some fixed compensation to the owner as per government rules. The acquired land is then developed and provided with basic infrastructure as per approved plan and then auctioned as per the government rules. The land acquisition mechanism faces strong resistance by original land owners and sometimes leads to serious legal challenges and delays in implementation. Under land pooling mechanism, Town Planning Schemes (TPS) are
prepared in which land is not acquired by the government agency. It is reshaped, readjusted and returned to the original owner. The deducted land parcel would usually be 40 per cent of the original plot and it is used for providing common infrastructure and facilities like roads, gardens, play grounds etc. In such mechanism, land area of a land owner decreases but overall value of the land increases several times. Major difference between land pooling mechanism and land acquisition mechanism is that under the latter, benefit of urban development is realized by the original owner of the land, whereas in the former, the planning agency benefits and not the original owner.

These land use planning mechanism have lengthy time lines starting from the preparation of the plans to the final sanction of the plan. For example, in Ahmedabad between year 1978 to 1999, only 18 town planning schemes were sanctioned and implemented while the population of the city increased two-fold. Secondly, the city government would not be able to implement the plans or construct a single urban road without the final sanction from the state government. The current urban planning mechanism promotes top-down approaches where the state government has all the powers to revert any decision taken by the planning officer. Thirdly, there is no effective mechanism of the participation of the stakeholders in the entire process. Fourthly, there is no link between the administrative boundaries and the planning boundaries and similarly there is no link between city’s budget and its land use plans. As a result the planning department and agencies function parallel to the urban local bodies where the planning decisions and the day to day functional decision often do not match.

The most successful development plans and town planning schemes have often worked well for the private domain much more than contributing to the public domain. The public domain (here defines as space for roads, open spaces-gardens, institutions and housing for the poor) in the city rely much more on the effective implementation of these plans. It is a matter of how effectively the planning tools are used for public domain rather than what kind of tools are being used in any context. For example, the reservations for housing of the urban poor in any development plans or town planning schemes are rarely utilised or built upon. It was found that in Ahmedabad municipal area about 90 per cent of the reserved plots for socially and economically weaker section housing either remained empty or encroached upon. Ironically, number of such land parcels had illegitimate low-income group settlements on it. Such settlements are prime examples of subversion of formal urban planning mechanism being done by the poor in order to find space in the city.
4.0 PLANNING THROUGH PROJECTS – ELITE CAPTURE OF URBAN RESOURCES

Urban development in India was sought to be pursued through the process of Rational Planning, also called Comprehensive Planning. Its actual form in the cities is a Master Plan or a Development Plan. But, the State itself has not been able to implement these, as discussed at length in the previous section. The State has therefore taken the route of progressing with urban development through projects. This section briefly discusses this journey of urban development, which has resulted in eventually, an elite capture of urban resources.

Urban development programmes and policies in India have been changing since independence with the alterations in the paradigms of development. The policy influences in India are a result of the changing role and reach of the government at all levels, the influences from the global institutions along with the changes in the social strata and economic class. New instruments of finance and public administration have been tried out not only in India but also in many developing countries globally under the goodwill garb of ‘sustenance of the economy’ and for the purpose of comprehensive development.

**TABLE 1: COMPARISON OF INTER-GENERATIONAL URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT DESIGN IN INDIA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects of project design</th>
<th>First generation projects</th>
<th>Second generation projects</th>
<th>Third generation projects</th>
<th>Fourth generation project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Concerns about slumming in the cities in 70s and 80s</td>
<td>Structural adjustment sin the 90s, 74th constitutional amendment act in 1992</td>
<td>Cities as engines of economic growth', emerging focus on urban development in late 90s</td>
<td>Millennium development goals, Need felt for greater investment in urban areas to attract private/foreign direct investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Improvement of surroundings, physical infrastructure with an external assistance</td>
<td>Financial and functional urban management for better infrastructure, beginning of conditions based funding</td>
<td>Market based instruments for urban infrastructure, funding based on local/state level reforms</td>
<td>Urban infrastructure, governance, basic services for the urban poor, reform driven 'mission', first big investment in cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target group</td>
<td>Metro cities or one or two special cases</td>
<td>Metro and large cities, initiation of state level interventions</td>
<td>Large cities, small and medium towns along with active state level interventions</td>
<td>Metro cities, state capitals, religious and heritage towns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Priorities</td>
<td>Housing, Sites and Services, slum up gradation etc.</td>
<td>Infrastructure, civic amenities, transportation etc.</td>
<td>Infrastructure finance, capacity building, computerization training,</td>
<td>Basic services, public transport, public housing, infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach</td>
<td>Top-down, insignificant</td>
<td>Top-down with loan to central/state government,</td>
<td>Top-down with loan to ULBs, financial</td>
<td>Top-down approach based on grants, urban reforms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>Institutional roles</td>
<td>Out comes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical planning and engineering: Master plan, Area/ Site planning, low cost engineering solutions</td>
<td>'Government as a provider', working with governments, Private sector exists depending completely upon the govt.</td>
<td>success in implementation but problems with sustainability and operation - maintenance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination of physical and strategic planning: integrated land use - transportation plans, introduction of financial operating plans</td>
<td>Initiating Private sector participation in urban sector in key area of service provision, Appointment of project management group</td>
<td>satisfactory implementation, likely sustainability but social/ environmental conflicts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic planning: City corporate plans (CCP), City Development Strategies - – new tools above existing planning tools</td>
<td>Rhetoric of 'government as a facilitator', Private sector participation at various levels, Government is an implementer, ‘users pay’ for operation and maintenance</td>
<td>Private sector participation works at micro level but no success at macro level.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic planning: City Development Plans (&amp; financial plans) and Detailed project reports (and comprehensive mobility plans) – new tools above existing planning tools</td>
<td>Big Government grants, MOA between three tiers of government, partnerships with private sector for project implementation, Private sector as contractor and consultants</td>
<td>Grasping difference between ‘rhetoric’ and reality, issues in project implementation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Focusing on the reforms in urban sector, an interesting trend can be deciphered from the designs of the urban development projects in India. The initial focus was on the physical intervention in the existing system of governance. Later on, with time, the role of State in physical intervention begun to dilute and other actors and agencies stepped-in with the facilitation by the State. Finally, with the JNNURM, the government at various levels have increased investments in urban infrastructure especially in basic services, public housing, public transport and other infrastructure in the selected cities (See Table 1) and multiple agencies are engaged in the delivery of these infrastructures.

The first generation of urban projects like the Madras Urban Development Programme (MUDP), Calcutta Urban Development Programme (CUDP) and Bombay Urban Development Programme (BUDP) were more focused on physical intervention in the existing system focusing on shelter. The second-generation projects initiated the concept of financial intermediary and involved private sector in the urban processes. The third generation projects not only promoted private sector participation but also added certain components like capacity building with the help of institutional strengthening. These institutions acted like Strategic intermediary facilitating services beyond financing the projects. Thus, reforms are driven in the ULBs ensuring the return of the investment along with visible changes within the institutional and policy framework. After the liberalization of the economy, the processes of decentralization, increased participation of private sector and communities in the planning process have been greatly emphasized.
This inter generational analysis of urban development project design reflects a slow paradigm shift in the urban development projects in India. The projects in early 1980s focused on the improvement of the physical aspects of development with the help of development assistance. The projects in early 1990s marked a major shift due to national level policy change and focused on the ‘management of the urban’. This also marks a transition from the development approach of a welfare state to market based neo-liberal interpretations of the roles of market and government where government merely regulates key services which are being supplied by market based institutions.

The coming of JNNURM marks yet another shift in the urban development paradigm in general and in the nature of projects in particular. It is finance based on the percentage share worked out between all ties of the government which depends on the performance of the ULBs and the state government in the implementation of the national policies while reforming local practices. JNNURM also began by emphasising more on urban poverty and community participation by creating a parallel hierarchy of technical advisory groups at local, state and national level.

5.0 QUESTIONING OF RATIONAL PLANNING MODEL IN INDIA?
The dominant model of urban planning in the world is called ‘Rational Model’, alternatively called Comprehensive Planning or Master Plan, through its tools of Zoning and Development Control Rules. This concept is of the modern world. Pre-industrial cities were seen as crowning achievements of empires, with orderly street systems and conduits for water and sewage along with majestic buildings and open spaces. The early industrial cities were besotted with rampant epidemics on one hand and haphazard city development. Modern city planning came as an answer to introduce public health and hygiene through laying of sanitation infrastructure, grid-iron pattern of roads to facilitate movement of motorized transport and also laying of infrastructure, ‘optimum’ location of economic activities and control population densities. This led to early ideas of city planning propounded by Ebenezer Howard (Garden Cities), city beautiful movement in United States of America (USA) and then development of new towns on the same lines in newly independent countries in Asia – Chandigarh designed by Le Corbusier, etc. The Rational Planning approach has antecedents in these historic experiences and today, is solely guided by the visions of the ‘experts’ known as the planners, who more often than not articulate the aspirations of the ‘State’ – whatever the nature of the state it may be. Hence, planners in socialist countries such as China have created ‘socialist’ city structures. In mixed economies, the city structures were expected to be orderly and egalitarian but turned out to create large Shadow Cities (Neuwirth 2006). The capitalist economy such as USA created a planning system mainly based on application of regulations to control excesses of a market economy.

Disillusion with the rational model set in during late 1960s and early 1970s, perhaps, with the rise of student protests all over the world and also radical political movements, and the planners realized the limits of what more technical and less socio-economically oriented models could accomplish. The model was questioned on the grounds of its use of terms such as ‘objective’, ‘rational’, ‘optimal’, ‘expertise’, etc. much the same way as classical and then the neo-classical economics has been questioned. Further, it has been ascertained that there is no such thing as ‘objective’ knowledge, ‘rational’ decisions and ‘optimal’ solutions and that all ‘expertise’ is based on values and norms (Alexander 1984, Mandelbaum et al 1996). This model has been criticized for being too ‘positivistic’, ahistorical and most of all, apolitical.
The last criticism indicates that the Rational Planning could be hijacked by a few vested interests. Lastly, its anti-democratic manner of planning ‘from top down’ has also been criticized. In practice, urban planning practice and theory has learnt very little from social and development theories and have thus ignored, at best, the political economies of urban spaces. In essence, urban planning paradigm, based on the Rational Planning paradigm has remained nothing but pandering to dominant urban class, what Holston calls ‘entrenched’ class.

But, this criticism has mainly come from the capitalist or welfare countries of the developed world. From this criticism has evolved other urban planning models namely: (i) The advocacy model, (ii) The (neo) Marxist model, (iii) The equity planning model, (iv) The social learning and communicative model (v) The radical model and (vi) The liberalistic model (Schönwandt 2008). There is some literature on the critique of Rational Planning in the developing countries, as already mentioned and also on the subversions and insurgencies of the urban poor. But, the literature does not articulate the paradigm within which the Urban Planning paradigm is located today in the developing countries. In India too, there is dearth of discussion on existing Urban Planning paradigm. Consequently, the profession is often lost on what is its ‘raison de être’ and hence what is the Urban Planning education expected to achieve.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS ON PLANNING EDUCATION

To a great extent, the practice of conventional town and country planning celebrated prescriptive approaches, singular perspectives, top-down control regimes and bigotry impositions in the name of the application of scientific knowledge. The ‘new’ planning pedagogy developed in some schools in India tried to go away from the conventional flaws promoting multi-disciplinary approaches and being more open-ended. However, in terms of day to day teaching practice, the co-existence of the old school and the new school is often visible.

Post-world war II development paradigm in the western world and post-modern ideas promoted and facilitated the fusion of different branches of knowledge and multiplicity of approaches. The contemporary planning education can be seen as a combination of two major streams of knowledge. One was an extension of architecture - redefined as ‘built environment’ and practiced in terms of physical and land use planning. Second stream of knowledge draws from economics in particular and from social science in general. With the marriage of these two unusual and unrelated branches of knowledge brought about broader understanding of towns, cities and regions. Given the complexities and the nature of the development discourses, the planning education in India and elsewhere adopted multi-disciplinary approach which was more inclusive, broad-based and thus, open-ended compared to the conventional training of ‘town planners’.

Any paradigm shift is a complex resultant of a dialogue between the theory, its practices and its due socio-political implications. One hand the planning pedagogy has always been balancing these two approaches and on the other hand, the changing paradigm of urban development in India also contributes the way in which planning is taught and practiced.

The first generation projects in India brought the focus of planning education to be on design and planning housing, land use planning and zoning regulations, economics of land and housing, site planning and service provision. The academic debates focused on the relevance
of planning principles, macro and micro trends, demand assessments and quantitative methods, models of development.

There was a remarkable shift in the planning education while the second and third generation were being implemented. The neo-liberal paradigm emerged as a major influence on the planning pedagogy. The planning education began to include courses on financial and administrative aspects of development and the need was felt to include more subjects of finance, real estate, urban management and governance. There was a rise of ‘managerial planning’ where the planners were seen as ‘urban managers’ themselves or were perceived to be working with them. The planning education saw the emergence of subjects like urban management, real estate and land management, project management and environmental management on one hand and courses on housing finance, project finance, urban finance and infrastructure finance on the other hand.

While planning education was being driven by neo-liberal paradigm, the role of planners was being redefined by the job market and (on campus) placement agencies. At times, the planners found themselves competing with the management graduates in the job market and in professional competitions. Policy research and applied social sciences required greater intellectual inputs, networking with the bureaucracy and fierce competition and thus, such projects were seen to be less attractive or commercially viable.

This era was the beginning of the disjunction between contemporary development and social discourses and the planning theory and practice. With the fourth generation projects focusing around JNNURM brought in large investments in the urban sector and the unprecedented need for consultants, practitioners and policy makers. The fourth generation projects brought new procedures, new projects and old tools labelled as new tools and mechanisms which offered to reform the urban practices in the country. Many of the new plans replaced the existing plans and their legalities creating new procedures and bureaucracy. This definitely made the planning practice broad based than earlier times where the planners found themselves making and implementing policies, developing and appraising projects, making/re-making plans and collecting-recollecting data for various levels of the government.

The planning education at large is changing itself to play ‘roles’ defined by the markets moving away from critical discourse on the relevance of policies, efficiency of tools or exclusions in the implementation process. There are new institutions and new courses emerging in the country which consciously positions themselves as urban/ regional / environmental ‘studies’ or as urban/infrastructure ‘planning and management’. It is obvious that the course with the second name as ‘studies’ are focusing more on applied social science, research and social theories. The ‘planning and management’ courses focus more on management principles, finance and business plans for the government.

The Urban Planning profession as such and so the Urban Planning Education, does not directly address the Bottom-up Approach. It has no answer to the processes of subversions and insurgency going on in the cities of the developing countries in general and in India in particular. It does not even take cognizance of these realities. The Urban Planning profession and hence the education has not included any participatory methodologies in taking decisions about urban space. It has not engaged enough with the processes of marginalizations within the cities.
Whatever has been the dominant ideology of urban development (as indicated in Table 1), the role of Planners has been that of ‘the experts’, with very poor footings in the real urban reality. Their role has therefore been working through and pushing of ‘Top-down planning’. The pedagogy of planning has shifted over time from preparing ‘experts’ for Rational Planning to experts willy-nilly pushing neo-liberal project of the State and the resources captured by the elites. This innate naivety about urban reality on one hand and the arrogance of ‘we know all’ attitude of the experts has led to the urban professionals thus created to pander to the established interests of the urban society.

In practice, in India, we find four types of Urban Planning professionals: (i) Technocratic, who would want to tread safely and not engage in any discourses about equity and justice, urban social realities, etc., in other words stating that they would be engaged in technical solutions of a policy decision taken by the State or the dominant classes; (ii) Techno-bureaucratic, who would also be like Technocratic Planners but be also engaged in the implementation of Plans thus created through tools – legislation and rules – available at their disposal and in the process may also engage in rent-seeking; (iii) Ideological, who is moved by ideals of Green City or Garden City propounded by Ebenezer Howard or of ‘Sustainable Cities’ from the contemporary discourse of urban development and may tend to ignore the socio-economic and political realities; and (iv) Opportunistic, one who would adopt the vocabulary of the dominant class and flow with the current in self-promotion. In situations such as India, we need a democratic planner, with post-modernist willing to locate in the real world, willing to negotiate the real world in a way to intervene on behalf of those not entrenched in urban power structures and for those whose interests the market in the neoliberal world does not serve and one who is therefore empiricist finding right balance between practice and theory. Urban Planning Education therefore needs to emerge from the clutches of Top-down, expert-driven based urban development paradigm to more inclusive, bottom-up, participatory and democratic paradigm.

Much as the Urban Planning paradigm and practice tends to become directionless in India, so has been the case with the Urban Planning Education to a great extent. This paper illustrates very eloquently, how the Urban Planning paradigm in India continues to be ‘Rationalist’ in approach but irrational in outcomes. This has been a great paradox of Urban Planning in India, in much the same way as in other developing countries. The Urban Planning Education remained within the narrow box of ‘Rational’ Planning, along with new practices of project planning and management being introduced independent of the Rational Planning approach. The project-based approach has roots in the emergence of neo-liberalism, which in its ideology rejects any intervention and thus rejects the ‘raison de tre’ of urban planning. The Planning Education has therefore become a hotchpotch of two different forces, pulling the education in two different directions. In the process, the powerful or the ‘entrenched’ as Holston (2009) have gained and captured the urban space through public imagination sponsored by the media, State support and machinations of the elite themselves. The Urban Planning professionals have therefore willy-nilly catered to these interests. In the first phase, they were exclusionists, excluding the poor and those in the informal sector and in the other three phases, supporting of the elite capture of the urban space through various means.

Planning and hence planning education cannot and should not remain neutral to realities around, as neutrality means insensitivity to the existence of inequalities around or need for
sustainable use of resources or to gender-specific interventions and so on. Neutrality also means hypocrisy, living in a make-believe world of ignoring the large-scale subversions of the ‘Plans’ by the rich through State complicity on one hand and through multiple ways by the poor, and maintain the status quo in Planning and Planning education. After all, Urban Planning is for ‘public good’ and hence Urban Planning and Planning Education needs to reflect these values a society, decided by the society organized on the principles of democracy and justice.

REFERENCES


NOTES

1 A bad word in the Indian middle class lexicon and popularized as a bad word by the media.

2 In India, evidences of Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), inspite of the component for the urban poor and 40 per cent of the funds allocated for the Basic Services for the Urban Poor (BSUP), the poor remain excluded.


4 For literature on social protection measures and coverage in South Asia, see, Kabeer (2009), op cit..


6 They call it external shock motivated upgradation (Hansen and Williams 1988: 307).
Centre for Urban Equity (CUE) advocates a human-centered and equitable urban development paradigm. The activities of CUE are research, policy advocacy, training and capacity building and data documentation and dissemination. The Centre is a National Resource Centre of Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India.

Centre for Urban Equity
(An NRC for Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India)
CEPT University
Kasturbhai Lalbhai Campus, University Road, Navrangpura, Ahmedabad – 380009