



GCDA & AMDA - **BODHI 2022** - REINVENTING URBAN DEVELOPMENT THROUGH EMERGING TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES. **OCT. 9-10/BOLGATTY PALACE**

CITIES OF FUTURE SHOULD BE DEVELOPED BY ADOPTING NEW TRENDS IN URBAN DESIGN

- CM PINARAYI



Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurates National Urban Conclave - Bodhi 2022 in Kochi

Kochi: Cities of the future should be developed by adopting the new trends in urban design, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said here on Sunday. He was inaugurating the two-day National Urban Conclave-Bodhi 2022 which hosts a series of discussions on 'Reinventing urban development through emerging tools and techniques'.

"Kerala is No.1 among the other Indian states in many aspects. It makes us the state with the highest human development index. At the same time we can do better in the implementation of the efficiency tools and techniques in urban planning and development," the chief minister said as he addressed the meeting online.

The Greater Cochin Development Authority (GCDA) is organising the event in association with the Association of Municipalities and Development Authorities (AMD A) at Bolgatty Palace here. It is imperative that we follow the principle of urban design and form if planned urban development is to be truly achieved. Therefore our cities of the future should be developed by adopting the new trends in urban design and form," he said.

He said Kochi is the perfect city to host the national event as the city is now emerging as a global city with the development in service, industry, commerce, IT and tourism. "In the presence scenario this conclave is relevant not only for Kochi but also for the entire state of Kerala," he said.



"The urban planning and development practices such as land pooling, transfer of development rights (TDR) etc. have to be implemented on the major projects in order to reduce the financial burden on the government and to avoid legal formalities. The Kerala town and country planning act 2016 have the provision for these and the government have started the formation of the rules and guidelines. We are actively inviting investments in the development of the state in the urban sector, ppp projects are on going and many more are expected to come up," he said.

GCDA chairman K Chandran Pillai chaired the meet. He stressed on the need to revisit the present mode of urban governance and consider fresh ideas and tools for addressing present and future challenges. "As India gets increasingly urbanised, we need to accept that cities will be the

key actors driving India's growth. We need innovative ideas and proposals to tackle the challenges of the future, and these cannot be addressed merely by ideas like "smart cities" and digital cities". The city of the future should be drawn up not through "top-down" agendas from the centre to states to local governments. We should also examine "bottom-up" solutions that come from the people to tackle the challenges we face in the future," Pillai, a former Rajya Sabha MP, said.

Local Self Governments and Excise Minister M B Rajesh delivered the keynote address. He said it is important to keep in mind a reflective question that how the technology is going to solve the complex problems coming out of the very process of urbanisation. "We in Kerala also face the issues like increased consumerism and the menace of waste generation, pollution, unemployment

of educated youth, individualisation, life style diseases, environmental degradation etc while the society as a whole getting exposed to the process of urbanisation. An answer to this, I feel, cannot be given without having a clear understanding of the various forces and flows that work behind the process," Rajesh said. State Industries and Law Minister P Rajeeve called for a sustainable model for the further development of the city. "Kochi is developing into a global city. At the same time, we are facing threats like rise in sea level and frequent tidal flooding. Hence a sustainable development model has to be adopted for the city," he said.

Keshav Varma, IAS (Rtd), Chairman, High Level Committee on Urban Planning by MoHUA, presented the theme of the conclave. Calling for region-specific strategies for urban planning and development, Varma said Kochi has the potential to position itself as a global city.

S Krishnakumar, founder chairman of the GCDA, was honoured at the event. V P Joy, chief secretary, Sarada G Muraleedharan, additional chief secretary, LS GD; M Anil Kumar, Kochi Mayor; Hibi Eden MP, Beena Philip, Kozhikode Mayor, M K Varghese, Thrissur Mayor and K V Abdul Malik, GCDA secretary spoke on the occasion.

T J Vinod MLA, Ullas Thomas, District Panchayat President, S Sahanavas IAS, CEO, Cochin Smart Mission, Dr Joy Elamon, director, KILA also attended the event.

Urban Designing has to be Environment Designing, says expert at Bodhi Conclave



Photo (from left to right) Ar. Vivek P.P., Ar. Biley Menon and Prof. K.T. Ravindran

Kochi: A commitment to the cultural and environmental aspects of a place are key to effective urban designing, experts who spoke at a panel discussion at the National Urban Conclave – Bodhi 2022 here opined on Sunday.

Architects Vivek P. P. and Biley E. Menon shared their experiences of designing public urban spaces in association with governments in Kerala and neighboring Tamil Nadu in a session moderated by Prof. K T Ravindran, former Dean of Studies, SPA, New Delhi. Ravindran, an academic with over three decades of experience, said the concept of urban design should be viewed as designing the environment in the wake of the challenges posed by climate crisis. He called for a resilient model of urban designing in a state like Kerala which is caught between the sea and mountain as a vulnerable land.

Sharing a people-centric approach to designing, he said in urban designing, “we deal with the lived experiences of the people.” Highlighting the importance of the participation of all stakeholders in urban designing ventures, Ravindran said urban designers have to play the role of

a negotiator between those involved in the process.

Vivek said a designer should be sensitive to the project he works on. He presented the ideas that went into the designing of projects like the Freedom Square and Cultural Beach in Kozhikode and the Thalassery Heritage Project. He explained how he envisaged such projects by incorporating the environmental and cultural aspects of the space even as ensuring that they remain maximum functional. On his experience of working on a housing project with the tribes people of Nilambur, he said, “Participation of the marginalised people happen when you work with them rather than work for them.”

Menon, meanwhile, spoke about his experience of working on the Tholkappia Poonga Ecological Project in Tamil Nadu and the Kerala Arts and Crafts Village in Kovalam. He said one can look into the issues concerning with urban designing only through effective collaboration of various stakeholders. He said a cultural and environmental education and inclusion of the younger generation were a must in each urban designing project.

Sri Keshav Varma, Chairman of High-Level Committee on Urban Planning, constituted by Gol at Bodhi 2022



LSGD Principal Secy calls for Constructive Growth

Kochi: Dr Sharmila Mary Joseph, Principal Secretary, LSGD, Government of Kerala, has said that engaging local bodies as engines for economic growth was of paramount importance which the planners had identified well before.

Making a general address prior to sessions at Bodhi 2022, the National Urban Conclave organized by the Greater Cochin Development Authority (GCDA) at Bolgatty Palace in Kochi on Sunday, she said that resourcing in a big way was key for implementing projects in a big way. “A total of 26% of the total state funds including 10 percent of the taxes come down to the LSGDs while the suggestions and ideas for development come from the grassroots level like ward sabhas and grama sabhas. That is how development happens in a constructive way,” she said

“It is about turning dreams into reality and policymakers, planners and administrators too

have crucial role in joining the bottom rung of the sabhas to realize this. They too have to contribute to this growth while dreaming big,” the LSGD principal secretary said.

Dr Sharmila said that getting new parcels of land was not easy in Kerala for development. On the other hand, LSGDs find it difficult to raise resources for development. “The 15th Finance Commission grants are not sufficient to propel growth in the local bodies and they need to optimize revenue collection in the form of property tax while there is a need to revise the structure of professional tax also which the State has apprised the Centre,” said Sharmila who asked civic bodies to explore the possibility of issuing municipal bonds to raise funds. She also said that development should be planned for one million population agglomerates.

BODHI 2022: URBAN PLANNERS SHOWCASE STERLING EXAMPLES

Kochi, Oct 9: Prominent urban planners in the country showcased their implementation of large urban schemes through land pooling and by securing land development rights at Bodhi 2022, the two-day National Urban Conclave organised by the Greater Cochin Development Authority (GCDA) which began at Bolgatty Palace, Kochi, on Monday.

Before a large audience comprising civic body chiefs from across Kerala and town planners from as far as Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Mr N K Patel, former national president of Institute of Town Planners India (ITPI), said that town planning in India developed over a course of one-and-half century ever since the onset of urbanisation in 1870 through the emergence of textile and other ancillary industries in Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai.

However, he said that as things stand now, certain parameters call for the delineation of the town planning (TP) schemes. "If you spot an increase in non-agricultural land conversions and substantial land transactions in a short time, there is a need for a town planning scheme," he said. He added that a hugely successful TP scheme will be where the developed land remains with the original owner and where it raises additional funds by selling infrastructure plots.

Citing the Prahladnagar TP Scheme in Ahmedabad as a model TP Scheme, he said that its infrastructure cost was Rs 166 crore whereas the total revenue it

generated stood at Rs 1307 crore. "The collection is 8 times higher compared to expenditure. The per square yard value rose from Rs 3,300 in 2002 to Rs 1,50,000 in 2020," Patel, who was also the former town planner at the Ahmedabad Urban Development Authority, said.

He also cited the case of Ring Road-Ahmedabad in infrastructure, which provided access to the city in and from the outskirts and reduced the congestion on western and eastern bypass. It was cited as a combination of town planning scheme and land acquisition which led to huge industrial development along the southwestern part of Ahmedabad.

Addressing the session, Additional Commissioner, Planning, Delhi Development Authority, Mr N R Aravind delineated the best practices the DDA followed while implementing TP schemes. He said that communication with the end user was key for land pooling and securing land development rights. "For TP schemes it's better to ensure that at least 70% of the land is contiguous," he said.

Chairing the session, Dr Jinu P Alex, Member, State Planning Board, said that customizing the different techniques adapted in other parts of the country is the challenge before the urban planners, politicians and administrators in the State which presented different socio-economic conditions.



Ar. Vivek P.P., De Earth - Calicut

Ar. Biley E. Menon, Architect and Urban Designer, Kochi



Prof. Dr. Jiju P. Alex, Member, State Planning Board, Govt. of Kerala



Honouring the founder Chairman of GCDA, Sri. Krishnakumar IAS (Rtd) by Sri M.B. Rajesh, Hon'ble Minister, LSGD



Sri. N.K. Patel, Former National President of ITPI

Sri. N.R. Aravind, Addl. Commissioner (Planning) Delhi Development Authority



Sri M.B. Rajesh, Hon. Minister for Local Self-Governments and Excise at Bodhi 2022



Prof. K.T. Ravindran, Former Dean of Studies, SPA New Delhi

Pathways for Inclusive Urban Development



Almost 30 years ago, India’s Constitution underwent aradical transformation with the passage of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments. These amendments sought to fundamentally redraw the constitutional architecture of the Indian stateby mandating the creation of Panchayats (73rd Amendment) and Municipalities (74th Amendment). Panchayats and Municipalities were now constitutional bodies that were to work as “institutions of self-government”. However, almost 30 years after its enactment, Urban Local Governments continue to find it difficult to respond to various urban crises or meet citizens’ expectations regarding basic services.

To tackle theseurban challenges, we need to revisit the present mode of urban governance and consider fresh ideas and tools for addressing present and future challenges. Here, I highlight a few pathways towards inclusive urban development: empowering our municipalities, adopting comprehensive and integrated urban planning systems, improving urban livelihoods, and adopting a people-centric bottom-up approach for future urban development.

Empowering Local Governments

India’s urban and regional governance is stricken by a weak and fragmented administrative structure in which elected municipal bodies operate with limited authority and autonomy. The 74th Amendment grants elected municipalities powers to prepare and implement plans and schemes for economic development and social justice and subjects listed under the 12th Schedule. However, many of the 18 functions listed under the 12th Schedule have not been transferred to local governments. According to an official review of the Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission, only eight states, one of which is Kerala, fully devolved all the 18 functions under the 12th Schedule.

One of the major shortcomings of the 74th Amendment is that it does not provide municipalities with an independent domain of taxation or provide any exclusive financial powers to local governments. Most Municipalities in India are vested with very limited taxation powers and revenue generation tools and hence continue to rely heavily on grants and loans from state and central governments. If we need our municipalities to become vibrant institutions, they should be provided with stronger fiscal powers.

As Indian cities struggle to meet the basic needs of its inhabitants, we must re-examine the existing modes of organising power in urban India. Unlike the 73rd Amendment which provides for 3 levels of Panchayats (at village, taluk/block, and district level), power in urban areas is given to a single level of the Municipal Corporation orMunicipality. However, as Indian cities grow exponentially with some cities crossing the 10 million mark, we must consider instituting decentralised systems within the Municipality through theempowerment of lower units like Ward Committees.

Comprehensive Urban Planning

Indian cities continue to follow archaic British-inspired planning system and lawswhich hasbeen completely overhauled even in the United Kingdom. While much of the world has moved on to more dynamic urban planning processes, India’s planning systems are focused on preparation of the “master plan”. However, as per state planning legislations, the master plan is mostly a spatial instrument for regulating land-use and buildings and does not require key sectors like transport or environment to be incorporated in the plan. Even if these sectors are included in the plan document, as some of the newer master plans tend to do, such provisions are not legally binding. So, the focus of planning continues to be the strict division of the city into various mono-functional zonal

categories like residential, commercial, and industrial.

Such a zoning regulation-based planning system speaks very little to India’s urban realities which are historically mixed-use in character. Hence, instead of having a pure land-use based master planning system, we should adopt new comprehensive and integrated urban planning system that includes all aspects of urban development, including environment, transport, social welfare.

The Kerala Town and Country Planning Act, 2016 is one of the few planning laws in India that has gone beyond the archaic British planning legislative framework and adopted a new planning system that is based on the principles of the 74th Amendment by giving Municipalities, District Planning Committees and Metropolitan Planning Committees a clear role in urban planning. More states should consider how planning systems are kept abreast with the times.

Improving Urban Livelihoods

During the Covid-19 crisis, we witnessed haunting images of workers leaving the city for their villages on foot. It revealed the extreme vulnerability of huge sections of India’s urban population, especially the migrant workers, who lack basic social security for their subsistence. As India continues to face an economic crisis, it is important for the state to undertake proactive policy measures that directly improve the livelihoods of the country’s workforce. These measures can be a combination of direct cash transfers to vulnerable groups, strengthening of existing welfare schemes and introduction of schemes like an urban employment guarantee programme.

Kerala has been successfully running the Ayyankali Urban Employment Guarantee Scheme across its ULBs successfully for many years. More states like Rajasthan, Odisha and Himachal Pradesh are now

launching similar employment guarantee programmes. An urban employment guarantee will not only cater to livelihood needs of the urban poor but also create public infrastructure, restore urban commons, and improve the capacity of India’s fledgling ULBs.

People-centred Future Cities

As India gets increasingly urbanised, we need to accept that cities will be the key actors driving India’s growth. We need innovative ideas and proposals to tackle the challenges of the future, and these cannot be addressed merely by ideas like “smart cities” and digital cities”. The city of the future should be drawn up not through “top-down” agendas from the centre to states to local governments. We should also examine “bottom-up” solutions that come from the people to tackle the challenges we face in the future.

Kerala has been a pioneer democratic decentralisation and in instituting a bottom-up “people’s planning” campaign during the 1996-97 period marked a new approach to development planning in the State.This has largely been a story of success; however, it has been mostly focussed on panchayats and has had limited influence in urban areas. As we move forward, development planning of our cities should also be more “people-centred” and the visions for the city’s development futures should be drawn up through participative exercises.

As we are at the cusp of the challenge of climate change, Municipal Corporations and Urban Development Authorities have the responsibility to come up with robust, innovative and dynamic plans to tackle this grave challenge. Cities should adopt measure for climate change adaptation as well as mitigation. We should draw up a new vision for sustainable urban development through a participative exercise that includes all citizens.

CIAL paved way for PPP in Airport Sector, says Geetha Ajit Pilai

Smt. Geetha Ajit Pilai, Chief General Manager (Transports and Airports), CIDCO, Navi Mumbai, Smt. Bindu C.A., HOD, Architecture and Planning, Govt Engineering College, Thrissur & Sri. Loveleen Garg, Chief Town Planner, GIFT City.



Kochi: Kochi paved the way for Public-Private Partnership (PPP) in Airport sector in the country, Geetha Ajit Pilai, Chief General Manager (Transports and Airports), CIDCO, Navi Mumbai, said here on Sunday. She was speaking at a technical session on PPP Projects at the National Urban Conclave - Bodhi 2022 here. Referring to the origin of the Cochin International Airport here, Pilai said, “that was the first ever effort to bring in privatisation in airport development in the country. The privatisation in Delhi and Mumbai airports came much later only,” she said. At the session, Pilai gave a detailed presentation on the role of governments and the challenges in PPP model in the

airport sector. She spoke about how CIDCO anticipated the challenges while planning the Navi Mumbai International Airport and tackled them effectively. “We managed the situation in such a way that ultimately PPP becomes beneficial for the private players, the government as well as the public,” she said. She listed land acquisition, rehabilitation and environmental clearance as the three major challenges any PPP project is likely to encounter. Loveleen Garg, Chief Town Planner, GIFT City, spoke on the experience of designing and managing the planned business district in Gujarat. Bindu C.A., head of the department, architecture and planning, Government Engineering College, Thrissur, moderated the session. In her concluding remarks, she raised concerns over land availability for PPP projects in Kerala.