

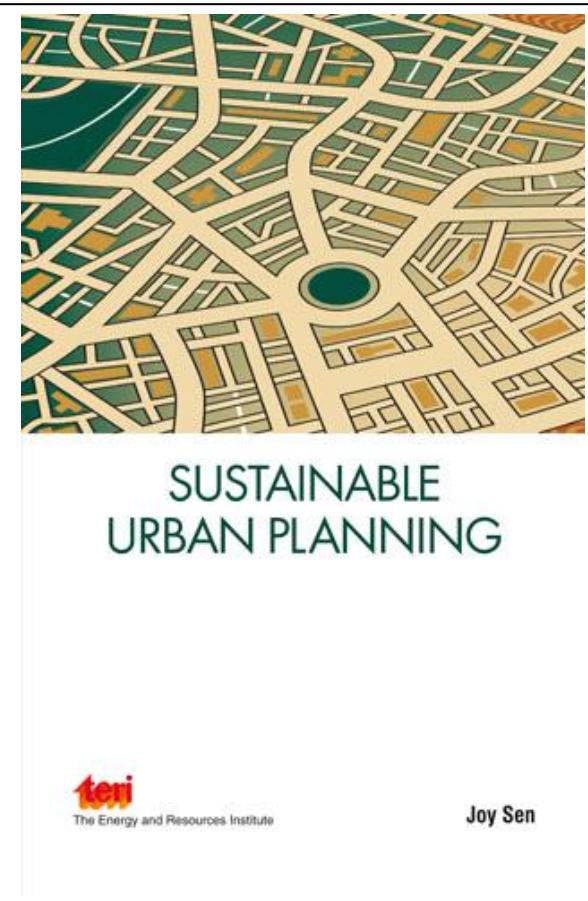


Book Review of Sustainable Urban Planning

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Reviewer

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Detail of Book



Book Title	: Sustainable Urban Planning
Author	: Joy Sen
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Book Review

In cities of India, urban planning practices guided or dominated by 'quantity' over 'quality' because of the population pressure, unequal resource distribution and lack of political will. The concept of sustainable urban planning has been recognized over the years by professional, policy makers and researchers but found difficult to implement it in real time situation. Nevertheless, Joy Sen has discussed the key indicators of sustainable urban development planning and makes an important contribution to understand the livability which has greater meaning in sustainable community development.

The book's five chapters are arranged in three sections. Section 1 is having one chapter, an attempt to setup the context of Indian urban scenario, where Sen explores the tangible and intangible factors of quality of life (QoL) based on fundamentals of sustainability i.e. economy, environment and socio-cultural wellness, in comparison with standard of living (SoL). Further, he analyses the livability, affordability and inequality at larger (Sub-regional), intermediate (urban) and smaller (neighborhood or community) levels in the context of physical, environmental and social composite.

After, setting up the context and fundamentals of sustainability in the chapter 1 under section 1, Sen kicks off the section-2 having three chapters 2, 3 & 4. Chapter 2 focuses on concept of livability, by mentioning examples & references of western world and publications. He also expresses his concern about "[a] limitations in developing a logical system of analysis [...]" (p.38) of livability variations. Therefore, he starts expressing the livability in terms of livelihood & ecology with evolution a framework on livability assessment. In order to justify the perfect or utopian livability and realistic or practical livability, author develops his idea of ideal livability at regional, urban and community level by employing '*mandala*'. Finally, chapter 2 converges on assessing and appreciating the applicability of livability in urban planning and management field.

Chapter 3 under section 2 begins with defining affordability in terms of various strata of the Indian society and supporting data collected by National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), India. Further, to built study author takes 'Housing Affordability' as an indicator of social and physical reality of urban people. After defining theories & approaches of assessing housing affordability by taking references from research works chapter ends with a theoretical conceptual framework and a concluding remark that pace of urbanization has created an excess demand for urban infrastructure including housing and needs supply to each class of society.

By means of chapter 4 under section 2 author through the light on last constituent dimension of sustainable development i.e. inequality variations in supply & demand of infrastructure in Indian urban context. At the starting of the chapter he accepted the fact that "[b] inequality is a natural state of the development processes. It cannot be completely eradicated [...]" (p.118), but we can minimize the higher degree of inequality variations from society. Further Sen takes various references, case studies to setup the relation of inequality to urban agglomeration and compares the Indian city with western world. He quotes "[c] pace of urbanization in economically, environmentally and socially misbalance [...]" (p.120). Author also mentions the various indices to measures urban agglomeration. Before summing up the chapter Sen takes the case study of Kolkata, India and explains all parameters of

sustainability at various levels discussed in previous chapters. As concluding remark he proposes a framework assessing degree of inequality and the relation between livability and affordability.

The last chapter 5 under section 3 presents a framework which is an outcome of synthesis of three indicators i.e. livability patterns, affordability thresholds and inequality variation in terms of supply and demand. The synthesis also suggests the holistic approach to link various disparities and advocating the co-existence, co-evolution as process development. Sen concludes his book by mentioning the need of culmination of modernity and traditional knowledge, a link between global and local and an integral rural- urban context, re-framed system to achieve sustainable settlement planning in India.

Overall the book is an important contribution to understand the basics and complex framework of constituents' dimensions of sustainable planning. The book also opens up the discussion on role of indigenous traditional knowledge system in urban planning with modern approach. Therefore, I strongly recommend it to postgraduate students of planning, planners, geographers, sociologist and practitioners in the urban development field.