

Socio-economic Benefits of Open Spaces: Towards Sustainable Housing

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Abstract

Recently the Indian realty market, especially the residential sector has witnessed rapid growth, leading to increased land demand. Also, urbanization of major Indian cities has resulted in over-population and acute shortage of residential property.

Non-availability of land for constructing affordable housing in many cities of India, has forced developers to search for land outside the city limits. Rising income level, easy housing loan and improved lifestyle in many metros; has promoted township development in India for better and convenient housing. Townships are now developed to end the housing shortage, and provide a better standard of living to all sections of the society. Staying in townships gives the residents a feeling of living in the countryside, with all the benefits of the city. It offers multiple advantages including: wide choice of small and large flats, apartments, row houses, bungalows; easy access to supermarkets, shopping malls, multiplexes, schools, hospitals, fire/police stations and entertainment as well as leisure places.

Townships are built on vast lands; that include parks, open spaces, landscaped gardens, recreational areas, jogging parks, kids play area; solar energy power-supply, rainwater harvesting, ample parking space, regular shuttle service to and from the city Centre etc.

Improper urban planning, lack of public transport, longer travelling time to workplace and inadequate infrastructure has created the demand for townships in India.

Keywords: Recreational Spaces, Sustainable Housing, Residential Township, Socio-economic Benefits, Socio-economic benefits of Open Spaces: Towards Sustainable Housing.

1. Introduction

The place where a man lives is the measure of the quality of life and the determinant of the urban environment development process. The open and recreational spaces are essential urban content which complement and enrich the dwelling function. They represent the physical and social component of satisfaction. As Kent rightly said that the purpose of the open space requirements is to provide standards for the recreation and maintenance of park and common open spaces areas in conjunction with new development that will protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the public, enhance property values, improve quality of life and the appearance of the community, facilitate pedestrian and bicycle mobility, and preserve natural surroundings.

2. Recreational open space

Recreational open space provides opportunities for more passive recreational pursuits such as walking, playing, sitting, and general relaxing.

The main types of recreational open space are:

- Parks
- Linear open space
- Amenity space within housing areas
- Natural/informal open spaces
- Ornamental gardens
- Grassed sitting out areas
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2.1 Benefits of parks and open recreational spaces

Parks, recreation, and open space perform numerous functions and provide numerous benefits, briefly, they provide:

- Active and passive recreational opportunity.
- Direct health and safety benefits (such as protection for water supply and groundwater recharge areas, cleansing of air, separation from hazards).
- Economic development including enhanced real estate values
- Natural features and spaces important to defining community image and distinctive character.
- Boundaries between incompatible uses and breaks from continuous development.
- They can shape land use patterns to promote more compact, efficient-to-service development.
- Places for facilities that contribute educational and cultural benefits.
- Healthy lifestyles enhancement by facilitating improvements in physical fitness through exercise, and also by facilitating positive emotional, intellectual, and social experiences.
- Historic preservation opportunities to remind people of their cultural heritage.

3. Results and Discussions

This paper focuses on the amalgamation of open spaces and their socio-economic benefits in residential housing. A survey was done to understand the various features of open recreation spaces in five residential townships of NCR. The data was tabulated and coded on various social and economic parameters which affect the residents.

All the townships under study are high rise buildings. These High-rises or vertical expansion is the most logical solution, which can accommodate maximum large number of people under the given circumstances while providing the option of maintaining open spaces around the development. The researcher found that there are other benefits of open recreation spaces other than aesthetics and health benefits both to the residents as well as developers in the form of Social Benefits and Economic benefits.

3.1 Percentage of open area

The study shows that most of the respondents were aware of the amount of open area in their township. About (43.75%) feel that their township has more than 60 per cent of the open area. While 13.75% respondents feel they have only 20-40 percent open area. Environment conservation and living close to nature is felt the most promising role of open spaces.

3.2 Effective allocation of open space

Parks and children play area takes the maximum space in the society whereas yoga grounds cycling tracks are given less importance while designing and allocating open spaces. With the rising demand and competition in the housing industry developers are coming up with different aspects and designs of open spaces.

3.3 Perception of the residents about the open recreational spaces of the residential townships

The perceptions of the residents of the townships about the open recreational spaces obtained from the residents are discussed below in with the technical information provided by the key personnel of each studied township. Majority of respondents (26.2%) find large open area that attracted them towards the township. The reason may be because with the changing scenario people are moving towards large pollution free green environment so as to have relaxing environment while at home. In correspondence (22.5%) respondents feel facilities and amenities in and around the township are important attractants in township while location, design and budget of the buyer have same importance in driving the buyer towards a particular township

3.4 Park facing apartments

The investigation has come up with the conclusion that park facing or other recreation places facing fetch higher benefits for the developers as they are sold at higher prices than other apartments. The interview to the developer revealed that an amount of Rs. 50 - Rs. 300 is charged additional with the apartments which have amenity facing

balconies or entrances. It is seen that this additional cost varies with change in floor in the building. Lower floors got maximum benefits and charged more than others.

3.5 Effect on property value

Researcher during the investigation found that open spaces such as parks and recreation areas have a positive effect on nearby residential property values . The economic impact parks and recreational areas have on home prices depends on how far the home is from the open space, the size of the open space and the characteristics of the surrounding neighborhood.

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4. Conclusion

The study clearly indicated direct relation between open spaces and their effect on socio-economic status of people. Open spaces in housing societies have an impact on property value, living standards as well as their status in society. Apart from the physical, environmental benefits that open spaces have a positive effect on psychological development of people living in surrounding. Open spaces in residential townships increase their market value; flats are sold faster and are far greater in demand than the conventional buildings. It also improved their quality of life along with appreciation of their properties.