

# Urban Renewal: A Need to Redefine and Rebuild the Old City Area – Case of Thane, Kalyan-Dombivali and Mira Bhayander



Janhavi Rajeev Korde, Digvijay Sanjay Deshmukh, Sagar Pawar

**Abstract:** Urban renewal initiatives play an important role in achieving the targets of making human settlements and cities safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable. Urban Renewal in India is a comprehensive presentation of strategic, technical and theoretical aspects of urban areas. 'Urban Renewal' refers redevelopment of urban areas to ensure quality of life, growth of infrastructure, promotion of tourism. The paper describes the tools or approaches for urban renewal namely slum clearance, redevelopment and rehabilitation. To describe the urban renewal scenario in Mumbai Metropolitan Region cases of Thane, Kalyan-Dombivali and Mira Bhayandar are described.

**Keywords:** Urban Renewal, Urban Renewal Plan, Urban Renewal Scheme, Redevelopment

## I. INTRODUCTION

Finding a satisfying definition of urban renewal that embodies the complexity of the issues involved in the process is not easy. Urban restoration by replacing or renovating dilapidated buildings with new buildings, public housing, roads, parks etc., often according to comprehensive planning (dictionary.com, 2020, [1]). Urban Renewal can be defined as a set of activities and plans to improve suburbs and neighborhoods that are in state of degradation or decay. Resolving the urban issues such as dilapidating housing, poor physical infrastructure facilities such as sanitation and water services, poor social infrastructure facilities including recreational activities, community services, parks and playgrounds etc., are focused in this process (Richards, 2014, [5]).

## II. BRIEF HISTORY

Urban renewal has been practiced since first established settlements of humans. 'Old cities continue to change with the passage of time, history and must inevitably fact the need for continuous renewal. However, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a moderately coordinated efforts were

taken by local governments, reform groups and business interests aimed at eliminating the physical signs of urban decay. (Neighborhood Regeneration in Beijing, [4]). It is believed the first large-scale urban renewal project to be undertaken was by Haussmann in Paris. However, one of the first countries to formulate a particular national urban renewal program was United States. The issue of neighborhood degradation has been known in the United States since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, and for many years great efforts has been made to solve the problem of degradation and revitalize cities across the country (Neighborhood Regeneration in Beijing, [4]).

### A. Urban Renewal in Developing Countries

The method of urban renewal is still comparatively new in developing countries. Efforts are focused on solving the problem of urban slums, which are generally home to 30-60 percent of the city's population and are usually the fastest growing part of third world cities. In both developed and developing countries, the development of urban renewal policies follows similar pattern, moving from demolition and reconstruction approach to a more socially oriented approach that focuses on the renewing of existing centralized structures. Can be observed to evolve gradually (Neighborhood Regeneration in Beijing, [4]).

## III. APPROACHES IN URBAN RENEWAL

### A. Slum Clearance:

It includes, demolition of dilapidated dwellings in slums. Clearance or removal of slums in an urban renewal strategy used to convert low-income and disreputable settlements to improved housing. For redeveloping urban communities this has been a strategy.

### B. Redevelopment:

It is the process of demolishing the existing building and replacing it by a new building. In redevelopment after the demolition of the existing buildings, cleared land is used to build the new buildings. The areas in which buildings are in very dilapidated condition and have no protection value, where the placement of buildings does not provide a satisfactory living environment, this approach is considered for renewal.

### C. Rehabilitation:

Restoration and improvement of present structurally sound properties. Rehabilitation, often called preservation or conservation and it is opposite of redevelopment.

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It is based on repairing, preserving and restoring the man-made and natural environments of present neighborhoods. Areas where buildings are in good condition but are dilapidated due to low maintenance rehabilitation process applies. In addition to this housing development, conservation, environmental improvement, economic renewal are approaches of urban renewal (S, 2020, [6]).

### IV. URBAN RENEWAL IN MAHARASHTRA

Government of Maharashtra introduced cluster development in the year 2009 and further incorporated in the 'Maharashtra UDCPR 2020' as 'Urban Renewal Scheme' for planning and collective development of large areas at least 10,000 sq. m. in non-congested area and 4,000 sq. m. in congested areas, instead of redeveloping single buildings on small plots. The main aim of the scheme to redress a complex urban problem such as unsanitary, deficient or obsolete housing, inadequate sanitation, inadequate transportation, other deficient services and facilities, traffic congestion and haphazard land use.

The main aspect of the scheme is redevelopment, which is achieved through clearance and rebuilding of dilapidated structures or are laid out in an unsatisfactory way. The FSI granted for the development is 4 in gross area excluding forest and CRZ areas. The FSI incentive could help faster execution of approved cluster projects that could create thousands of new homes, with well-planned facilities and amenities. E.g., The Bhendi Bazaar cluster development in Mumbai will provide new homes for 3500 families from 280 dilapidated buildings spread over 18 acres. The developer has right to use the unused FSI for sale housing in open market. A major challenge in cluster development is identifying beneficiaries, which is complex and long process (Kanakia, 2014, [3]).

#### A. Case of Thane City

Total 45 urban renewal plans (URPs) are prepared by 'Thane Municipal Corporation' which will provide shelter and employment in the neighboring areas. All-round development of the city is planned through this scheme by planning road networks, green zones, civic amenities and open spaces etc. Along with the residential areas these URPs will have community centers, commercial and city centers, public transport, hospitals, play grounds etc., as per the need of that particular area depending upon the population.

Out of 5,903 Ha of developable land of Thane, 1,477.18 Ha. (Around 23 percent) will be developed in the first phase. These URPs are planned for the next 25 years and almost 15 years will require to implement these URPs in Thane. Through this scheme more than 13 lakh residents of Thane will soon get homes. However, Thane will be the first city in India to be redeveloped completely under the urban renewal scheme (Times, 2018, [7]).

#### B. Case of Kalyan-Dombivali

There was also a demand to approve the cluster scheme in Kalyan-Dombivli city after the cluster plan was approved in Thane city. Finally, the government has approved the implementation of cluster scheme in the surrounding cities including Kalyan, Dombivali. The municipal commissioner has claimed that this has made development of unauthorized and dangerous buildings possible.

In view of the rapidly increasing traffic and urbanization in the Kalyan-Dombivali Municipal Corporation limits, it is necessary to provide facilities like road widening and grounds

and gardens, but lack of space was hampering these development works. Many buildings have become dilapidated, dangerous. The question of redevelopment of these buildings was put on hold. There was a demand from political circles that the cluster scheme should be implemented in the city as the development of these buildings was possible through the cluster scheme. The state government has finally announced that the Kalyan-Dombivali Municipal Corporation has been included in the cluster scheme. Total 41 preliminary urban renewal plans (URP) are prepared in 'Kalyan-Dombivali Municipal Corporation' area. The total area under these URPs is 1405 Ha (Around 12 percent) (Times M., 2021, [8]).

#### C. Case of Mira Bhayander

Most of the Mira Bhayander's old and dilapidated buildings were built during the previous Gram Panchayat and Municipal council regimes and already have a FSI of over 4, which means that under the existing development laws redevelopment is not feasible. Local authorities decided to hire an outside agency with expertise in this particular area to carry out the task. Currently, evolution study has been stuck in an administrative hustle and bustle (Golani, 2018, [2]).

### V. CRITICAL ISSUES

Urban regeneration can affect the urban environment on many levels. The regeneration process should pay special attention to preserving the identity of cities, communities, local cultures, natural and built environments.

#### A. Urban Identity:

A common challenge in the careful redesign of existing environments is to discover and preserve visible structures and resolve their unique images and identities. It not only transforms the physical form, but also the way it is perceived and experienced, and the psychological and emotional relationships between people and urban places.

#### B. Environmental Concerns:

Maintaining the natural and man-made environment is another important issue that should not be ignored in the renewal process. To maintain the vitality of a city, we need old buildings, monuments, parks, streetscapes, and the old patterns of the city that give it its own character.

#### C. Social Concern:

Concern for the physical and psychological well-being of individuals and communities is essential for sensitive renewal. Evictions have not only economic costs, but also social and emotional costs. Urban renewal often leads to the breakdown of urban communities and loss of closeness with friends and family.

### VI. CONCLUSION

Urban renewal is important and useful process for the replacing or renovating dilapidated buildings in a large area instead of redeveloping single buildings on small plots.



Urban renewal is a complex and multi layered process which should not be viewed only as a financial and physical proposition, but also as a cultural, sociological, economic and political matter as well. The realistic renewal process must be a holistic approach and be based upon a multi-disciplinary understanding of the economic and social factors affecting urban areas and the physical nature of the cities and towns.

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## AUTHORS PROFILE



**Janhavi Rajeev Korde** is working as an Assistant Urban Planner at Techcomm Urban Management Consultants, Thane. she has completed his graduation in Architecture from University of Mumbai and a Masters in Housing Planning from the School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi. She has worked with various reputed organizations such as M/S Arch-Innova Design and Infrastructure Pvt. Ltd., M/S Archetype Consultants Pvt. Ltd., Thane. She is working on the project of Urban Renewal of Thane City which is Asia's first pan city Redevelopment Project. Apart from this, she is also working on the preparation of a GIS-based Master Plan for Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation. As part of academic projects, he has worked on Project Formulation for BDD Chawls in Worli and conducted research on topic of 'Affordable Housing in Thane' and presented it as a thesis for her master's program.



**Digvijay Sanjay Deshmukh** is a dedicated young student aspiring for higher education opportunities in fields of civil engineering, planning, construction management and transportation sectors. He is currently pursuing his higher secondary education and holds distinction grades. Apart from academics, his interest in thinking and envisaging about urban development makes him an aspiring urban development enthusiast.



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