

Urban Green Spaces (UGS) – An External Artificial Environment (AEAE)

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Introduction

Who doesn't love greenery? Besides loving it, everyone knows about its manifold benefits. As Edward McMohan a senior resident fellow at Urban Land Institute (Washington, US) states that 'Green space is not an amenity, it's a necessity'. Here in India (Developing country), UGC necessity is at peak in the recent scenario with increasing urbanization and pervasive population from last decade. What exactly Urban Green Space (UGS) is? How it is important to assess urban areas like cities, towns, and developing rural areas.

Urban Green Spaces and their Significance

The name 'Urban Green Space' has been highlighted after adopting in one of the Land Use Pattern classifications for managing developing areas of town/city. Health in this context refers to both 'mental' as well as 'physically'. Health restoration is crucial in the urban environment, which is significantly worse than in rural life. In today's scenario, villages are equally prone to devastating effects of development. Yes, I have written this explicitly and call attention to the simultaneous conditions in the landscape of Hilly states like Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and other area on fragile Himalayas, Eco-fascists are neglecting devastated consequences and keep going with developments without considering soil and vegetation degradation impacts. Last year incident of *development-destruction* in Uttarakhand's Joshimath area of Chamoli district was recorded. Similarly, hilly regions of Himachal Pradesh have faced devastation results due unmanaged habitation during heavy monsoon of 2023. It is a stark example of how dangerous Himalayan settlements are and disturbed the natural weather conditions.

In the urban environment, where UGS is an imperative approach is being significantly reduced by anthropogenic activities. Human densification beyond carrying capacity leads to an imbalance in the urban microclimate. Mankind had wiped the greenery excessively from the earth-surface to make way for the sake of residential and commercial needs. Without being aware of the implications, urban sprawl is

steadily growing. One paradigm of extensive habitation in capital city which is queen of Himachal Pradesh – 'Shimla' (Photo-1)



Fig.1 - Urban sprawl continues in Shimla city

(PC: B. Dhiman)

If I stress on *Life on Land* the financial hub of India 'Mumbai', has been disrupted and suffered extremely annually due to the monsoon's above-average rainfall over the past five years. City witnesses water submergence conditions due to unchecked urban development, improper drainage system, and lack of appropriate green space. Who is responsible? Is Climate Change Or We Human? According to the 2018 report from the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, India's urbanization is accelerating at a pace of 0.25% and will double by 2050 due to a burgeoning population and industry. Hence, for city residential area, UGS can be created artificially or by protecting natural green patches which survived from turning to concrete. Like some of the biotopes, constructed parks, zoos, inland waterbodies (ponds/lakes), wayside tree plantings, railroad/industrial greens, institutional parks, grassy playgrounds, etc are being set up by authority. There must be blue-green corridors in urban spaces. Green (vegetation) and blue (water bodies) passageways could aid in flood defence in city. WHO seeks an area of about 9m² green space as a per capita for healthy living in urban residential. Consequently, what is the scenario for Indian cities? Can artificial prepared

green spaces in the urban areas compete with a natural patch of hilly vegetation or village pond? Are they being assessed qualitatively to enhance or sustain their effect? There are many unanswered questions in this situation. The foremost question arises- is it sufficient for the city population? As human density is increasing with respective of declining green cover.

Development Assessment and Action Taken

By using GIS (Geographic Information Systems) and RS (Remote Sensing), green spaces can be assessed. This resulting information can be utilized for spatial planning to make green corridors, to assess the rapid urbanization and degradation as well as access urban green quality. Another, due to the scarcity of green space in urban neighbourhoods, individuals are switching to indoor plants keepers, vertical gardening, terrace farming etc. These spaces are man-made, need art as well as practice to create with respect to local physical conditions but one must incorporate biodiversity-friendly activity. We must make room for our ever-growing homo-sapiens population, but we must do it without endangering our natural resources, the

environment, or even human health. The way forward can begin with inculcating love for nature from childhood and gradually pave to ensure any development policies formulation or economic model execution should consider 'Nature' genuinely. By designating the 'Environment' as an umbrella for both holistic health and sustainable survival of Earth's flora and fauna. We 'Humans' must continue to engage in our regular chores like our predecessor (Heritage protector) as limitless human cognition becomes the root cause for ultimate climate change. We have to take stringent action on ourselves to halt or discard development technology (except essential for human-race), all of which are piercing nerves of Mother-Nature. As we are talking about the renewable energy source, zero-carbon emission, carbon footprint, electric mobility, climate action plans in every corner of the world's platform along with taking Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) target, article has linked viewpoint to fulfil mentioned goals of the SDGs listed as; Goal 3 - good health and wellbeing, Goal 11 sustainable cities and communities, goal 13- climate Action, goal 15 - Life on Land, all are interconnected.
