UNDERSTANDING RENEWAL AND FINDING ITS SCOPE FOR INNER-CITY AREAS IN INDIAN CONTEXT

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Abstract — Urbanization has accelerated in the past few decades in India causing an increase in sprawl and transformation in inner-city areas. Currently the inner-city areas have become affected with myriad social, economic and environmental problems, which have undermined their significance and exacerbated the quality of life. In the context of revamping the quality of life, it is often seen that three terms have overlapping connotationss: renewal, regeneration and revitalisation, creating a muddle. This paper is an exploratory attempt to distinguish the connotations of each, understand renewal and find its scope for the inner-city areas in the Indian context.

Keywords – Urbanization; inner-city areas; regeneration; revitalization; renewal; redevelopment; relocation; conservation

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1. CONTEXT

Urbanization has accelerated in the past few decades in India. On one hand, sprawl has increased and on the other, the inner-city areas have transformed. These areas, also called core-city areas or downtowns are often the oldest inhabited areas of any city. In most cases, these areas are functional, commercial, administrative and historical centers of a city. Currently, the inner-city areas experience myriad social, economic and environmental problems, owing to the accelerated process of urbanization. With the changing role of the city, the inner-city areas have become associated with issues such as conflicting (or incompatible) land use, violated architectural norms (built character), outdated infrastructure, heavy traffic movement, congestion, road-side encroachments, on-street parking, destruction (or degradation) of heritage, socio-economic issues and environmental pollution. This has not only undermined the significance of inner-cities but has also exacerbated the quality of life of the residents. In this regard a suitable approach to revamp the inner-city areas is needed.

2. GROWTH OF CITIES AND URBAN DECAY

There has been a need for utilization and reuse of existing unused spaces mainly because old core at the center (inner-city) represents an important part of the city and such large important chunk cannot be left to rot and be wasted. The green field movement towards the outside (suburbs) is not sustainable – physically, economically and ecologically. Thus the solution must be more compact, brownfield development by solving problems of inner-city areas (Pankaj & Johnson, 2015). In this context, renewal finds relevance as a practice for revamping the quality of life.

3. RENEWAL IN PAST

The concept of renewal emerged in post second world war decade, and the process was erstwhile identified with clearance and redevelopment of blighted housing and slums in America and Europe during 1940-50s (refer figure 1). With a paradigm shift in urban affairs, the connotations of renewal have changed, and its scope widened (Saggu, 2011). At present various processes (or practices) are identified

as those of the urban renewal. Depending upon the gravity of a settlement or an area, each may have its own distinct practice.
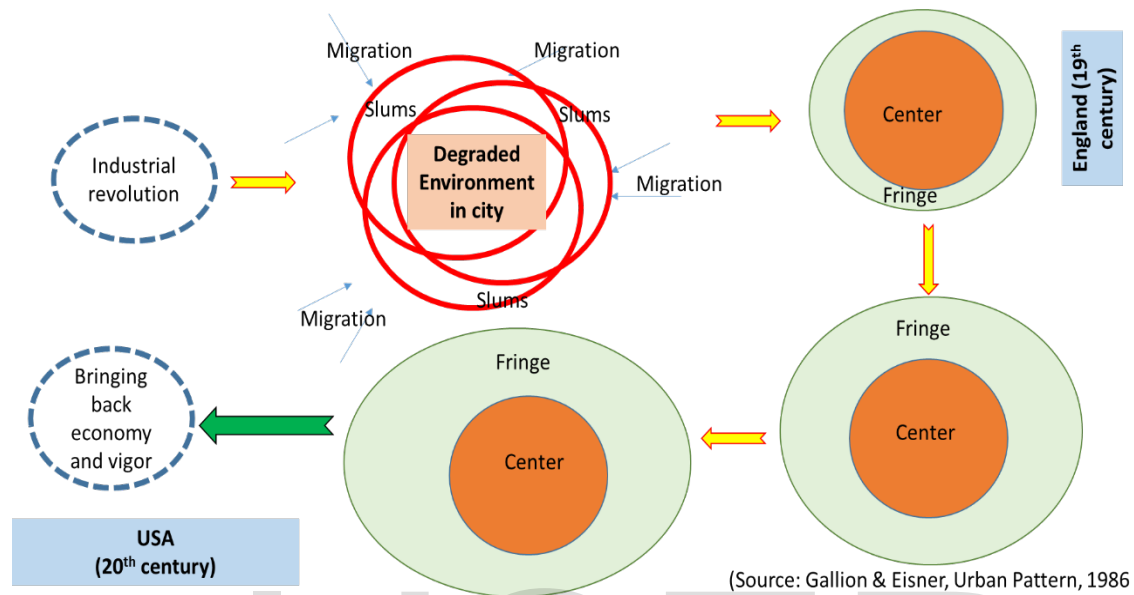

Figure 1: Process of urban renewal in England and USA

4. RENEWAL AT PRESENT – NEED FOR DEFINITION AND SCOPE

In the context of revamping the quality of life in the inner-city areas, certain terms have constantly been mired up creating confusion with regards to renewal. These terms are regeneration and revitalization. There has been a constant debate as to what should be the scope of regeneration, revitalization and renewal. Are these terms having similar connotations or does renewal encompass regeneration and revitalization? What are the major practices to revamp the quality of life in inner-city areas? All this is the focus of the current paper.

5. METHODOLOGY

The paper is a literature review to understand the concept of renewal and establish the distinction between renewal and related terms - regeneration and revitalization. Thereby it pursues the scope of renewal for cities in the Indian context. For this purpose, it studies definitions of regeneration, revitalization and renewal, and tries to establish a relationship between each of it. Thereupon, through international and Indian cases, the paper finds the scope for renewal.

6. CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE REVIEW

6.1 Regeneration

It is an integrated local development of deprived areas through comprehensive political, financial and technological strategies for enhancing, the restorative relationship between cities and ecosystems from which they draw their resources for sustenance (Awasthi, 2015). From the definition, it may be observed that it is a process mostly associated with restoring the relationship between city and ecosystem. Thus, under regeneration, overhauling of an economy should form an important aspect.

6.2 Revitalization

It is a process of imbuing something with new life and vitality. It involves the application of planning principles that bring vitality to an area by intertwining economic, social and environmental considerations to create a place to work and live (Awasthi, 2015). From the definition, it may be learnt that this process merely deals with improvement in physical activities (related with environment) that bring back things to life (predominantly in terms of economic growth) in an area.

6.3 Renewal

It is a process of redeveloping dilapidated or no longer functional inner-city areas (Dictionary.com, 2015). Urban renewal is a general process of transforming the urban environment (Broudehoux, 1994). It can also be understood as a program of developing land in areas of moderate to high-density urban land use (Saggu, 2011). It is may also be defined as 'a deliberate effort to change urban environment through planned large-scale adjustment of existing urban area' (Saggu, 2011), or 'a process of conserving historic buildings and other heritage resources to achieve economic, social and cultural objectives' (Pankaj & Johnson, 2015). Thus, renewal is vivifying dead or deteriorating socio-economic and environmental aspects of urban areas. Hence, the practice of renewal has a possibility of accommodating regeneration and revitalization respectively. The processes in the above terms are schematically represented in figure 2.
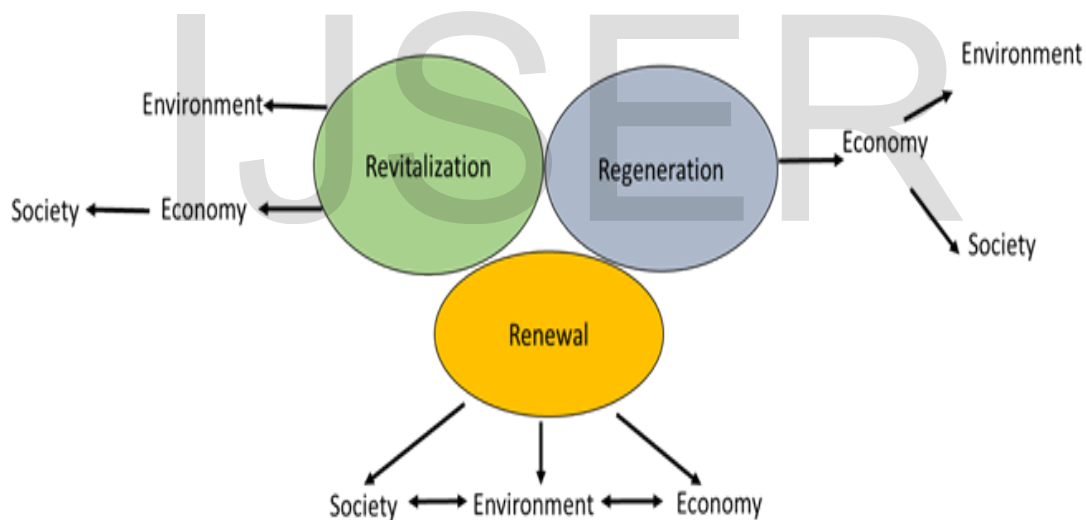

Figure 2: Regeneration, revitalization and renewal
Source: Author (2016)

6.4 Learning

It is learnt that revitalization is a process in which improvement is done for physical activities so that environment and economy of an area improve significantly. While direct intervention to society at large is more or less elusive, the condition in it is significantly enhanced nonetheless. Thus as soon as economic development takes place the social development happens as well. For revitalization, it is hence arguable that the practice maybe valid when the physical (environment related such as physical infrastructure) and economic development of an area are prime motives. In case of regeneration, developing the economy of an area leads to the development of environment and society. In case of renewal, the development of

society, environment and economy are directly related to each other. For renewal works pertaining to improvement are simultaneously done for the society, environment (that includes infrastructure) and economy such that each aspect improves the other aspect concomitantly. Thus, renewal may be utilized when the overall development of an area is the primary motive. One may infer that regeneration is an element of revitalization and revitalization is an element of renewal. This is detailed out in table 1.

Table 1: Relationship between Regeneration, Revitalization and Renewal

Aspects	To boost the economy, protect/improve the environment and ensure overall social development		
	To boost the economy and protect/improve the environment through infrastructure up gradation		
	To boost through development/improvement in commercial activities/ centers REGENERATION	REVITALIZATION	RENEWAL
Economy	MF	MF	MF
Environment	CO	MF	MF
Society	CO	CO	MF
Legend	MF: Major Focus	CO: Consequential Outcome	

Source: Author (2016)

Thus it can be ascertained that regeneration, revitalization and renewal are all related to each other, with one subsumed into another.

7. EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

At this juncture, it becomes important to also understand the scope (processes or practices) to carry out renewal. Because the scope for renewal is meant for inner-city areas of the Indian cities, in the current paper, it should be noted that the best cases at international level and in India are assessed. This is because certain practices with regards to renewal seen elsewhere and needed in the Indian context are still elusive. Thus, the acclaimed international cases of urban renewal have been taken from each continent and the same for the Indian scenario have been taken from major metropolitan cities where the practice has been successfully carried out. This is done deliberately as many large-scale developments have been carried out with lesser diligence in India (Gandhi, 2007).

Table 2: Concise summary of acclaimed international cases of renewal

Case (International)	Practice	Source
Richmond, Virginia, USA, North America	Mixed-use development	(Davis, 2012)
	Housing diversity	
	Smart infrastructure	
	Promoting medium and small scale businesses	
Inner City, Johannesburg,	Infrastructure up-gradation	(Galeshewe, Kwamashu,

South Africa, Africa	Citizen oriented governance	Plain, & Motherwell, 2002)
	Prioritization of NMTs and public mode	
	Mixed use	
Olympic Village, Barcelona, Spain, Europe	Creation of public amenities in blighted neighbourhoods	(Nelson, 2010)
	Reuse of derelict spaces	
	Redevelopment of blighted areas	
	Reclamation of inner courtyards	
Massena Nord, Paris, France, Europe	Mixed-use development	(Firley & Gron, 2013)
	Redevelopment of derelict areas	
City Core, Pingyao, China, Asia	Prioritization of NMTs and public mode	
	Pedestrianization	
	Adaptive reuse of obsolete structures	
	Conservation of heritage	

It is seen that practices indicated in table 2, may be summarized as promoting mixed-use development, fostering the diversity of housing, up-grading the infrastructure, boosting the economy, improving traffic and transportation, better utilization of land, protecting the environment and conserving the heritage. In a similar way, the following summary of acclaimed cases of urban renewal in India is worth exploring.

Table 3: Concise summary of acclaimed Indian cases of renewal

Case (Indian)	Practice	Source
Ward C, Mumbai, Maharashtra	Redevelopment in inner areas	(Anbu, 2011)
	Infrastructure up-gradation	
	Pedestrianization	
	Heritage conservation	
Bhindi Bazar, Mumbai, Maharashtra	Infrastructure up-gradation	(Seshadri, 2014)
	Redevelopment of derelict spaces	
	Mixed-use development	
Humayun's Tomb, New Delhi	Heritage conservation	(AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK, 2013)
	Infrastructure up-gradation	

Old city, Cuttack, Orissa	Infrastructure up-gradation	(Nikose, 1997)
	Heritage conservation	
	Redevelopment of obsolete structures	
	Rehabilitation of hazardous industries (nuisance creating)	
	Pedestrianization and road widening	
	Conservation of water bodies	
Core City, Hyderabad, Telangana (then Andhra Pradesh)	Development of adequate infrastructure	(Vyas, 1998)
	Pedestrianization and road widening	

It is seen that practices indicated in table 3, may be summarized as, up-grading the infrastructure, improving traffic and transportation, better utilization of land, protecting the environment, conserving the heritage, redeveloping derelict spaces and rehabilitating hazardous activities.

Overall these practices maybe categorized as development of obsolete structures, infrastructure up-gradation, development of derelict areas, creation of public amenities in blighted neighborhoods/areas, mixed-use development, relocation of hazardous industries and defunct offices/buildings, relocation of obnoxious/nuisance creating activities and heritage conservation (built and natural).

8. LEARNING

From the above discussion, it is learnt that certain practices deal with developing whole or the part of the considered area. In order for these practices to successfully happen, the existing built character needs to be modified. Thus some of these practices may be clubbed together into an umbrella term called **'Redevelopment'**. It is further learnt that for certain practices to actually happen, removal or relocation of certain aspects must take place. These practices may be clubbed together into an umbrella term called **'Relocation'**. There are certain other practices which require efforts of conservation, owing to historical and heritage related significance. **'Conservation'** is therefore considered as the third aspect. Hence, each of the practices of renewal may broadly be categorized as Redevelopment, Relocation and Conservation (refer table 4).

Table 4: Inference from best practices on urban renewal

Practices	Aspect of urban renewal
Development of obsolete structures	Redevelopment
Infrastructure up-gradation	
Development of derelict areas	
Creation of public amenities in blighted neighbourhoods/areas	
Improvement in traffic and transport related activities	
Mixed-use development	Relocation
Relocation of hazardous industries and defunct offices/buildings	
Relocation of obnoxious/ nuisance creating activities	

Heritage conservation (built and natural)	Conservation

Form the above discussion it may be justified to say that redevelopment is a process in which anything pre-existing is developed again or constructed again. It is a process in which derelict areas and obsolete structures are developed, infrastructure is upgraded, public amenities are created and improvement in traffic and transport related activities takes place. Relocation is a process of moving something or someone to a newer place to better suit their needs. Relocation of hazardous industries, defunct offices and obnoxious activities are some examples. Conservation is a process of retaining something that has immense value. Conservation of heritage is an important aspect.

9. CONCLUSION
In order to improve the quality of life the in inner-city areas and revamp it socially, economically, and environmentally the most appropriate solution could be renewal. It encompasses revitalization and regeneration. For cities in India, renewal may broadly include redevelopment, relocation and conservation.

10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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