SA5 Urbanization

Discussing the role of governments on the arrangements of city planning and settling housing complications

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Introduction

City planning also known as urban planning is the control and plan of a space for its uses focusing on factors such as economic functions, physical form, and social impacts of the urban environment. Because it concerns politics, economics, agriculture, and society, it is considered to be a technical and political process. To plan a city, architects and city planners work together to urbanize open land, greenfields, or work to improve the existing parts of cities. While planning these, city planners and architects take into account strategic thinking, data collection and analysis, forecasting, and public consultation to plan the best city possible.

Resolving housing matters, likewise, is the government's responsibility as well. Lack of stable housing is a big problem for every member state and is also the basis of many other issues such as but not limited to lack of education, poverty, and healthcare problems.

Because of income inequality, the wealthy part of society continues to become even richer, and, on the other hand, the poor continue to become even poorer. As a result of this, the poor section of a country settles down in the parts of the country where houses are cheaper, and the rich section resides in more expensive parts of the country. Because of this many housing issues start to rise, and after some time actions such as gentrification start to get taken. To prevent these problems, governments with the help of the United Nations should consider many things while planning a city to prevent housing issues.

Definition of Key Terms

Gentrification: a process where a poor area gets fixed with the help of the wealthy.

Urbanization: Urbanization is the process where people move from rural areas to urban areas and is the process where a city grows and becomes more developed.

Security of Tenure: Security of tenure is a right of a person living in a property that is owned by another person to keep on living in that property after his or her lease is expired.

Habitality: Somewhere being capable of a person to live in.

Cultural Adequacy: Fitting to the cultural parts of a society.

Cost-burdened: A person spending more than 30 percent of their income on rent.

General Overview

City planning dates back to the third millennium BCE, at the times of the Mesopotamians. Urban planning went through a big change in the 20th century as problems with the working poor started to become a public concern. In 1899 The Town and Country Planning Association was founded, which is an organization based in the United Kingdom which focuses on improving the science and art of Urban Planning. In the first half of the 20th century, the idea of modernism started to rise; however, in the second half of the 20th century, the main focus of city planners was individualism and diversity in urban centers. In the 21st century, city planning has been used to help reduce global warming. For instance, cities are encouraging their residents to use public transportation instead, and thus, they are planning on constructing many more republic transportation opportunities for cities.

The primary concern of city planning is the welfare of the residents. In addition, while urban planning, governments with the help of city planners, architects, scientists, and many more people, take into account many things such as but not limited to transportation, communications, accessibility. They also take into account the basic needs of individuals such as water and electricity. To maintain public welfare, governments need to take into consideration the sanitation, efficiency, and protection of the city. This process is not only technical but political too, since urban planning affects the city. It is related to economic profit, quality of the public, preservation of historical monuments. Thus, city planners and governments work together. As time has passed, sustainability has also become an important part of urban planning. With global warming increasing, trying to protect the environment has become an important part for every urban planner.

Housing issues are very common in the world, especially after the Covid-19 Pandemic. Housing is connected with the economy of a country and its citizens. The pandemic had a big effect on every country's economy. Because of the complications with the economy and overcrowding, housing issues started to rise. A housing crisis occurs when the affordable houses of a country become very rare to find. However, this is not the only issue at hand. There are also shortages of land and houses, and entitlement to land and housing, which also creates many other problems. Income inequality is also a very big factor that affects housing. As the rich become richer, and the poor become poorer, many people become unable to find appropriate and affordable houses for themselves. Income inequality can cause gentrification, which is a process where a poor area gets fixed with the help of the wealthy. This can result in issues such as but not limited to homelessness, community conflict, lack of social diversity, loss of affordable housing. For example, Tower Hamlets in London, United Kingdom was gentrified between the years 2010 and 2016. It is the most gentrified area in London and has the fastest growing economy in the whole United Kingdom. Governments have been taking action to overcome these issues. The United States, for instance, has been making many donations to at-risk homeowners and renters. Nevertheless, these donations are not enough to solve every housing problem the US faces.

Timeline of Events

Date of the Event	*The Event*
12 February 2020	*Affordable Housing and Social Protection Systems for All to Address Homelessness*
22March 2018	*Adequate Housing as a Component of the Right to an Adequate Standard of Living, and the Right to Non-Discrimination in Rhis Context*
17-20 October 2016	*The United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development*
25-27 September 2015	*The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*
	The United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR)'s The Right to Adequate Housing
21st Century	*Ideas of sustainability*
20th Century	*Ideas of individualism and modernism started to rise*
1899	*The Town and Country Planning Association was founded*
Third millennium BCE	*City planning started to rise*

Treaties and Events

The Right to Adequate Housing:

The United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR)'s The Right to Adequate Housing was an attempt to resolve housing issues. This is an international law that depicts issues such as eviction and displacement, equality and non-discrimination, homelessness and informal settlements, and the Covid-19 pandemic's effect on housing issues.

The United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development:

The United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, was a conference in Quito, Ecuador between 17 and 20th of October 2016. Also known as the Habitat III conference, the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development is an opportunity to discuss how to plan and manage cities and towns with sustainable developments.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was set in motion by a United Nation summit in New York City in between 25th of September 2015 and 27th of September 2015. It aims to end world hunger and poverty. It has five main elements: people, prosperity, planet, partnership and peace (5P's). It plans on ensuring that by 2030 all 5 P's would be achieved in the world.

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

The United States of America: The US has been having housing issues for a very long time because of the imbalance between supply and demand. Before the Covid-19 Pandemic, the United States had a shortage of approximately 7 million affordable homes. People working minimum wage jobs were not able to afford to purchase a house in every state. In addition, in 2019, almost half of the home renters were cost-burdened. After the pandemic, many people were getting evicted from their houses because of the economic impacts of the pandemic. To solve this, Congress and the White House provided 75 billion dollars to support at-risk homeowners and renters. Even though this funding was able to help many people, it is still not sufficient to solve the housing crisis in the United States.

China: China is facing severe housing issues because of overpopulation, and today the population in China is still growing rapidly. In 2021, China released a new 5 year plan to solve housing problems. In the 5 year plan, China plans on pressing ahead with legislation of property taxes. This policy has been previously stated in China; however, it was never put into action.

The United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR): OHCHR is a UN body that is responsible for housing issues. Since its creation, OHCHR has released many resolutions to solve problems related to housing. There have been 5 resolutions by the Commission on Human Rights and 10 resolutions by the Human Rights Council. Even though many of the resolutions accepted by the OHCHR have helped tackle housing complications, none of them were sufficient to resolve the issues radically since economic problems such as income inequality are still an issue at hand.

Adequate Housing as a Component of the Right to an Adequate Standard of Living, and the Right to Non-Discrimination in Rhis Context

Adequate Housing as a Component of the Right to an Adequate Standard of Living, and the Right to Non-Discrimination in Rhis Context was a resolution accepted by the The United Nations Human Rights

Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) in its 37th session in March 22, 2018. This resolution is about finding adequate housing opportunities.

Affordable Housing and Social Protection Systems for All to Address Homelessness

Affordable Housing and Social Protection Systems for All to Address Homelessness was a resolution accepted by the Economic and Social Council, Commision for Social Development in February 12, 2020. This resolution was the first resolution to depict issues related to homelessness in three decades and it states possible solutions on tackling homelessness. Additionally, addresses ways to fulfill the 2030 Agenda for a Sustainable Future.

Possible Solutions

One possible solution could be to decrease income inequality in nations, which can be done in several ways such as increasing the minimum wages, investing in education and expanding infrastructure.

Another solution can be reducing land speculation, which is buying undeveloped land and leaving it as it is until it increases in value. Governments can reduce land speculation and build public housing on those lands to help with housing crises.

There are many ghost cities all around the world. China, for instance, has around 50 ghost cities. Almost one-fifth of the homes in China are empty. Reinvesting in ghost cities could be a great way to fight with many housing issues.

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