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Restructuring the Urban Panopticon to Increase Safety in Rapidly Growing Cities: Case of Gurugram, Haryana

Panopticon is a surveillance mechanism developed by Jeremy Bentham in order to enhance the security and deals with the behavioral patterns of people in a certain location, creating an involuntary surveillance using existing crowd and thus resulting in social control and disciplinary conditions. This can be achieved through planning and design, thereby restructuring the existing panopticon. Rapid urbanization and globalization have been few of the major concerns in the present world today and it has caused chaos in developing cities like Gurugram in terms of urban developments, housing, and infrastructural developments. Rapidly growing cities are prone to the issue of safety and security due to lack of proper infrastructure and unplanned growth patterns.

Gurugram is part of the Delhi National Capital Region which developed to accommodate growing population which includes migrants from all around the world. During the 1980's, private developers bought large parcels of land from the Haryana government in order to create large clusters of gated communities or fortified enclaves. Large scale developments from the Private developers ensured infrastructure, amenities, and security in the gated communities, while the Government could not cope up with the rapid urbanization and development. Gurugram developed in large scale to be an IT center of India that caters to high income IT professionals. In order to sustain high standards of living, several large-scale projects like shopping malls and large hotels were brought up. These irregular and unplanned developments in several areas created underdeveloped spaces which are susceptible to crime and violence. Mehrauli-Gurgaon Road is taken as the study area to develop a prototype that intends to enhance the safety and security of the area. Large private developers have built over a dozen shopping complexes and several clusters of gated communities that are within walkable distances in the area, but people use private vehicles to commute even walkable distances due to lack of safety. Since the locals depend solely on private vehicles, the walkability has been largely compromised due to congestion and chaos and increased concerns of traffic safety. The only pedestrians on the street is the floating population who depend on public transportation like metro rail and buses. Hence this study attempts to reconstruct the urban panopticon to achieve walkable, sociable, and interactive spaces for all ages and reduce the vehicular movement which in turn create opportunities for humanization of public realm. Changes in the existing building codes and guidelines along with development of public spaces with defined urban design and planning strategies, guidelines and programs are the main agendas to achieve enhanced safety and inclusive public spaces.

Keywords: Humanization, Panopticon, Safety, Urbanization