

Effect of Social Spaces on Human Behaviour in Gated Communities

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Abstract.

For many decades, human habitation began with the formation of settlements, marking the initial stages of communal living. Community living denotes people coexisting through social interactions and shared activities, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose while minimizing social and physical insecurities. Over time, these settlements evolved into diverse cities and towns, exhibiting various patterns and developmental changes. However, the progression of such communities has brought about social disparities. Initially, settlements provided ample space, and houses were surrounded by expansive compounds, accommodating various activities within. This spatial arrangement inadvertently led to the isolation of social life, influenced by factors like structural distances and the geographical separation from city centers. The subsequent emergence of gated communities exacerbated this issue. While offering a more exclusive living environment, these communities became financially out of reach for individuals with average annual incomes. The high market prices associated with such developments restricted accessibility for the common person, despite their interest. As a viable solution to this challenge, there is a need to establish vibrant and inclusive social spaces with minimal barriers to entry. This involves reimagining street designs and maximizing the use of open spaces to create communities that are not only accessible to everyone but also promote active and healthy social lives. This approach aims to overcome the limitations posed by traditional gated communities, fostering a more inclusive and user-friendly environment.

Keywords: Social Spaces, Gated Communities, Interactive Design, Human Behaviour.

1. Introduction

The townships and gated communities are the projects developed under the concept of community living. These places provide common spaces for community gatherings, meetings and other activities. But, the scenario turned into a state that people are being forcefully driven to perform or participate in activities together in an enclosed boundary. Similarly, when considered individual house in a colony built up together, the individuality & security up to a level is achieved. But, the social interaction within the neighbours (in general) is less due to the social insecurity. People in the end are feeling in-secured or unhappy & isolated even though they are living together as a community. Gated Community is an idea which can rapidly change the dynamics of an urban environment. It has an influence to potentially put together the contrast nature of the urban rich and poor together [1]. It can also influence the liability of both the local and national government bodies (especially in transitioning and developing countries) which could impact on the sustainability of cities.

Gated Communities

Generally, when the word gated community comes people think about it in two ways, either for facilities and services provided or for security. These will be the prime characters resembling a gated community. But, the actual definition of a gated community is mentioned in the following section. Gated communities are referred to as a “physical area that is fenced or walled off from its surroundings” having a restricted or prohibited entry.

1.1 History of Gated Communities

The history of gated communities didn't actually start with gates in the criteria; they are first started as communities. In the initial ages of human evolution and settlement, the settlement of people in a place instead of being nomads is due to the invention of agriculture. This development can be considered in two stages. The first is the construction of houses in a common space, so that every house is accessible. Later, the division of spaces happened to differentiate their individual space. This is created with all sorts of access to the house from a common entry to everyone and individual entries to access the neighbours. These are the irregular settlement, unplanned, based on their function.

This is the formation of villages or towns and they used to have internal access between the towns. Then with the ruling of kings and areas being divided into kingdoms, forts came into the existence. These forts need to be secured and isolated; this made the forts to settle on the hilltops. Later, with colonization of these places, they need security to the entire

town, so that no one can occupy these spaces. The solution is fortified walls and a single entry. This is the reason in some places even today gated communities are called as “*Fortified Enclaves*”.

Then the GATES came into the existence. This creates restricted access and vehicular movement. So that, inside and outside are created, use of the common amenities can be restricted to the outsiders. Thus the westernization brought it up as a trend.

1.2 Background to the Study

The scenario in the previous decades in INDIA is different regarding the settlement patterns and migration. The major population of India lives in rural areas. The way of the life that exists in the villages or sub-urban areas is very interactive. People used to live together (and are even living now) with no boundaries made socially though they are physically existing due to the open plan types. Life of people happens in the streets, it is like a living room for people living in that community and this impact on the social insecurity of people. Due to the visibility of life of others, everyone is comfortable living together as a group. The trust factor is high& they are all majorly happy [2].

Due to the industrialization, the rapid growth of cities made people to move& migrate to cities. And eventually they ended up living in slums due to many factors. So, the same type of community living as in the rural areas is established in slums

2. Literature Study

The literature study of this report covers the topics which help out for the research. They are the factors for considering the survey, issues of the urban gated communities. The gating provided turned up to create a quite opposite reaction; they are gating as a secure context and gating as a insecurity.

2.1 Gating in an Insecure Context

Gating in ages back in the medieval period is in the form of fortified walls. This is done during the colonization; they used a single enclosure to enter and walls at various stages. This is used for two purposes; to protect the city from any foreign attacks and to create a controlled/restricted movement of social, trade and economic life. In some other cases, it is the previous settlement in the outer boundary walls, so that there is no further extension of this settlement. The newer places can be created and not being occupied by the settlers, this

created a great sense of oppression in the local settlers though they have all the amenities and infrastructure [3].

This is further continued as the cities which now exist controlled by the local government or authorizations. They developed the entire urban open public infrastructure and concentrated on its development. So, the security of these residential communities became a questionable thing, though they can look into it, they avoided. So, that the private people take their own precautions and appoint their own security. The reason for government avoiding these situations is the lack of government funds.

2.2 Gating in a Relatively Secured Context

The rule under the government of all such residential communities is liberalized and given private rules and regulations in around 1970's and 1980's. The private organization can make changes passively in these fortified enclaves, can access and look after their own amenities if any problem occurs. This reduced the burden on the government in personally looking after every residential community. With the reduction of taxes, this became a very comfortable way of living with security and all the basic amenities in proper conditions. In the contemporary context, this residential communities or gated communities has become the prime business strategy for producers to target. They specifically have these market strategies targeting the senior citizens and other related groups for pooling into the communities. They can create a very small residential area with basic amenities and infrastructure to a huge residential area bearing up to 10,000 residents and with full municipal services.

2.3 Reasons for Gating

For people to purchase the homes/ rent in these residential communities have many factors. Although, in many cases security is the prime reason for people to approach these gated enclosures. There are also other factors that are driving people to these enclosed communities are mainly based on the functions of the community. The people living in such enclaves believe that the enclosure enhances the safety and security. Such aspects are the prime concerns for certain group of people, such as senior citizens. The residents of such gated communities pursue domestic behaviour and communal agreement [4]. Guards, security cameras and the inhabitants monitor behaviour and regulate rules.

2.4 Separation and Privacy

Courtyard provides a way for the inhabitants to manage their communications with others, and to evaluate the level of communal contact they want with the outsiders. In many regions courtyards affect the estate's worth and emphasizes the social prestige of residents. Those inside the community may share a strong group identity. Gates allow inhabitants to govern the access to common "club" activities. Those who pay for the luxuries can prevent outsiders from using the facilities.

3. Gated Communities as a Reaction to Crime

The crime rates in South Africa and Brazil are very high due to unemployment of people and lack of availability of resources. The easiest thing for any person to earn money is through a crime of robbery or assault. In order to reduce there need to be areas created with high security and highly restricted entry/exit or controlled access into the enclosure. This is how the gated communities became the solution for reduction of crime rate [5]. Security in Brazil refers to the 24-hour guard security under the surveillance of cameras in every possible extent of coverage and sensor activated alarms, etc. The way of life in Brazil has become security; total security has become the complete housing requirement. In Brazil gated communities include office complexes, shopping centres and other required spaces. The basic requirements of such enclaves are:

- A. Private property for collective usage
- B. Physically separated, by walls or empty lands or other design spaces or natural barriers.
- C. Turned inwards and not towards the street.
- D. Controlled by armed guards and security systems (the advanced modern invention in technology such as video cameras, sensors detecting the motion, etc.).

The key words or findings anyone searches in a liveable city are the combo of the following:

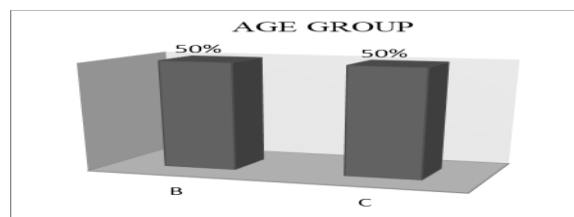
- Clean air is among the most significant conditions for liveability – and natives are not happy with the specialists'endeavours in the region.
- Wellbeing is crucial – both traffic security and wrongdoing aversion – and residents are likewise disappointed on this count. There is additionally a hole between the interest for reasonable lodging and its accessibility.

- Versatility is another distinct need – and a lion's share discover better conditions for people on foot, bikes and open transport more significant than better conditions for vehicles.
- Green regions and urban nature are significant, particularly in Copenhagen – in truth green zones are the most significant part of liveability in the capital.
- Natives see flood flexibility as to a lesser extent a need than the greater part of different variables referenced above, yet at the same time communicated disappointment with what they felt was too low a dimension of atmosphere security.

The Government of India along with the various State and Local Governments is implementing several flagship Urban Missions. There are many goals set up for these missions, to achieve the cities to be “liveable”. The liveability Standards of cities in India are governed by the Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD). This set up a set of rules to generate the liveable indexes and rates for cities. The source of the Liveability Standards is the 24 features contained in the Smart City Proposals (SCPs), which have been grouped into 15 categories. These categories are part of the four pillars of comprehensive development of cities. A total of 79 Indicators (57 Core Indicators and 22 Supporting Indicators) have been prescribed in the document. While the Core Indicators are considered an essential measure of liveability of cities, the Supporting Indicators supplement the Core Indicators by adding value to them. These are organized in 15 ‘Categories’ given earlier.

4. Results:

The main aspects concentrated in the survey is security levels, interaction, and the social life of residents. The data obtained in the survey is depicted through charts and pies in this chapter.



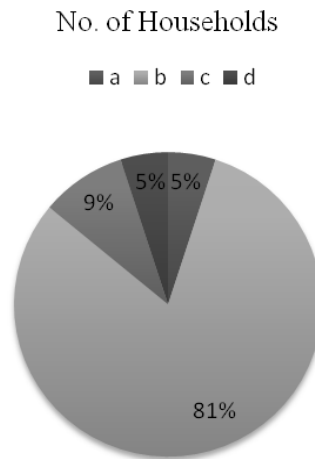


Figure 1. (a) showing the major age group. **(b)** showing the no. of households
The major group living in the area is identified by dividing it into FOUR sub-categories, namely:

- A. <30
- B. 30-50
- C. 50-70
- D. >70

The results from the survey showed in chart nothat the major age group of people living in this community is 30-50 by 50%, equally is the 50-70 age group by 50%, and the rest are youth, teenagers, and children as in the chart 15.

The average household size is depicted through chart3 by dividing the category into 4 sub-categories. They are:a- 1-2, b- 3-4, c- 5-7, d- >7. The result from the survey conducted as in the chart16 is depicting that the major household size on an average is 3-4 persons in a family by 81%.

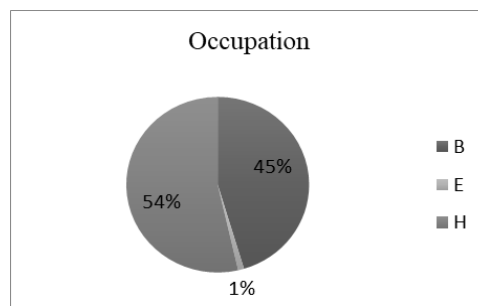


Figure 2. Showing the occupation ratio

The major occupation in this community is surveyed by dividing it into three major sub-categories. They are: B- BUSSINESS, E- EMPLOYEE, H- HOUSE WIFE. The major dominating occupation in this community is the employee sector by 54% of the survey and the next occupation is the house wives by 45% as in the chart 17.

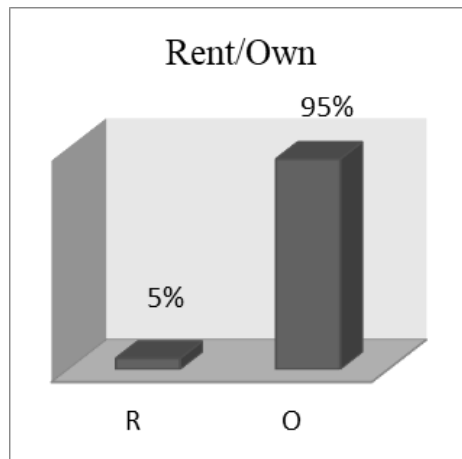


Figure 3. showing USER GROUP ratio of own to rent houses

The ratio of people owning houses unanimously higher than to that of the rentals by 95%. This shows that the houses owned and built by the higher business class people as represented in the chart no.18.

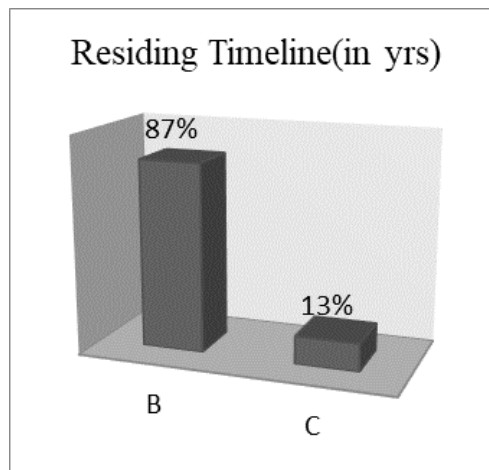


Figure 3. showing the ratio of user group residing timeline (in years)

The no.of years the people are staying in the communities are depicted in the chart no.19 in three sub-categories. They are: a- <3, b- 3 to 7, c- > 7. Majority of the people are staying in this area from around 3 to 7 years of span. The reason for surveying the no.of years since they started to live will depict their concetcion/bond/interaction with the co-residents which is the one prime aspect for acjieving social security.

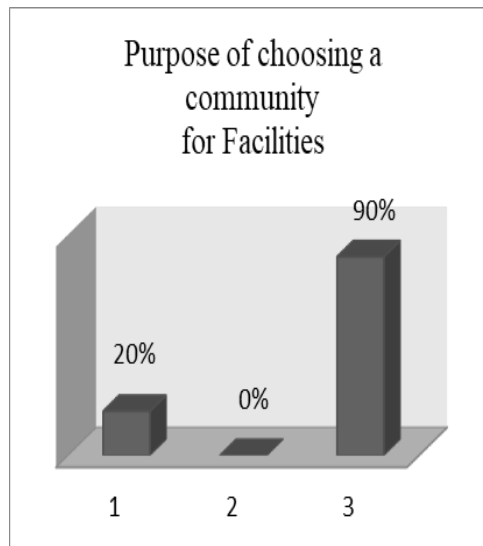


Figure 4. showing the priorities of USER GROUP based on Facilities.

As discussed in 1.1.2. in the chapter 1, there are three types of communities based on the nature of the gated communities. They are prestige, lifestyle, security. Here are the results for the question, in the survey to answer the question based on their priorities on these 3 options: facilities provided, social life, security.

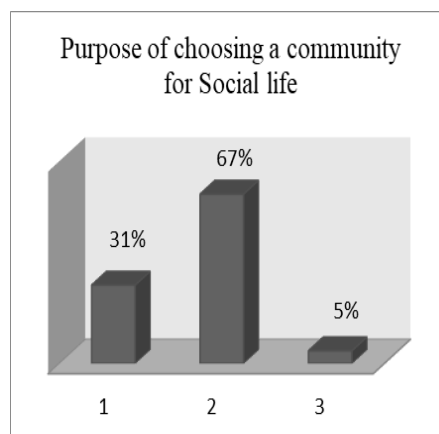


Figure 5. showing the priorities of USER GROUP for social life

The results of the survey is given in as priorities of each sub-category out of 3. The purpose of choosing a gated community for the reason of facilities provided the option people chose it as last requirement by about 90% as shown in chart 20.

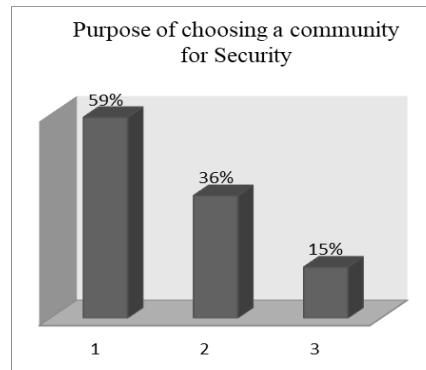


Figure 6. showing the priorities of USER GROUP for security

The purpose of choosing a community if it is for social life, about 31% of people rated it as the prime or first priority in this community. But for some of them security is the prime issue for around 67% of the people. The purpose of choosing a gated community if it is for the security around 59% of the people choosed it to be the prime aspect in a community.

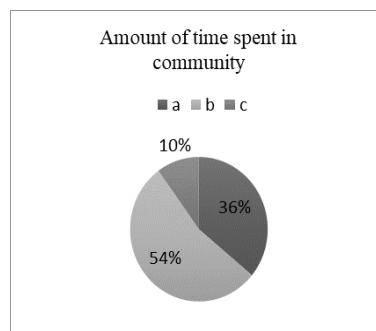


Figure 7. showing the time spent by user groups in community

The amount of time spent in the community spaces other than in the house, may be in playarea, or jogging/walking,etc, is divided into three time periods. They are: a. 1-2, b. 2-4, c. >4. The major time interval choosed is 1-2 hours by 42% of the total people as shown in the chart no. 23.

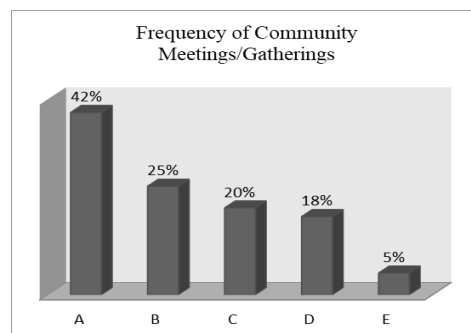


Figure 8. showing the frequency of community gatherings on overall scale

Frequency of Community Gatherings

The frequency of community gatherings on overall scale are divided into 5 sub-categories for the survey, they are: daily, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly and others. The survey showed that there are nearly equal positions for three categories such as daily (for walking or jogging), monthly (the association meetings, etc.), others under this category the traditional gatherings or offerings on festive days or some get-togethers on frequent scales as shown in chart no. 24.

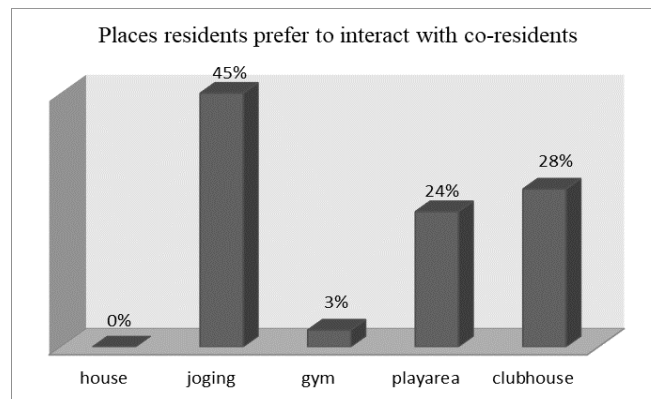


Figure 9. showing the places people prefer to interact with the co-residents

5. Street Design

STREETS occupy approximately **20%** of the total land area in a typical city, and they are the most important and ubiquitous form of public space. There is a famous saying as “Streets are the **STAGE** upon which the **DRAMA** of **URBAN LIFE** unfolds every day”. There is an urgent need to look at streets as places where people walk, talk, cycle, shop, and perform the multitude of social functions that are critical to the health of gated communities.

“Streets make a city liveable”. If a street makes a space liveable, it can make a community liveable. Modern streets also carry a number of infrastructure services such as pedestrian paths, cycle paths, infrastructure, furniture, automobile paths, BRTs etc

A Complete Street is that caters to all users. It can take on a variety of forms, depending on factors such as the

- available right-of-way,
- traffic volumes,
- street-side activities, and
- Adjacent land uses.

In general, smaller right-of-ways can function as slow shared spaces used by both pedestrians and vehicles. A larger street can cater to walking and stationary activities as well as through movement, but it often makes sense to differentiate the slow, shared zone from the mobility zone to ensure comfort and safety for pedestrians and stationary users.

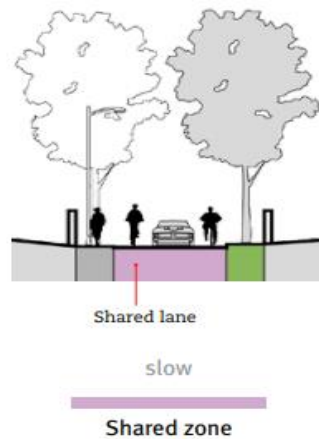


Figure 13. showing the shared zone of a street

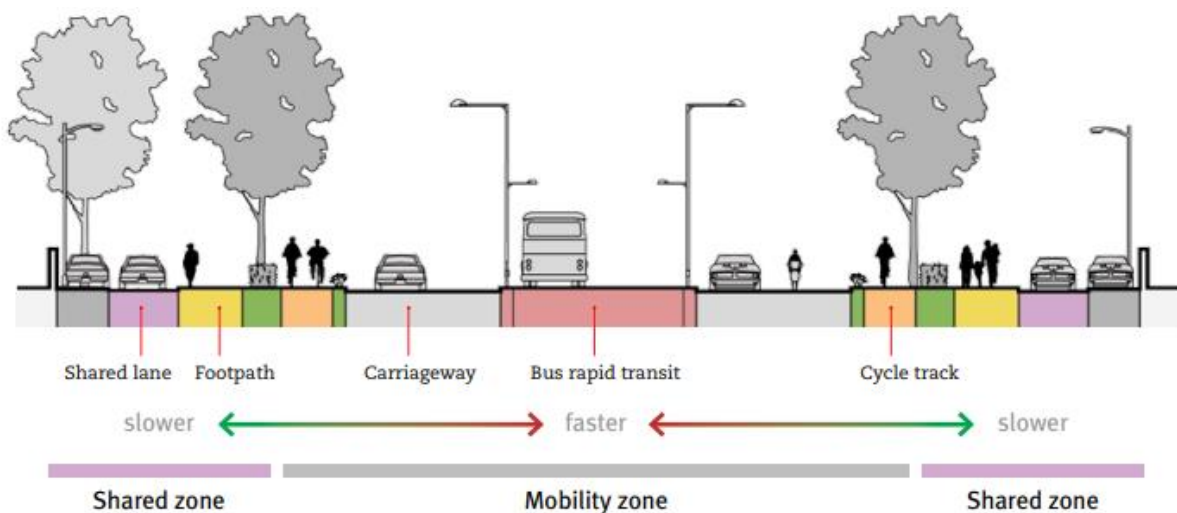


Figure 14. showing the shared zone and mobility zone of a street

Open spaces design should be designed in such way that they should be user friendly and interactive. These open spaces should be designed such that they are east to access for any person i.e. universal design.

They should be used by every age group of people and every social group of people in a comfortable way. These open spaces should be in association with physical activity and

walking/cycling routes, wooded areas, water features, lights, pleasant views, bike racks and parking.

For any open space the score for it is its attraction. More than 50% of the people moves through a space through attraction. So, the key point is design anything in an aesthetically pleasing way and user friendly. Being attractive alone is never sufficient or perfect.

6. Conclusion

The conclusion is that yes, the social spaces have an effect on human behavior directly or indirectly. This may be depicted through their interaction levels or frequency of meetings or minimum dispute and maximum co-ordination between them. Any space or community or city when to be designed the maximum concentration should be on the way spaces are provided and the interaction levels that can be achieved among the residents. So, the maximum possible open spaces or social spaces should be given. If not possible to give a large open space and arrangements, it can be created in a simple and proper street design. The life of people should let to be happening on the streets just as in Dharavi or rural areas or villages. It is not difficult to create an open space; it is just that the profits should not be purely commercial. But, the residents who are actually staying in the area should also get some benefits by providing open spaces. By which the residents can have a healthy social life with the co-residents.

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Research paper

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