

**Presentation n.1 : Sustainable Urban Development : New Perspectives for Urban Planning - Presented by Mr. Dattatri (Consultant for the Auroville Master Plan.)**

Mr. Dattatri, formally chief urban planner for the state of Tamil Nadu, project coordinator for the Integrated World Bank Projects, part time consultant at the UN in the sustainable city program, with 20 years experience in town planning hinted of introducing 'good things' in the planning of Auroville, and clarified that no single document, even the Master Plan can bring in everything that a planner has to do. The planning process, the planning ways, the planning deficiencies, the planning inadequacies, and said steps to improve urban management were essential. He suggested that Auroville as an innovative institution could certainly share its experiences with other cities. His concern was time constraints regarding the planning and the resultant outcome in most cities. He said since Auroville is not a rapidly growing urban area, there was time to pause, reflect and make necessary amends.

He compared the approach of planning to British practices in India. Master plan for urban areas, in India, had been the basis of the Planning Acts. The first act was the Bombay Town planning Act of 1919 and the second was the Madras Town Planning act then it was called the Madras Town Planning Act of 1920. Both were based on earlier acts in the UK – the British Town Planning Acts. The planning acts provided basically for making the Master Plan or what was called the General Town Planning Scheme for cities and the detail town planning schemes under the legislations and planning requirements. One important thing to be seen is that the Master Plan and the Detail plans were never thought of to be complementary. The General town planning schemes, particularly in the Madras state of TN, the first Master Plan did not come until the Chennai metropolitan development authority was set up in 1971, although the Act was of 1920. In Madras itself there were more than 30 town planning schemes, as were schemes in Coimbatore and Madurai. The detail town scheme and the general town planning scheme went separately. The Master plan was a perspective plan really; a futuristic look at the city 20 or 25 years hence and what would be then the population growth & social requirements. He explained that when the area under the Master Plan was larger than the local body, a committee would oversee activities with the representatives of various municipalities, but since they lacked technical skill, the responsibility was hijacked by the directorate of town planning. Lack of local background turned many of the Master plans particularly in TN, into paper plans. The operational part of all the Master plans was only three things. One was the land use or land utilization, the other was the development control and finally the enforcement mechanism. The Master Plan for the Chennai metropolitan area was started somewhere around 1935-36.

He clarified that the second part of the Master Plan related to development control, had two aspects, one was the land use characteristics, what can & cannot be built, in particular areas and the second thing was what planning parameters are required. The different set-backs, the floor area ratio, came in much later, the important thing was plot coverage in the initial stages. Master plan requirements

were growth rate of population, land required for urban activities, policy for water supply & policy for sanitation. Planning was done in isolation to the infrastructure development agencies. Master Plans had also suggested how cities can be decongested. The Master Plan idea moved to what is called the Structure Plan which was more philosophical; policy oriented, & also became more a sort of a book-shelf plan than an implementation plan. The first plan that was made to integrate infrastructure and planning was the basic development plan for Calcutta. A basic development plan was made, and then there were regional development plans because Bombay municipality was close to the local people & was therefore the strongest local body in India. A metropolitan regional developmental authority was set up and they made a regional development plan, which in a way set up the policies and then the implementation was done by the Bombay municipality. The Bombay BMRDA was set up and was responsible for the planning of new Bombay area which again was given up to another institution to implement. Andhra Pradesh is an example where every town had a development authority. The development authorities developed new land areas for housing and new industrial estates and new activities, planning to development to metropolitan development plan.

He illuminated that Madras Metropolitan areas attracts people from the rural region, as well as from other urban areas, so land for the growing population is required, for living, working, recreation and amenities. He said the idea that physical planning has to be integrated with economic planning, & that state planning and central planning commissions, not always integrated. A time has come where economy, financial strength, employment, poverty elevation have to form the part of an urban development plan whether you call them a Master plan or a structure plan or a metropolitan plan. Infrastructure in terms of energy supplies, water supplies, waste removal and traffic and transport, sanitation, pollution abatement, control of disease and recreation is very important in terms of planning. Environment was one of the most important parts of the Master plan. Slum less cities, urban renewal, protection of natural resources and assets, heritage sites and buildings, these have also become priority areas in every city. Then the management mechanism is an important thing. For many of the development areas the mechanism is very good though only on paper.

For example if you take the Chennai Development Authority the members come from almost all the departments of the government, the department of environment, industry, water supply. So ultimately because each authority is independent and has an agenda of its own, although the authority itself is one in which all the things can come in, it has not materialized. Capital investments are made. Maintenance is not given importance as it is considered as a local body. But as capital assets increase maintenances also increase. Then there is the stakeholder participation. He said public-private partnership, citizen involvement and local governments as a very important emphasis which had not been in the original plans, particularly because when the Master Plan was made, there was the idea that it would be published widely. When the first Master Plan was published

there were about 50-60 responses from land owners claiming that their land was not agricultural, but was good urban land, suitable for industrial or residential purposes. So there has never been a very systematic or articulate public participation or citizen participation in the Master plan, a prime requirement in today's urban development.

He mentioned WHO introduced the Healthy City Program. UN habitat introduced Urban Management Program and the Sustainable Cities Program. World Bank came up with City Corporate Plans. The latest is the TN central pollution board, which introduced the Eco-City Program and then the Town and Urban Planning Organization and the Ministry of Urban Affairs, central government, introduced the UDPFI (Urban Development Plan Formulation & Implementation) guidelines for urban management, the most important development at the central level. The city must have a perspective plan which must be done as quickly as possible, and should be divided into five year plans, for integration with the economy, with the physical structure, with the infrastructure, and with the other structures. Five-year development plan should be slotted into annual implementation plans, should be project oriented, program oriented, policy oriented. Within this experiment the best part of the sustainable cities program, the Eco-cities program, should be inducted in the urban management program.

He explained that Asia Urbs provided some resources to do the Auroville Master Plan. This could then divide into five year plans and annual plans. Auroville Perspective Plan is perhaps the first plan in India to follow the UDPFI guidelines. Sustainable environmental practices is the pillar of perspective planning, because economic planning, physical planning, infrastructure planning are not implemented separately.

He explained that Auroville has 20 square kilometres of area for planning, but then within 5 sq kilometres, all the population of 50,000 is possible. The basic idea is that it will be high density in green surroundings. The city area will be within 5 sq kms and will be surrounded by a green belt of 15 sq kms, which will have many other aspects of environmental planning. And even within these 5 sq kms the population of 30 or 40 thousand would be within one-fourth the area. In the Auroville Master plan the green areas are productive areas. Although we may not be able to reach the aim of 100 percent alternate energy for development, the direction is towards renewal energy syndromes that can be thrashed out and a strategy on developmental control is worked out. Problems of urban areas are in the rural areas but for the sustainable development of rural areas there are no guidelines. In Auroville, the concern was for the bioregion, as not only the immediate surrounding village but the entire bioregion. The 5-year plan shows the areas to be developed, how it can be developed, what are the parameters involved and then the mechanism for implementation. To implement the Master Plan, whether it is water supply, energy, traffic, international centre, the urban design there has to be a mechanism for implementation. A mechanism not to control, but to facilitate, to bring them together, to bring in new ideas. Auroville is

experimenting in bringing together all the good aspects of planning and is conducting a good experiment for the whole country to follow.