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E-content

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Characteristics of CBD in Indian cities

Introduction

Like in other cities of the world, in India also CBD is the heart of the town where transportation network coverage and where land value is highest leading to the maximum use of land. Some of the CBD of important towns are recognized by their distinctive names, e.g. Chandani Chowk in old Delhi and Connaught Place (Rajiv Chowk) in New Delhi, Ameenabad in Lucknow, Chowda Bazar in Ludhiana, Godoulia in Varanasi, Peepal Mandi in Agra and Sector 17 in Chandigarh. In Patna due to linear shape development of the city along R. Ganga three distinct nucleus developed during different phases of its growth. They are City Chowk or Maroofganj in the oldest nucleus located in Patna city, Muradpur located in Central part and New Market developed near Patna Junction during Post-Independence period. In small towns it is still found in the centre of the town and often called as 'Chowk' or 'Ghantaghar'. In old cities which have long history of their origin and growth, CBD forms the initial core or nucleus of the town and played important role in shaping the morphology of that town.

Characteristics

The CBD is characterized by maximum accessibility mainly by roads. It has bus terminals or railway stations in close neighbourhood. But in many cases specially in old cities the CBD is characterized by narrow roads which become extremely congested by pedestrian and vehicular traffic during day. Due to heavy congestion the vehicular as well as

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pedestrian traffic move slowly. This is basic difference between CBD of Indian cities and cities of developed countries. The foot path as well as roads are encroached by a small vendors, food stalls and hawkers etc. who make their business here adding to overall congestion.

The land/rent value is very high. The residential buildings are converted into commercial ones. In almost all the CBD of Indian cities residential land use is invariably found mixed with commercial activities. It has been in practice to utilise back portions of the shops or upper storeys of buildings for residential purpose either by owner of the property or by tenants on rent. In this core area of the city centre land use is highest, therefore it is most suitable for commercial utilisation. However, in many towns land value has been found higher in other parts also lying in intermediate zone or along the margin of the town because of the development of better site for buildings, better connectivity, wide roads and other favourable considerations. People who prefer to live away from the congested core of the city are ready to pay higher rates of land on favourable locations. Due to the development of better roads and increasing modes of public transport, easy accessibility to city core has no longer been considered essential. In fact, living condition in CBD is poor in comparison to other parts of the city because the buildings are old, the residences have a small houses without proper open space and green space.

Since residential land use is found within CBD, therefore CBD which remains buzzing with different types of activities during day is not completely depopulated during night as is found in western developed countries. Though density of population sharply falls by night in almost all the CBD of Indian cities.

In India the CBD is characterized by oldest buildings which are not always tallest buildings of the city. However, the buildings undergo changes consistently. The old buildings are demolished and replaced by new buildings which are generally multistoreyed. Similarly new storeys are added to those buildings which are not so old and dilapidated.

Now a days, dispersal of commercial activity in different parts of the town specially in newly developed areas of big cities have been observed. This leads to the development of secondary commercial zone

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or outlying business area. People who do not prefer to visit congested CBD for purchase of goods prefer secondary commercial zone. Shopping malls have also added a new dimension to commercial activity specially in big cities. In shopping complex and malls customers get all items at one place with ease of marketing, convenience of parking and better accessibility. Besides, branded food courts and places of recreation e.g. cinema halls are also found in these malls. A section of population prefer to visit these shopping complexes are malls for buying retail goods as well as for recreation.

Problems

During present times CBD of Indian cities are facing several problems. Since this part of the city remains highly congested, large number of people and vehicles add to noise pollution and air pollution, there is always problems of parking for private car and other vehicles. Traffic jam is the most common problem of all the CBD of Indian cities. Since there is high concentration of people who come to this place for buying goods, pick pocketing and snatching of purse by antisocial elements are common phenomena. Also sellers who pay high rents for the shops, keep the price of goods high to make profits. Besides sellers of loose temporary retail shops on footpath charge arbitrary due to bargaining system. Sometimes people feel cheated in such shops. Since buildings are tall with no open space in between the buildings, the living condition is unhygiene. The CBD is highly unsuitable for residence purpose. Besides roads are generally narrow and it is difficult for any authority to widen the roads of CBD.

In spite of all these problems, the CBD is an integral part of all the cities and it forms the nucleus around which the whole city development takes place.
