

Evaluating Liveability of Residential Built Environment

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Abstract—Does a house offered by the Real Estate industry in newly built townships meet the expectations of a connected 21st century resident? The concept of "livability" has been gaining currency over the previous couple of decades. It means many things to many people but is generally understood as ease of living and quality of life. This paper aims to explore various dimensions of livability and evolve a methodology to evaluate and benchmark the built environment that meets contemporary living requirements in residential townships. Classified as design, economic, environmental and social factors, these identifiers include: building envelope, access to goods and services, and leisure spaces; proximity to workplace and commercial centers; open spaces, green cover, pollution and noise levels; and factors such as community and cultural mores that affect experiential living. The World Health Organization's understanding of livability is based on a four-layer model of housing that takes into consideration the physical structure of the dwelling, the external dimension of the immediate housing environment, and the community with all neighbors. The AARP Public Policy institute, a US based NGO, has developed one such Livability Index that defines a livable community as one that is safe and secure, has affordable and appropriate housing, and transportation options, and has supportive community features and services.

Considering India's demography, a vast middle class and economic stratification, built environment continues to be an opportunity and a challenge. National building code and local bylaws dictate minimum built specifications and the optimum space utilization but fall woefully short in delivering real value to the end user, the resident. This paper suggests that a relational evaluation is possible to assess the efficacy and performance of residential township projects. The benchmarks and evaluations so synthesized will greatly benefit all stakeholders viz real estate developers, planners, architects, engineers, and the end users.