

Topic: Workshop on 'Ageing in city' – Group 4, Faridabad

Name: Aditi Kamat

University of Heidelberg

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The Workshop "Ageing in the City" by DAAD-project "New Directions in 'Active Ageing' and 'Age-friendly Culture' in India and Germany" took place from 27th to 30th September 2019. It was conducted under the guidance of Prof. Dr. Christiane Brosius and Prof. Dr. Arunava Dasgupta, and it took place at the School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi. A workshop with students from varied fields like urban design, anthropology, gerontology, and medicine added remarkably to the think tank and productive discussions. An introductory session was followed by presentation by Prof. Brosius and Dr. Weigl-Jäger, post which the participants presented on the reading which were preassigned, and we were allotted Fischer(2018) readings on 'Creative Ageing Cities' which sheds light on the idea of baby boomers and silver tsunami.

The participants were divided into varied groups with a mix of Heidelberg University (HU), School of Planning and Architecture (SPA) and Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) students; and assigned various locations in Delhi . We were allotted Faridabad. The field visits took place for two consecutive days to two different gated communities. The objective was to observe and note ageing in place. The group visited a senior citizen home care facility in old Faridabad called The Golden Estate, developed by builder and architect entrepreneur group and is a Private Ltd. Company. The project manager, Group Captain Mr. Ahuja, an ex-serviceman from the armed forces, patiently explained the project from its conception. The project is operational since 2013 and boasts of about 50 plus residents from the age group of mid 50s to late 80s. He emphasized that the administration ensures that the resident finds the facility as a 'home away from home' and stressed that it caters to the economically sound families which is also reflected in the charges which start from 50,000 INR per month. The project is equipped with surveillance cameras, WIFI enabled, medical emergency facilities, 24-hour security, laundry services, mess, a gym, library etc. The necessary facilities like hospitals, markets etc. are within 1 km of this facility. The diet plan of the week is prefixed, and specific dietary requirements are catered as cooking for residents is prohibited. The residents are free to visit/travel outside and their visitors are welcome, they can use the guest house facility to stay with prior intimation. There are many activities arranged though out the week to ensure active participation by the elderly. We spent over 2 hours at the location and did a 'walk along interview' with Ms. Suchismita who explained the day to day working of the facility which culminated with some very short interviews with residents.

On analyzing the field visits of the Golden estate, we noted a structural transformation of family's construct. Due to the rise of individualism and need of independence in old age which each resident claimed was necessary especially due to the rising number of nuclear families and space problems which has translated into this new kind of silver tsunami. The social and cultural construct of ageing is traversed and living securely and independently in old age is given importance. It was noted that the facility provided them a projected independence which many seeked, but we also came across some residents who were

subjected to this facility out of loss of alternative. It's also interesting to note that Faridabad was recently deemed with a smart city status and hence this facility adds value to it.

On the second day, our field visit was at Ashok Enclave, a gated community in new Faridabad. This community is not a strictly senior residents' colony and encompasses families of low-income groups. As a part of the field visit, we went to the community parks and an ISKON temple (inside the gated community). The park was inconspicuous of the senior group's presence considering it was evening but the temple was frequented by them. Further along the interviews, we spoke to people from the administration to the devotees ranging from 50 to 75 years who visited the temple. On analyzing the work of day two, we noticed that religious organizations work as community organizations for socializing and bonding. Majority of the aged demographic visited the temple for some social interaction and to pass away time. The activities at the temple make them interdependent as many of the elderly do not have family support or are financially weak. However, it was interesting to note that the temple administration was all male and most of the visitors were females.

On ruminating the two field visits on basis of Mayer's readings, it's seen that in both the field visits, property rates and safety has been a common reason to shift to Faridabad. The navigation and struggle of the elderly through these urban and social changes was seen in both the field visits. The arrived veterans (Brosius 2011, 461) has made it a lucrative business in property developments. On one hand, the development of the senior living facility speaks greatly of infrastructure and development on the other side, it also brings out the harsh reality of the lessened to scarce family attention. The elderly in Ashok enclave also stated a similar problem of diminished family care but relied on the temple visits for social interactions. The senior living facility provided a place of security and prestige in the society as compared to the Ashok enclave elderlies, but both the sectors were keen to seek social interaction. The active aging and old age homes are not so native to India and still as a result of modernization and independent living are prevailing. The independent living of the elderly is beyond the social construct of how the elderly are visualized in India yet due to ageing needs and increase in nuclear families the growth of such facilities is seen. However, the economically poor elderly are not seen as the clients of this development. It's hard to ignore that both the sites are in Faridabad which is a few kilometers away from New Delhi and a cheaper location with respect to land prices and cost of living so it wouldn't be wrong to deem that this aging in the city is not actually in the city geographically, but by subjecting a certain age demographic outside the city and then providing inclusivity.

Culminating all these thoughts together the workshop concluded with comprehensive presentations by all the groups and participants connecting the on-filed experiences with theoretical ideas, followed by a closing note by the organizers.

References:

1. Brosius, Christiane 2011. "Middle Class." In India Today. An Encyclopedia of Life in the Republic, edited by Arnold P. Kaminsky and Roger D. Long, 459-464. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO.
2. Fischer, Michael M.J 2018. "Creative Ageing Cities: Place Design with Older People in Asian Cities: Foreward" In Creative ageing cities. Place design with older people in Asian cities, edited by Keng Hua Chong and Mihye Cho. Andover: Routledge Ltd.

3. Mayer, Annika. 2019 (in press). "Gateways of Ageing: Middle-class Senior Citizens in the National Capital Region of Delhi." In *Caring for Old Age. South Asian Approaches to Ageing*, edited by Christiane Brosius and Roberta Mandoki. HeiUP: Heidelberg.