



Urban Planning and Development at Crossroads

Edited by MCK Swamy, B. Bhaskara Rao & V. M. Hegde and published by Books for Change, Bangalore

Over the years, the quality of life in cities all over India has deteriorated. Urban India is faced with master plan violations, congestions, cramming of residential layouts in unauthorized and unplanned areas, and crumbling or inadequate infrastructure delivery systems, resulting in degradation of sanitary and environmental conditions. The stark reality is that the development authority and para-statal agency model adopted in the country for master plan preparation, implementation and enforcement have failed to achieve their objectives. Serious doubts are now being raised in various quarters about the efficacy of the current town planning and urban governance practices. Many see these practices themselves as the main culprit responsible for the current urban crisis, and feel that our town planning process is at the crossroads. With a view to deliberating this important issue, a group of veteran development professionals, assembled by the Centre for Symbiosis of Technology, Environment & Management (STEM), early last year, brought out a White Paper entitled *Town Planning at Crossroads: Crisis in Urban Development and Governance?*. This document was an attempt at thinking aloud on the subject and providing an agenda for action to build sustainable cities and improve the environmental and living conditions in urban India. Later, the White Paper was adopted as the theme paper for a **South Meet on Town Planning**, jointly organized by STEM, Bangalore Metropolitan Region Development Authority (BMRDA), Karnataka Urban Infrastructure Development & Finance Corporation (KUIDFC), Karnataka State Town Planning Board (KSTPB) & Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) at Bangalore, on September 22, 2007. ***Urban Planning and Development at Crossroads*** draws mainly on this theme paper and the issues and recommendations that came up during the Meet.