

"Emerging urban planning solutions for COVID-19", ITPI, Haryana Regional Chapter,

Schedule Date: 30 May 2020 (Saturday)

Schedule Time: 11:00 AM

Webinar on "Emerging urban planning solutions for COVID-19", ITPI, Haryana Regional Chapter, it was an inclusive session, out of all regional chapters across country, Haryana was the first one to initiate the discourse, thanks to Shri. Diwakar Meshram, ITPI president for constant support along with him, various experts and students from institutions. The Webinar had eminent experts in the field of Urban & regional planning. The discourse started with welcome address by ITPI HRC chairperson Sh. Sudhir Chauhan & Mr. Vibhore Bakshi, young academician from SPA Bhopal. The list of eminent experts included Sh. S.D. Saini, Former Vice President ITPI, Sh. R. Srinivas, Senior Town Planner & Mr. Niranjan Setty, City Manager, UN-Habitat. All the panellists discussed about the changing urban planning paradigms as far as pandemic is concerned.

The webinar, highlighted the emerging solutions that can be undertaken to solve the issues associated with migration, creating recreational spaces, real time data monitoring and other tools. The experts from multiple disciplines are enthusiastically studying the impact of COVID-19 globally with speculations about future, which cities have witnessed at present in terms of physical and social crisis due to such a pandemic. The historic chronology of pandemics in Europe, US and Asia has sown the seeds for positive and negative externalities. The pandemic has significantly altered urban life, number of people moving around have dropped to unprecedented low levels, the fate of millions of entrepreneurs is up in air.

The discourse focussed on the plethora of facets of urban planning envisaging how adversities due to COVID-19 could be reduced up to certain extent. It alludes on preparedness and post pandemic challenges for policy makers, urban planners and government in terms of density, housing, public spaces, green and blue spaces, resilience and creation of data sets and sharing of real time information to communities so as to avoid panic during pandemic furthermore it addressed the growing concerns for health and mobility by inculcating the sustainable development goals of good health and wellbeing, Industry innovation and Infrastructure and Sustainable cities and communities. The panellist addressed on the time to re-think and re-invent measures for promoting active transportation for all the emerging cities and facilitate adequate infrastructure in terms of network accessibility.

More than 200 participants have registered for the discourse, it was good to see the participants from diverse background. The session was participatory and inclusive in terms of questions asked from the experts. It was a fruitful session indeed. At last, thanks to Institute of Town Planners, India for initiating knowledge exchange program.

Webinar on Artificial Intelligence & Urban Planning ITPI, Haryana Regional Chapter.

Schedule Date: 25 July 2020 (Saturday)

Schedule Time: 11:00 AM

The Webinar focused on the need and research question of “ would robots take over and do urban planning for us”? Well, they might and might not, it's still very early to say. The difficulty of automating tasks in urban planning is the reason we planners currently do not feel the heat of being overtaken by our machine overlords. But can we dedicate super complex tasks to machines and take responsibility for decisions and administration for city management? Can Artificial Intelligence be utilized as a friend in crunching large datasets and values to provide numerical scales that we can use to determine future action? The chief guest for the occasion was Dr. D. S. Meshram, President, ITPI. The discourse started with welcome address by ITPI HRC chairperson Sh. Sudhir Chauhan & Mr. Vibhore Bakshi, young academician from SPA Bhopal. The eminent speaker for the discourse was Dr. Deepank Verma. He is an AI Expert from IIT-Bombay. He further works on deep learning applications specific to computer vision, audio analysis, and remote sensing. His research interests include Data mining, Machine Learning, Remote Sensing, Human perception, and Urban Design. He wishes to create tools for smart urban planning and development.

The webinar highlighted the evaluation of what people perceive about their surroundings is essential in studies related to urban design and planning, mental and physical health, individual well-being, and quality of life. Everyday urban surroundings are a blend of visual, auditory, and olfactory features. People involuntarily attach abstract definitions, meanings, and preferential rankings to the specific spaces in such environments. These rankings influence a person to favor the spaces which are more captivating and alluring. The assessment of individuals' thoughts and emotions regarding urban areas forms a critical part of urban perception research. However, with the current state of urban planning and development practices, such individual assessments on qualities of surroundings usually go unnoticed. Framing methodologies to capture and represent individual perceptions would require scientific rigor in sensory data collection and analysis.

In recent years, advancements in technology, mainly in the form of data analytics, have extended the viability and generalizability of traditional research methodology in the urban perception domain. However, fresh perspectives are required to integrate large-scale data capturing, analysis, and computation, along with well-established research practices. The inclusion of Machine Learning (ML) techniques has started unlocking new possibilities in mapping perceptions at large spatial extents. The use of such technologies can aid decision-makers and urban planners to create a lively, safe, and healthy environment.

In the webinar we discussed about:

1. Introduction to Human perception of urban surroundings as a topic and why it is interesting.
2. Introduction to Deep Learning models that can aid such studies.
 - a. Convolutional Neural Network models for Object Detection, Semantic Segmentation, and Image Classification.
 - b. Sound Classification from Recurrent Neural Networks.
 - c. Combining these models to gather details we need for the abovementioned study.
3. How Urban Planning and Artificial Intelligence (AI) go hand in hand and why AI is the need of the hour.

This was the second successful webinar of ITPI HRC, and there was an immense registration of more than 400 participants across the country. It was good to see the participants from diverse background. The session was participatory and inclusive in terms of questions asked from the experts. It was a fruitful session indeed. At last, thanks to Institute of Town Planners, India for initiating knowledge exchange program.