



Analysis of Co-living housing

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Abstract

With growing urbanization and migrant population, the demand for an affordable rental housing is increased drastically. Renting an apartment or an individual house is always not a favorable solution for the migrant population, as it majorly consists of young people either looking for a job or in the beginning of their career trying to settle down, and students who came down to fulfill their educational needs. Both these segments of people always feel the burden of higher rents and security deposits in a traditional rental housing facility. So, their next automatic choice would be getting into PGs, which are, to an extent, can be considered as an affordable solution but not without compromising on the quality of living condition. In these circumstance Co-living could be the game changer, since it appears to be tailor made to fill the requirements of the migrant population. Co-living offers privacy of a traditional rental house at the rental price of a PG and to go with the amenities of a high-end apartment. Co-living proves to be an affordable and a flexible option because, there is only a minimum-security deposit (up to 3 months rental amount) and no minimum rental period meaning, the user can vacate the place in few days' notice. The main objective of this review paper is to provide better conclusion and inferences by analyzing various aspects like evolution, design aspects and impacts of Co-living through literature study.

Keywords: Affordable, Rental housing, Migrant population

Introduction

What is Co-living?

Co-living is a kind of arrangement where the facilities are divided in to private and shared spaces. Generally, the bedroom with attached toilet and in some cases living room and kitchenette will be part of private space, which will be rented out to an individual or a family or a group of people. The shared spaces will consist of common kitchen, laundry, dining room, library, indoor games etc. (depends on the available amenities). The rent will be collected on the basis on private space and the user can enjoy the available shared amenities. (Usually, the rent will be inclusive of the maintenance charges of shared amenities, but it will be very minimal, because it is being shared by many people)

Why Co-living?

Co-living is not only an affordable and flexible option for the migrant population, but also it offers good and hygienic living condition. The essential amenities like working pods, laundry and recreational area are an added advantage. In terms of safety and security aspects, Co-living spaces offers all the mandatory surveillance facilities. It also meets the needs of an aspirant younger generation with modern lifestyle. Most importantly, as all the Co-living spaces are stationed strategically near the industrial and educational hubs, the user could save the day-to-day commute cost and time by just selecting the appropriate Co-living facility.

Literature review

Evolution

Vestbro D.U. & Horelli L. (2012) have tracked the evolution of communal living in the form of Co-housing with the perception of gender equality. The authors discussed about the various early models starting from Utopian ideas followed in 16th century and the material feminist ideas evolved around 19th century in the US and Europe with various driving forces. Most of the early models centered around the

Aspects Models	Driving forces	Models of cohousing & gender	Housing solutions & design	Domestic work, impact on the labour market	Lessons for the future; obstacles & stepping stones
Utopists, 19 th century USA & Europe	Visions of a harmonious and just society, workers to own the means of production.	Women to work in production but the division of tasks according to gender.	Production and reproduction spatially integrated out of cities; influence on modernist ideas.	Collective organization of meals, partly for women's participation in production.	Inflexible solutions, but had positive influence on later cohousing ideas.
Material feminists, late 19 th & early 20 th century	Econ. Independence of women through socialized domestic work (coop. housekeeping)	Production coops in the neighbourhood liberating women, (but work not done by men).	Neighbourhoods with kitchen-less houses, public kitchens & laundry, dinner clubs, etc.	No demand for equal distribution of domestic work with men. Gender & class conflicts not solved.	Interesting solutions in neighbourhoods. Conflicts with patriarchal society and corporate society.
Central kitchen houses, 1904-1922	To solve the servant problem of the middle classes; "collectivization of the maid".	No ideas of equality, an aid to housewives, rationalization of food production.	Bourgeois apartments without private kitchens, with food lifts + a central kitchen.	Reduction of domestic work; house wives not expected to work in production.	Possible to centralise food production, otherwise few lessons for the future.
Cohouses with employed staff, 1935-1976	The machine age transferred to housing. Well-educated women wanted to combine family with a career.	Socialisation of maids allowing women to participate in labour force. Low valuation of house work.	Apartments with small kitchens, central kitchen and other services.	Enhanced female participation in the labour market. Domestic work not done by men.	Paid services became too expensive. Strong resistance from the patriarchal society.
New Everyday life & the Swedish self-work model.	Integration of work & private life through shared domestic work by men and women in housing.	The model made domestic work visible and thus sharable with men. Neighbourhoods with local production, care, culture.	Combination of bungalows and apartments with the community house and other shared spaces.	Equal distribution of domestic work a prerequisite for work/life balance.	The most successful model today, has expanded the concrete utopia into the neighbourhood.
Today and the future	A need to overcome isolation, a demand for sustainable lifestyles.	Reduction of house work and care of children & elderly still issues that affect inequality in labour market.	Models needed at the neighbourhood level, also ones that are accessible to all classes.	Equal distribution of domestic work, but the educational & labour markets remain segregated by gender.	Cohousing ideas expand, but the conservative construction sector is slow to respond. Hope in the new movement.

Table 1: Aspects of communal living models from Renaissance utopians till today.

Different design elements and ideas like, collective organization of meals, kitchen-less houses with public kitchen and laundry, apartments with food lifts and central kitchen were used at different point of time, based on the requirements. The present-day model, which believed to be originated in the Scandinavian countries around 1970.

The authors concluded that, the contribution of communal living to the total housing stock is very negligible, even in the Scandinavian region (1%) where the concept is comparatively famous. Also, women are more open to live in a community than men. But the authors did not discuss about the measures that can be adopted to promote the way of community living among men.

Spatial Planning and Design Consideration

Lidewij Tummers (2015) in her collaborative research found that different planning contexts were adopted in different countries, but the purpose remains constant. User's participation in planning process makes it more accountable. Tummers also states that contextual planning criteria is important to create a positive impact in the society. Interaction within neighborhood is also the reflection of the planning process. It is understood that proper analysis must be done on local policies before finalizing the project location.

Djordje Alfirevic & Sanja Simonovic Alfirevic (2020) in their research analyzed the role of territoriality in spatial organization of co-living housing which influences the unit typology. User's willingness to share the space determines the level of tolerance, which is one of the important parameters that decides the success of the co-living community. Further in their research they discussed about the zoning with various examples and merits & demerits of each typology. Also, by analyzing various examples they found out that due to lack of proper zoning either user's privacy is lost, or their comfort is compromised which affects the living condition. Alfirevic also discussed about the relation between common and private spaces which not only promotes social interaction but also determines the character of each co-living community.

M NF Sekardini et al (2021) researched about co-living for millennial generation (people born between 1980 and 2000) using Environment Behavior Study approach. The article states that millennials prefer to live in the collaborative environment as it is affordable and efficient in all ways, but they want their privacy to be secured. So, the space categorization becomes more critical to draw the boundary. According to Sekardini's research, bedroom and bathroom comes under primary zone with 100% privacy. Dining area, kitchen and laundry comes under secondary zone, which the users willing to share with each other. The research article further discusses about the supporting facilities, which states that users prefer to have co-working space, open gardens, and sports facilities within the co-living community. The author concluded that convenience and privacy are the two main parameters to be considered while designing for millennials.

Impacts

Heidi M. Berggren (2016) in her research stated that members of voluntary civic association like co-housing governing body or communal living association, requires certain skills to run it successfully. The skills required are, to conduct periodical meetings and events to maintain the community. In periodical meetings, the expense details, upcoming events, work related to maintenance etc. are discussed and

volunteer list are formed. Events like, weekly meals, festival celebration, skill sharing sessions are also conducted to improve the bonding between the occupants. According to Berggren, the experience and skills that are developed by conducting all these events encourages the volunteers to participate in the politics with confidence. Thus, a bit of impact has been created in the political arena.

Mathew Daly (2017) in his research discussed about the environmental impact created by co-housing communities by doing systematic review of quantitative studies. The author was exploring the level of sustainability achieved at community level. He had stated that cohesive community often tends to leave minimum impact on environment. In his research, he had used primary and secondary indicators namely, ecological footprint and carbon footprint respectively to assess the environmental impact. Users' day-to-day chores and lifestyle directly contributing to the environmental impact. Often the communities which are cautious about using eco-friendly and locally available construction materials, adopting efficient planning and everyday commute plans are proved to be successful in terms of achieving less environmental impact. Furthermore Daly, in his research found that communal meals, common kitchen gardens are contributing towards low carbon footprint. The author concluded that more research on communities to be done as the current available data are too minimal, but according to the arrived result with available data, it has been found the communities are heading towards the right direction in contributing towards a healthy environment.

Laura Oliveras (2020) researched about the impacts of co-housing model on people's health and well-being by literature review using scoping review method. It has been mentioned in the article that access to quality housing is one of the deciding factors of people's health and well-being. Also, living in a community helps in dealing with loneliness as it offers mutual support and sense of togetherness especially for elderly people. In the research, physical & mental health, quality of life & well-being is analyzed. Often, quality of life is the product of one's lifestyle than the physical environment, having said that, living in secured environment gives satisfaction and sense of security. Furthermore, the author added, social networking among the residence in co-housing is more evident which increases the chances of support in terms of domestic help, emotional and recreational needs. People living in lack of said support often complaining loneliness and poor mental health. The author concluded that more research is required in this topic to fill the gaps that's been identified.

Methodology

Evolution of communal living has done through analysis of various literature. Whereas, for spatial planning and design consideration collaborative research, comparative analysis and environmental behavior studies have been done. To analyze various impacts created by community living, participatory survey and analysis existing data has been done.

Discussion

The study about evolution of communal living gives an insight about the various factors that's been influential all through the years. Sharing has been the main criteria for communal living, the parameters could be space, resources, or work. Only the ratio among these parameters have varied contextually and periodically. The significance of participation was found to be dominant to achieve seamless community. Even though sharing has been profound in community living, sense of territory and privacy are also very important to create a successful community. Therefore, care must be taken while doing spatial planning and zoning. Lack proper zoning results in either privacy breach or less usage of amenities provided. Strategical placement of community is important to be successful. Users prefer to be in a community which closer to all the possible infrastructure.

The impact created in politics due to participation in civic societies like communal association to run and manage various events is eminent in developed countries. People who are part of the volunteer group develops an interest and skills for future participation in politics. In terms of environmental impact, the communal living has proven to be efficient and leaves comparatively little impact on the environment. The sharing of resources, land and food proves to be helpful towards protecting the environment. Also, meticulous planning and organization helps the community more sustainable and eco-friendlier. Proper usage of locally available construction materials, locally grown vegetable and crops etc. makes the community less impact towards the environment. Living in a community also helps to improve people's health and well-being. The sense belonging and security that community offers has been of an immense help for the elderly people to fight the loneliness. The emotional support and social interaction are equally important to deal with mental illness. Since, living in a community is affordable, the access to quality housing itself makes a world of good to the people who are insecure and in need to support.

Conclusion

Co-living or communal living is one of the oldest concepts that's been evolved through the time. Well planned community offers more to the users as it is affordable, flexible, and more secure. The sharing of resources makes it more affordable, participatory programme makes it more flexible and closed community makes it more secure. The ratio of private space and shared space and location determines the cost of living in a community. Proper analysis and market study is critical before the commencement of the project. The developer must know the targeted people and their potential in hiring the units inside the community. These factors will determine the feasibility of the project. The successful community will not only profitable to the developer but also to the users in many ways.

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