

Urban Ecology & Resilience: a case of Soaking City Chennai		
An initiative of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) & AARDE Foundation		
<i>Multidisciplinary & Pro-Bono Event</i>		
<p><i>The Urban Thinkers Campus model is an initiative of UN-Habitat's World Urban Campaign (WUC), conceived as a space for critical exchange between all stakeholders and partners that aim to promote sustainable urbanization. It is also envisaged as a platform to advocate enlightened planning and design, community engagement, good urban governance and management of our cities as advocated in 'The City We Need' and propose urban solutions in addressing urbanization challenges to urban futures. http://www.worldurbancampaign.org/urban-thinkers-campus</i></p>		
A Case of Soaking City - Chennai^A:		
<p>The Tamil Nadu government has officially notified that the Chennai Metropolitan Area will increase from its current size of 1,189 sq.km to 8,878 sq.km, making it the largest city region in the country. The newly expanded area will include Kancheepuram, Thiruvallur Districts, and part of Vellore region. The pan-India pattern of expanding cities shows that a mere increase in the size of the urban region provides no guarantee for better planning or improvement in the quality of life of its residents. The biggest challenge confronting the proposed expansion — will be in the environmental sector. Incorporating vast peripheral areas without adequate planning will lead to loss of environmental assets such as water-bodies that are essential for water management and prevention of urban floods. Without a pre-planned expansion agenda, the addition of 1,700 villages, which otherwise provides the opportunity to nurture urban agricultural practices, could pave the way for mindless urbanisation.</p> <p>Chennai has a very unique ecological system, but least researched upon in detail. The distinctive ecological features of Chennai are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) It is <u>the only metropolitan region which depends on the North East Monsoon</u>. In India, Tamilnadu and coastal Andhra Pradesh are the regions that fully depend on the North East Monsoon. N.E Monsoon is the most devastating of all due to its intense and extreme wind forces. 2) Chennai Metropolitan region (and Coastal Tamilnadu) is the <u>only metro region in India to fall under the classification of Tropical DRY Evergreen Region/Forest</u>. 3) Chennai and Coastal Tamilnadu are <u>Wet-land based Eco Systems</u>. Unlike Western Ghats in SW Coast of India, South-East Coast of India relies solely on its Wetlands to attract rain bearing clouds. 4) Chennai has three important wetland (lagoons) and many small ponds/lakes as part of the Wet-Land Ecological System namely the <u>Pulicat-Lagoon</u> in the North, <u>Pallikaranai Wetland</u> in the middle, and <u>Kaliveli-Wetland-Complex</u> in the South. <p>Looking back to our past we realize that cities across the world have been carved out, both technologically and legally, from the amphibious territories that we called swamp, fens, bogs and marshes. Today these watery spaces threaten to claim back our cities. These amphibious territories are warning us that cities are spaces where we have cultivated a dry culture of living, building and design by initially draining the swamps to create habitable lands for people. The Colonials from the Temperate climatic region had brought non-contextual planning and design methods to our region, ignoring local, tropical vernacular principles. This lack of vernacular-thinking in our system is overtaking our cities and towns during occurrences of floods or other natural calamities every year.</p>		
August-16/2018 @ Raman Auditorium, AC-Tech Campus, Anna University, Chennai		
09.30AM	Chief Guest: Thiru. Rajesh B Lakhoni, CMDA Member Secretary Guest of Honour: Dr. Raneer Vadamuthu*, Professor & Dean, School of Architecture and Planning, Anna University Chennai	
10.30AM	Introduction to 'Soaking City'	Xavier Benedict MIDAS Architecture College Founder Trustee, AARDE Foundation
11.00AM	Building Ecological knowledge for the regeneration of cultural landscapes of South Asia	Prof. Nalini Thakur, Retd School of Planning & Architecture New Delhi
12.00PM	Chennai City Master Plan	CMDA Chief Planner
02.00PM	Trees are the Earth's endless effort to speak to the Listening Heaven (participating college presentation)	Prof.Ar.Parisutha Rajan, Principal, Prime College of Architecture and Planning, Nagapattinam
02.15PM	<i>Chennai City - An Area (participating college presentation)</i>	Dr. MGR University Students Presentation
02.30PM	Urban Ecology	Dr. Karen Coelho Madras Institute of Development Studies Chennai
03.30PM	For Earth's Sake	Dr. Sultan A Ismail, Director Ecoscience Research Foundation Chennai
04.30PM	தூழலியல்- தமிழ் இலக்கியத்தின் வழியே ஒரு பார்வை	J Rajagopalan, Vishnupuram Literary Circle

August-17/2018 @ Raman Auditorium, AC-Tech Campus, Anna University, Chennai		
09.00AM	<i>Participating College Presentation</i>	MIDAS Architecture College*
09.30AM	சுற்றுச்சூழல் விழிப்பில் தமிழ் பயன்பாடு	S Theodore Baskaran Wildlife Conservationist & Film Historian Bengaluru
10.30AM	Chennai Weather	Pradeep John Tamilnadu Weatherman (Facebook)
11.30AM	International Case Studies	Kees de Vries Arcadis - Netherlands, Senior Consultant Hydrology & Integrated Water Management
12.15PM	International Case Studies	Dr Martina Girvan Arcadis - London, Technical Director Ecology & Arboriculture, & the Global Natural Capital
01.30PM	Participating College Students presentation for 15 Minutes	
02.00PM	Adapting to Climate Change using Technoogy	Dr. Jinu Louishidha Kitchley J HoD, Department of Architecture Thiagarajar College of Engineering, Madurai
03.00PM	<i>Evolution of Chennai City Plan</i>	*Urban Planner
04.00PM	<i>Sea Rise & Chennai City</i>	*Waiting for Confirmation (IIT-M)
04.30PM	<i>Flood 2015</i>	*Sidharth
Lecture/Discussions will be in English or தமிழ் (Tamil)		
All are Welcome		
August-18/2018 @ Venue to be confirmed		
09.30AM to 08.00PM	Exhibition of Urban Design Studio / Participants' Sheets @ <i>Public Place</i>	

Workshop Structure:

This WUC-UTC is being organised for the first time in Chennai as a Workshop. This event will bring together academicians, government agencies(CMDA), professionals, and students together to share their experience and knowledge. The workshop is structured in two sessions. The first two days will have lectures and presentations on various topics related to urbanization, planning and architecture, resilience, earth science, and climatology. The last day will have presentations by the participants on their works and ideas as an open public review and exhibition.

The Schools of Architecture are invited to participate. Incorporating Urban Ecology in the IX Semester in the UG or PG Degree Urban Design studio studies should be made mandatory in these schools to raise awareness of its importance. This workshop will be extremely beneficial to their study on this subject with valuable inputs from experts in the field. The participating colleges are invited to present a 'Talk' relevant to the workshop topic for 15 minutes.

Participants:

All are Welcome!

- 1) Final Year UG, and Post-Graduate Students
- 2) Ecologists, Journalists, Economists, Urban Enthusiasts, etc.

Outcomes:

- 1) Report with Design Details will be submitted to UN-H, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, and CMDA.
- 2) Exhibition of Design Drawings developed by the workshop participants.

Requirement:

We are requesting every participating college to incorporate Urban Ecological Study (understanding water bodies, and any vernacular systems) component in their Urban-Design studio project in UG / PG so that the students can participate in the workshop with the basic data of their chosen area within Greater Chennai Metropolitan City limit.

What is Urban Ecology?^

Urban Ecology is a field that emerged in the 1970s and has become increasingly active over the last 25 years. Urban ecology is the study of ecosystems that include humans living in cities and urbanising landscapes. It investigates ecosystem services which are closely linked to patterns of urban development. As its name suggests, the discipline investigates the urban-environment and all its inhabitants as an ecological system. Urban ecology is an interdisciplinary field that supports societies' attempts to become more sustainable. It has deep roots in many disciplines including geography, sociology, urban design & planning, engineering, economics, anthropology, climatology, public health, and ecology.

A single generation from today, by 2030, will cause the population of the world's cities to grow by 2 billion more people. At present, about half the humans on earth live in urban areas. In 2030, according to The CIA World Factbook, 60 percent, or almost two-thirds of the population will live in cities. In short, the entire planet is becoming more urbanized, a phenomenon which is already having a profound effect on the natural systems that maintain breathable air, drinkable water, and seasonal climatic conditions.

What is Resilience?

According to a popular dictionary, resilience is an ability to recover from or adjust easily to change. The change could have occurred due to lack of ignorance of vernacular principles in planning and design. Globally, 80 percent of the largest cities are vulnerable to severe impacts from earthquakes, 60 per cent are at risk from storm surges and tsunamis, and all face new impacts caused by climate change. Resilience refers to the ability of human settlements to withstand and to recover quickly from any plausible hazards.

Organisation In-Charge:

Prof. Xavier Benedict (9884013409),
Academician & Practising Architecture
 Founder Trustee - AARDE Foundation
 Founder of m/s Anameka Architects and Designers, Chennai

AARDE Foundation:

Art and Architecture Research Development & Education (AARDE) Foundation is a not-for-profit registered Trust located in Chennai (Registration #1243/5-2007). We are an Associate-Partner of United Nation Habitat under World Urban Campaign, since 2011. The organisation is actively involved in the promotion and conservation of Pulicat-Lagoon. The organisation is exempted from Taxes under 80G & 12A sections of Income Tax Act of India. The Trust has been empowering more than 120 fisherwomen through traditional palm-leaf craft. It maintains the Pulicat-Museum at Pazhaverkadu and works closely with the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, Government of India, for protection of wetlands. www.aarde.in

^taken from many sources, including www

Supported by M/s Anameka Architects and Designers, Chennai