

Contemporary Research in Urban Planning



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CHAPTER 7

THEORY AND RESEARCH IN URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING: EVOLVING NATURE AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

Mohammad Abdul Mohit

INTRODUCTION

Professional streams in the Built Environment discipline are – Urban / Regional Planners (URP); Architects (AR); Landscape Architects (LA); Quantity Surveyors (QS); Building Engineers (BE). Whereas URP deals with the overall spatial layout of human activities, AR focuses on the detail design of individual element of human activity, such as a building. Building Engineering concentrates on the technical, service and engineering aspects of buildings. LA is concerned with the layout design of surrounding environment of building sites, whilst QS deals with the costing and procurement processes and systems of construction.

The main focus of this chapter is to highlight the changing research perspective in urban and regional planning and as such the following objectives have been set which constitute the scope of the study:

- a) Investigate into the development of planning theories.
- b) Identify the changing perspective of research / research issue.
- c) Relate the management of research to the changing perspective of planning.
- d) Anticipate future directions in planning research.

NATURE OF PLANNING THEORIES

Built environment theories, particularly pertaining to town and country planning, have two elements – (1) Substantive elements are concerned with the subject matter of planning; and (2) Procedural elements deal with the methodological approaches. In fact, in every planning theory both the elements are present, however, which element is dominant is a controversy, but it may vary from one sub-field to another sub-field. Over the years, the philosophy of planning has undergone several paradigm shifts – from city functional to city beautiful movement. from place prosperity to people's prosperity followed by environmental and sustainable development concerns. Recently, the philosophy of the Islamic *Tawhidic* approach has been applied to the formulation of a total planning doctrine (JPBD, 2001; Ismawi Zen, 2002).