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Gated Community Living: A study of contemporary residential development approach in Indian Cities

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ABSTRACT

Gated communities are growing in most of the cities in India. This phenomenon was one of the most popular patterns of growth worldwide and gained admiration in the last half of the 20th century in India. It was initially a response in to the safety, security, privileges and class need of Indian homes that are not resident. Gated communities with a range of scale and styles are built that differ across states, city centers and neighborhoods. To date, hundreds of families across Indian cities choose to live in the gated communities over ungated communities and neighborhoods.

This paper focuses on Indian residents' perception on a gated community. It aims to explore the factors of residents' preference for stay in gated communities in Indian cities identifying the attributes for their choice of selection. The study asserts that each resident chooses to live in these communities for inculcating certain values, such as community significance, prestige, lifestyle, or security. It adopts an empirical and qualitative analysis approach by questionnaires. The results show that 'life style' is the key value correlated with residents' preferences to live in communities of India, in addition to the preference of open spaces that can be accomplished by its spatial characters such as scale, shape, visibility, accessibility, architectural and landscape features.

1. Introduction

"People generally spend considerable time at home, a common place of social interaction, and for most people considerable health and emotional engagement. Residential preferences also have a significant effect on the well-being and quality of life."

Apparently, the option of housing isn't always an easy decision to make, as people invest their hard-earned money into it. It is confined with establishing the right location, proximity to amenities, schools, offices etc. It also includes informal social life, health, welfare, social way of living, work and education.

In India, the predominant trend has been to live in independent residential neighborhoods which has changed with time and lifestyle requirements for a secured community living. The gated community refers to the site which is bounded or walled in and around the same socio-economic context, is divided into different classes, with special way of life. The most common characteristic of Gated Communities, is that it is limited to a particular group of people and prevent persons from freely entering or leaving without a membership or access authorization. The above have generated many social problems at micro and macro levels for the societies.

There is an increasing number of contiguous gated communities worldwide due its popularity and advantages they provide. Many researchers from diverse backgrounds analyzed studies and preferences of housing choice and discussed place selection, socio-cultural conditions, economic or sociological approach or demographic approach. However, these studies are only part of the neighborhood's function of house components.

Hapsariniy et al. examined preferential housing conditions for residents in urban and suburban locations by comparing preferences and highlighted the variations between preferences for housing in towns, cities and suburbs. Most studies are on the similarities between residents and floating populations with few addressed with their physical characteristics and their impact on decisions.

In the face of rising urbanization challenges, India is experiencing increased home demand in advanced residential communities. The overcrowded centers are getting worse in terms of quality of life. Many of India 's major cities have undergone a high degree of congestion in town centers, and hence private neighborhoods are a popular choice in the outskirts. Gated communities offer the type of protection and the lifestyles that urban residents prefer but cannot achieve, in the middle or even on the fringes of the unfolding urban chaos, in non-gated residential projects. Gated communities remove the filth and disorder in urban life and provide every essential need for modern living, including food and shopping, children's and medical centers and entertainment. Gated communities provide their residents with open spaces, such as parks, jogging paths, children's play areas and more. Such features of open spaces are much greater than just aesthetic, as they provide opportunities for social interaction, fresh air and help gain overall well-being.

This study aims to determine the factors that influence the choice of people (Case of Gated Community at Hyderabad, India) and to link them with the unique characteristics of gated community. To document factors that influence resident satisfaction, we have used a comparative analysis for previous similar works. These factors are then assessed using an online survey of residents to find out why some of them prefer gated communities to non-gated communities.

This work incorporates three key components to cover the objective:

1. The theoretical component: data is gathered through literature review which provides an overview of confined populations around the world, their perspectives and classifications. It also outlines the factors that influence Community living and the attractive features of gated communities worldwide.
2. The application section: begins with observation and tracking of gated communities in India with Hyderabad as a case selected, then qualitative exploration of the elements associated with the preference towards these communities is done by means of an online survey.
3. The study finds the applicability of above-mentioned finding using results of descriptive analysis of the online survey conducted among residents of gated community at Hyderabad. Finally, a set of inferences for the preference of gated communities and the need of Open spaces with design guidelines and general conclusion to the analysis has been summarized.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Gated communities: Gated communities are residential houses or building blocks, with restricted access usually rendering private spaces public. Access is controlled by wall or fence barriers built around the area with guarded entrances. These are distinguished from stand-alone apartment or condominium buildings with security systems or security guard. There, a security guard only monitors public access to a built environment, to a lobby or corridors. Gated communities prohibit public access to vehicular movement, walking paths, green areas, open space, and play areas, all amenities that would have been free and available to all local residents in earlier times. Gated communities, also known as "gated enclaves," have been rapidly converted into a major housing phenomenon in both the developed and the developing countries, based on distinct, self-contained, carefully designed identities as well as their size and diversity. While gated communities appear similar at first glance, history, styles and intentions differ greatly from country to region. Studies offer a detailed analysis of the cultural elements including social and behavioral diversity of closed communities. Blakely and Snyder describe among the most widely accepted classifications of gated communities, which has established a functional typology by reviewing gated communities in the US. This category describes three types of gated communities mentioned below:

Lifestyle communities, including retiring villages, golf communities and newer suburban towns, concentrate on activities of recreation with entertainment facilities, shared facilities and service delivery.

Prestige communities, act as identity perception and wealth measures, concentrating on group exclusivity that encompasses wealthy and popular communities, top rated communities, and middle-class executive communities. The *security communities* represent fear of strangers and fear of crimes and criminals, not developers but their people. Each category includes the places, neighborhoods and barricades. The gates were designed not by developers but by locals. Not the only one, but every researcher has established his own typology that takes account of the causes, effects and important implications of gated communities.

Considerations of neighborhood preference: Contrary to its role as the major decision-making factor for neighborhoods, affordability and its location are the highlighting characteristics. People chose to live in a healthy community in a neighborhood and bring up their children in a healthier climate. Therefore, many participants stated unequivocally that the environment would affect the behavior, beliefs, values, quality of life and opportunities of its inhabitants, as well as its effect on peoples' happiness. Researchers investigated the factors affecting resident preferences, amongst them Clark and others, concentrated on the social and economic status of the neighborhood and its positioning in the context of housing policy. Almatarneh studied marketing and social consequences in the decision-making phase of people. However, Bergstro et al studied the relationship between resident features and preferred areas that led to this selection. Finally, they present a structured method that residents use to select their place. Nonetheless, Hapsariniaty et al. presented an overview of the factors that could influence the choice of context among residents.

Three factors are:

Demographic-sex, age, marital status, family members, professional period, employment, ethnicity and religion. **Socio-economic**-home income and lifestyle.

Location-place, housing and conditions in the community.

All these factors influence the preferences of residents, but Rana identified a very predominant factor in the marketing concepts and marketing that drive people's desires and decisions. Foreigners prefer gated communities in these countries, as their lives and traditions fit and prove. A gated community can show these factors, where each affects people differently. Denis, however, said the first generation of gated communities was not so popular, for example, because the same was developed for the middle class and the promoters concentrated on providing them with a good place to live, but struggled to attract people. Since it was not their main factor that focused on the middle class, the location and its link to public transport. As a result, higher-class citizens were attracted who had no impact on the location, replacing them with better privately-owned services. Yet marketing content from non-governmental groups leads people to a new lifestyle and a dysfunctional culture. This desire for people with this lifestyle to focus on the new wave of hidden firms. The marketing aspect This leads to the biggest challenge: the special features of gated communities that draw people.

Enticing attributes for gated communities: "It functions for everybody, not just for the richest," to give many people a sense they seek, just by placing the gates in the old neighborhood. The word "gated" is different for various people, some consider it exclusive, some consider it protection, but most consider the private sphere. The security of the values of homes is vital for property owners as those gates may block their economic condition, ensuring that property prices for property owners are more secure. Many reports believe that the safety factor in private community literature is the most crucial phenomenon, as Smets demonstrated.

Gated Communities in Indian Context: In India, these modern gated communities began during the 1990s with the return of Nonresident Indian, NRIs. They wanted to stay in India but in the US housing style. It was initially developed in metro cities such as Bangalore, the capital of IT firms. A person in these closed communities was regarded as a global and cosmopolitan member of a successful group of people. As such, several researchers have researched its influence. Despite the lack of empirical evidence, it argued that neighborhood cohesion and neighborhood satisfaction would satisfy neighbors' feelings of protection and relationship, mutual interest, belief, and norms.

The life style residential projects are built in Indian cities keeping in mind common community needs and desires. Some of the high cost/ high end project cater to non-resident Indians' market demand and are built as farm houses on out skirts on farm land. The types of prestige can be found on the periphery or in the city center. The high-end designer product with high-quality specifications serves the desires of the city to own a high-quality product. However, high city cost is due to high land price. Almost every existing residential area in a town is found very often in the third type i.e. security zone communities. The residents have installed doors in their neighborhoods in every street. This cut them off further with the surrounding areas. However, the gates are locked at night and only one door is open during the day, which is guarded at night for purposes of security.

Spatial Characteristics of Gated Communities:

Ideation of Design: The cities see rapid growth of the private / gated population. In studying the morphological characteristics of the Beijing pre-reform and post-reform reform, Qiang Dou, a research scientist, explained that the morphological variation in the GC was caused by the West in which new ideas were generated in design companies. SS Cruz and others considered that such construction is an exclusive, fragmented urban residential type, condominium (one typology of the GC) of Portugal. Abe Kudo argues that a high-ranking condominium is a kind of tight-knit development, and is drawn in parallel with the developments in Tokyo. Similarly, the master planned modern type of communities in Australia originating from trend of garden city in Australia, where land is not scarce. These are major developments along the outskirts of cities where large parts of the country are designed and developed for the individual family. Eric Charmes lists one of the most important traits on the roads as the cul-de sac which provide additional control of the road network

access system and is the culmination of the suburban residential estates in a 'superblock'.

Amenities: It has historically been argued that the residents ought to have exclusive right and power over their development's facilities and amenities. It generates feeling of privilege. They are for residents only. These are places where residents communicate and exchange thought and ideas and social interaction. And these are any growth 's hot selling feature. Some of these can be listed as free car parking space for residents, sports club, lush green park, children's tot-lot, local shopping arcade, nursery, club and party hall, gymnasium, swimming pool, spa etc., instead of facilities provided residents are charged heavy fees for monthly use. These facilities also include the 24-hour guards and surveillance.

Security: Many fold safety measures are taken by GC designers and developers to attract and make investors / residents feel safe. Many are CCTV camera system, border wall or fence, wards, gates, barrier, a hierarchical road network, footpaths, public area lighting, etc. In conjunction with the general measure adopted by the GC, the building also has an integrated security system. Housing protection has become one of the most critical concerns for all people with this sense of crime. High quality electronic protection solutions are routinely used in advertising. The guard house of the gated complex is fitted with surveillance equipment at exits, parking spaces and other publicly accessible locations, as well as 24-human watch period.

Gates, walling and landscape: In the transparent and dynamic property market, residential building projects are a commodity for sale. No stone has been left unturned to developers to encash big sales. The construction of open landscape features along with housing units is therefore highly stressed. The superbly designed doors and wall design are also part of the customers' enticing bid. Landscape designers use a combination of hard and soft landscape elements. The water is also used in the form of body water, springs, infinity pool, etc. Better landscape designs have an advantage over other designs on the market. The glassy watch house is designed with an automatic boom barrier.

Rationale to move behind the gates:

Far from bad: The people of the city center live sickly and polluted. The Gated Community is often known on the outskirts of the city as an escape from the dirty and crowded towns. People need fresh air to rejuvenate, not only for their health 's benefit. In a private, isolated world, peace of mind is a requirement. And, in such a closed area out of town, people search for fresh air and shelter. Indirectly they are increasing the traffic pollution by moving from a long distance to their workplace into car travel mode. It was also called "flight from Blight"" as a way out of the congested city.

Fear: Renaud Le Goix says they were accepted due to their fear of crime and safety. Several readers seem to agree on the security and sense of fear. The state saw its existence as a lack of security. Urban awareness of crime, pollution, and so on that people feel unsafe has increased demand for safe, well-organized societies. Strict rules governing residents' development and

behavior exist in agreements and regulations. Higher safety is due to interventions and the private governance framework.

3. METHODOLOGY

Case Study: Gated community in Gachibowli, Hyderabad. The research area in this research is Hyderabad City, which focuses on Gachibowli residents' perspective on people's residences and preference to stay in such communities. In case of Gachibowli, gated communities are still at first less widely scattered and less impactful as a permanent housing concept, making it useful for residents to evaluate the attitude of this phenomenon, examine the variables and challenges linked to residents' willingness to live in these locations and learn what people are trying to support in the urban growth cycle. Three steps were taken to accomplish this analysis approach:

Field observation: This step is a pilot study in Gachibowli to map gated communities. Data gathered from different outlets, such as newspapers, real estate firms (by direct contact or the internet), statistical data from residents, aerial photographs and mostly field visits and online surveys.

Data Collection: It's a 31.59 acre mega gated community. This consists of 10 + 2 towers; 2 towers are divided by ring road but connected by under-road bypass. It has small open spaces next to buildings, as gardens or sand-pit play area for kids. It has central open space with various events and amphitheater. It is situated in the midst of technology parks such as Wipro, Infosys, UBS, etc., world-renowned institutes such as Indian Business School, IIT, etc. and well connected to all places in Hyderabad. This neighborhood has small open spaces near towers and wide open space as central park. It also has sports areas separated by a central 12 m wide road for children, club house, food court, grocery store, ATM, medical store, etc. Every of these open spaces has certain preferable or not preferable traits. It has 10 residential towers and under 30% of built-up ground coverage. There are 900 housing units. A survey was performed online using Google Forms. This has been used to determine the importance of these open spaces and to consider their spatial preferences. Based on literature reviews, the questionnaire covers most aspects of comfort, access, visibility, operation and amenity. Ten open spaces were chosen as public areas. The questionnaire was distributed by mail to the resident association community. It is a limited group, accessible only by a resident or owner. This meant that participants used such open spaces. Total twenty-seven people responded from all the towers, belonging to various age group. Based on the chart below, maximum people responded belong to age group of 31 to 45 years and half of them are staying more than four years.



Figure 1: Site Plan of Gated Community, showing towers and open spaces along with road and clubhouse

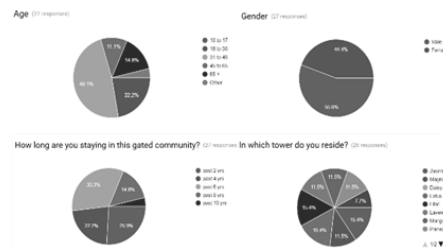


Figure 2: Charts showing participation type for online survey, with-in residents of Serene County

Analysis: This stage focuses on the variables of a qualitative analysis of residents' choice. Jansen, Coolen & Goetgeluk, book titled ‘‘The Measurement and Analysis of Housing Preference and Choice’’ give a description of analytical techniques which could define, forecast and explain housing preference for this project process. The chosen form is a simplified Structure Model, as it focuses on how people want from the book's methods. This approach helps to answer two key questions; how and why people like their housing. This cycle consists of three basic steps: product attributes – results – values. Afterwards, by ensuring the respondent beginning with the selected attribute, the data is collected using a laddering process, and then continuously ask why his choices are good and meaningful. Data is obtained from a short online survey with simple questions on multiple choices to cover the Mean Structure Process's three phases. The Mean Structure Method phases presume the main component of this analysis is the neighborhood.

The first stage is the attribute: the preference in between the gated community and the non-gated. The second stage, its implications: show inhabitants' role in selected properties. Because these studies address and since people prefer specific communities, the inputs chosen for the project are restricted to residents choosing the primary process preferences of specific communities. To determine the current stage, the above are the factors affecting neighborhood choice. Our research emphasizes only on the community's external variables and confined populations. Therefore, the attractive elements in the portal and protection areas, activities and facilities, Urban and community design, density, same social class, companionship and open spaces are the factor for this phase of research identified by El Sayed. The last step is "values": the destination values of their attributes. The Grant & Mittelsteadt study showed that to support property values, private sectors seek a sense of community, identity and security. Therefore, the values may include security, prestige, lifestyle, sense of community as shown in Fig-3.

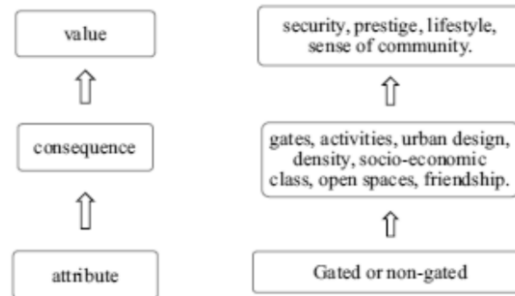


Figure 3: Means-end chain model, inspired by: E.J.E. Molin

Findings: First: Seven characteristics of a gated community influence the preference of residents from assessments of the above survey responses: open spaces being the prime requirement, followed by gates and security, activities and services, landscape and leisure, age, same socioeconomic status and companionship. The following values affect residents. Four values: safety, prestige, lifestyle and community sense. And even the preference literature in confines accepted the predominant reason for protection, in contrast the survey shows that this is the most common benefit to be gained by living in confined communities for Hyderabad in the case of Hyderabad and the most prevalent features of confined communities that affect residents' choice. Most respondents agreed that they prefer gated communities rather than non-gated communities because the seven attributes primarily motivate them to choose the latter. Secondly, the main reason for choosing gated communities for their stay is the fact of open spaces for their recreational purposes.

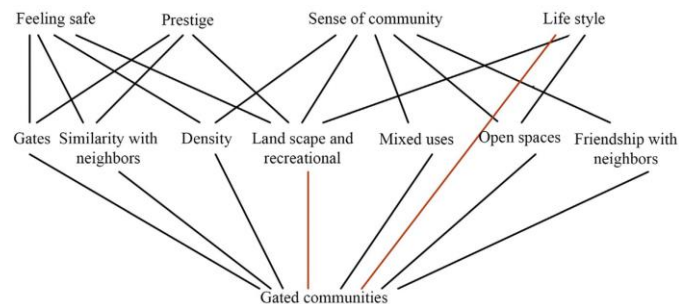


Figure 4: Preferences map of hierarchical value for gated communities

In case-study, the Central Park is highly favored, the charts show that a range of activities appropriate for all age groups, big open areas, seating areas, landscape etc. are offered to ensure the open area is successful (Fig-5). In other words, a variety of activities are given. This is also demonstrated by the least desirable open spaces, such as Lilac Garden and Jasmine Gardens, that have low visibility, no room for planting or moving events, the lack of seating and easy access.

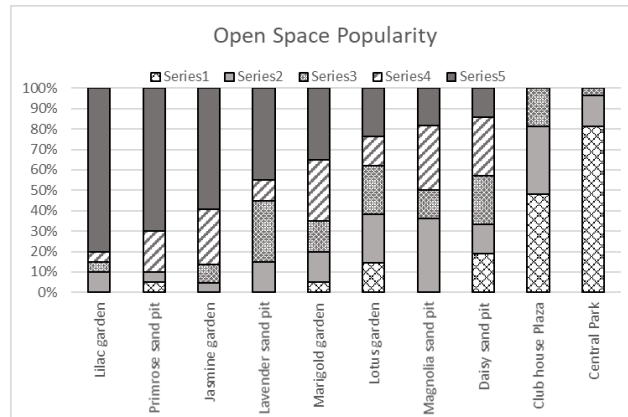


Figure 5: chart showing residents preferences among open spaces with-in their gated community in a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being not preferred and 5 being highly preferred.

Open spaces which has activities for specific age group is popular among some residents. Seating spaces with its sizes and numbers, shading due to building and trees, daylight and artificial lighting, wind, clear demarcation, proximity, cycle parking, multiple activities, water station and dustbin near open space, are preferred by residents. Residents are neutral towards dense vegetation in and around open space, multiple small open space, shape, levels, mixing of age group activities, amenities and replacement of sand in sand pit. Also, not preferred features are vehicular traffic either next or crossing open space, play areas for games like football.

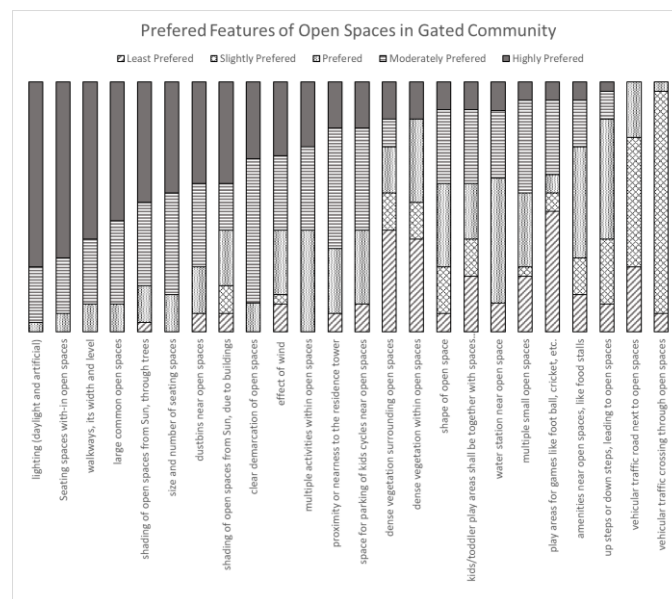


Figure 6: Chart showing multiple features preferred by residents on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being not preferred and 5 being highly preferred

4. INFERENCES

In recent years in India, the number of gated communities in various cities, one of them being Hyderabad, has increased rapidly and spread, prompting an investigation of factors leading to the preference of persons to live in these gated communities. The analytical results can be summarized as follows:

- a. The notion of gated communities and their neighborhood has been accepted by the inhabitants with a number of socio-economic backgrounds.
- b. Those who support the concept of gated communities are influencing the promotional collateral which promises an enviable position such as culture, friends, lifestyle, safety, exclusivity, prestige, open spaces and good life for children.
- c. The seven features affecting resident preferences in gated communities were gateways and safety, activities and services, landscape and recreation, density, equal socioeconomic status, open spaces and companionship in order to meet four values: health, dignity, sense of life and culture.
- d. The research taking these characteristics and principles into consideration indicates that "lifestyles" are the key priorities of the privately owned group life through living in private communities. The key characteristics of gated communities, which impact resident interests, are: countryside and leisure, gates and open spaces. The literature, which chose to live in enclosed societies, also acknowledged protection.
- e. Not only does this interest come from others, but other people purchase house in gated communities as a means of investment, like a small count of families who also don't sell their old properties, they're likely to return to a new pattern of gated communities.

Open space plays an important role in improving resident social interaction. Its spatial features such as size, shape, visibility and accessibility will define the residents' usability. Amenities such as seating, lighting, signage, shade from harsh sunlight, rain canopy, view from open spaces and various activities are also important to engage the user while developing social communications. A basic set of guidelines has been recommended based on the literature reviews to enhance these open space in spatial planning of neighborhood gated communities:

- a. Open space shall have size appropriate to size and number of dwellers in the gated community.
- b. It shall have defined edges, so as to discourage its encroachment. The edges can be a simple continuous masonry ledge, which can allow people to sit on them. This ledge wall can be of different heights, so as to be useful to everyone, irrespective of age and heights
- c. Seating spaces shall be provided near activities or in shade of tree or buildings or in space with pleasant view. It shall be avoided near dense vegetation, as fear of hidden animal like snake is deterrent for its use.
- d. Activities like young children play areas shall be provided in such a way that, it can be easily supervised by their parents, while conversing with other residents.

- e. A diverse type of activities shall be planned in appropriate way suitable to size and shape of open space. It shall be usable to all genders and all age of people, like children, adult and older people.
- f. Water bodies if provided, shall be well maintained and cleaned regularly. Odor and stagnant water deter resident to come near it.
- g. Orientation of sun and wind draft, shall be considered while locating them in the gated community.
- h. Open space shall be visible, so that its use is maximum
- i. The edges shall be in such a way, that people using shall be seen from outside. It deters people from using it for illegal activities.
- j. If possible, it shall be located near to amenities like club house, food court, etc. It keeps users engaged.
- k. A good lighting shall be installed for open space and pedestrian movement.
- l. Universal design shall be applied for accessing open space, by providing ramps and grab rails.

5. CONCLUSION

The paper gives an understanding of perception of Gated communities in residential neighborhoods and highlights the attributes which enable the inhabitants' preference and inclination towards these gated communities. This paper claims that every other resident chooses to live in gated communities, and that could inculcate a community sense, a sense of belonging, prestige, lifestyle, or safety for the neighborhood. Focusing on the view of Hyderabad residents against gated communities, this study utilizes a descriptive and survey-based approach. The results show that the 'life style' is a key value linked to residents' preferences to live in Indian Context in such communities.

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