



Using principles of urban villages as a solution to improve life quality of citizens

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Abstract. Today, with the rapid growth of cities, we are encountered with spaces separation of residential areas and this causes the increase of citizens' immigration. By using the principles of urban villages, we can achieve the design of sustainable residential areas. The idea of urban villages attempts to create a vital environment with the increase of people participation, environment protection, the priority of using public transportation and walking, etc. This study aimed to use the principles of urban villages to increase quality of life of citizens and township stability. The question is raised as how can we improve life quality of citizens by using principles of urban villages? This study is descriptive-analytic design. The data of principles of design in urban villages are collected by library studies. The results of the study showed that if there is a healthy village with some features as natural resources protection and combination of natural and anthropogenic environment, using efficient, integrated and human-based transportation, the presence of leisure spaces for all people, belonging, identity and other items, the residents feel safe to the urban environment and they can receive satisfaction and happiness well.

Keywords: Urban villages, Life quality, Sustainable development, Sustainable residential area, Township stability

1. INTRODUCTION

Low life level in rural areas and villagers migration to big cities led into various social, economic and environmental problems in rural and urban areas. The various strategies and policies to reduce negative effects of these problems and fulfillment of life requirements in urban and rural residential areas in developing countries including Iran are considered. In our country, development of small cities via the policy of improving big villages into city is one of the most important measurements with the aim of improving quality and life standards in rural areas, reduced migration to big cities and absorbing migrants in small cities (Rezvani et al., 2009). The lack of recognition of rural residential areas and inadequate consideration to the requirements of villagers increased the migration of villagers from village to the city. The successful urban villages can absorb people and they provide social, recreational and cultural places and they give services to the neighbors, regions, local residents and tourists. We can say that this model compared to raise images in sustainable development includes all the principles of sustainable residential areas and these principles are considered based on all dimensions of society as tangibly (Bahraini and Hajibande, 2011).

2. STUDY METHOD

This study evaluated the design principles regarding urban villages via library studies. By the study of global literature, the sustainable design principles of environment as effective on improving quality of citizens can be applied.

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2.1. Sustainability and sustainable development

Two raised criteria in the following definition clarify the sustainability concept:

- Improving life quality and considering the environment toleration capacity
- Fulfillment of the needs of present generation without restricting the abilities of future generations to fulfill the needs.

As a strategy, the basis of urban sustainable development in rural regions can be considered. Poverty causes migration of rural poor people for using land to surrounding village land. Due to poverty, these people can not make efforts in environment and poverty creates instability. Thus, it seems that to approach sustainable development goals, we should consider all economic, social, cultural physical and environmental aspects (Bahraini, Hajibande, 2011).

2.2. Sustainable residential area

In another definition, sustainable residential area is the one in which improvement of life quality of people is achieved in coordination with health improvement of ecological systems and industrial basis of a healthy economy guarantees the health of human and ecological system health (Moinmehr and Noroldin, 2012).

Sustainable city is the one with the economic basis not only without any adverse effect on environment but also effective on improving its quality. Sustainability and sustainable city is the reasonable substitute for harmful urbanization of 20th century (Bahraini, 1997:13).

2.3. Urban village

In the past, the term village city or urban village was used for the residential areas in the margin of cities. The urban village in this study is the movement in the late 80s in Britain and the similarity was only in the name (Moin Mehr and Noroldin, 2012).

In this idea, the concept of development is defined with sustainability issue and most of authorities consider the solution of designing a sustainable city by the principles of urban village idea (Bahraini, 2008).

2.4. The origin of idea of urban village

The term urban village is a response to the problems of development with some features as zoning, etc with environmental, social and economic objectives. This idea was created to reject modern single-dimensional urbanization. In modern urbanization, work spaces, recreation and residency are separated from each other, dull and cold environment was dominant in these areas and more cars reduced human relations and this led to environment pollution and reduced sustainability in residential areas. The first ideas were presented by Welles prince (England prince) and the designers, planners, architects, producers and developers developed it. Prince of Welles described urban village as a place with human scales, intimacy, identity and vitality (Moinmehr and Noroldin, 2012).

2.5. The features of urban village

In a report in 1992 as urban village report in England, the main principles of movement were as:

- Development of suitable space and adequate mass
- A pedestrian-based environment with emphasis on public transportation
- Suitable mixture of use and employment opportunities
- Various and sustainable architecture
- Mixture of residential sector and employment use
- Providing basic needs of purchase, health and education, relative self-reliance (Bahraini and Hajibande, 2011).

Later, we investigate the principles of urban villages in environmental, social, economic, physical and communication dimensions to apply the indices in various dimensions to achieve sustainability (Table 1).

Table 1. The principles and criteria of designing urban villages.

	Dimensions	Index
Urban villages	Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reducing long trips and personal cars ➤ Walking and using bicycle rather than car ➤ New technologies of construction and new, clean and renewable energy ➤ Combining anthropogenic and natural environment ➤ Least interference in natural environment ➤ The presence of open and green spaces ➤ Reduction of fuel consumption ➤ Waste recycling ➤ Optimal balance between nature and resources
	Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support of collective vital spaces ➤ Strong social links of establishing great social interactions of residents ➤ Belonging to living place ➤ Emphasis on identity ➤ Participation of residents in activities ➤ High life quality and social sustainability
	Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Relative self-sufficiency ➤ Land ownership ➤ Required infrastructures for various fields of employment ➤ Using new construction technologies and clean and renewable energy
	Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mixed use and diversity of activities ➤ Active use in various hours ➤ Collective use and public spaces ➤ Diverse views in pedestrian paths to absorb pedestrian and encouragement to walking ➤ Green space for vitality ➤ Combination of natural and anthropogenic environment for spatial variety ➤ Diverse and sustainable architecture ➤ Compressed urban form with suitable development of space and adequate mass
	Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The design of human-based and sustainable communication network ➤ Priority of pedestrian lane and bicycle lane ➤ The access of pedestrian to 600m to daily and weekly use ➤ Reduced use of car ➤ Efficient and integrated transportation system

2.6. The concept of life quality

Quality of urban life includes psychological dimensions as satisfaction, happiness and safety and it is also sometimes called social satisfaction. Quality of urban life includes environmental dimensions as housing, access to services and environmental security. Other aspects include

considering social opportunities, employment, and wealth and leisure time. The main factor of urban life quality is incomplete without fulfilling mental, emotional and social requirements of citizens (Qanbari et al., 2013). Life quality is mostly affected by time and place and its constituent components are different based on geographical place and time. Life quality is mostly affected by values and according to individual, social and national values can be defined. In addition, life quality besides having objective dimensions and dependence on objective and external conditions is subjective and it depends mostly on one's images and perceptions of life realities (Zebardastand Baniamerian, 2009).

There is no coherent agreement regarding life quality and its constituent aspects but all researchers believe in multi-dimensional nature of life quality. Each researcher considers the constituent layers of life quality with his view and by definition of layers attempts to define life quality (Fatalian and Partoyi, 2011). Some researchers consider it as a living capability, others as a measure for attraction and others as public welfare, social wellbeing, happiness, satisfaction and the like. Also, the life quality is defined as the relationship between individual perceptions and people emotions and their experiences in the space they live. Fou (2000) considers life quality as one's general satisfaction of life. Dass (2008) defines life quality as well-being or non-wellbeing of people and their life environment (Rezvani et al., 2009). One's life quality depends upon objective realities of his life and receptions, internal and subjective perceptions of these factors and himself (Lotfi, 2009). Any definition of life quality includes two basic elements (feature): 1- A subjective psychological and physiological (internal) structure providing satisfaction, 2- The external phenomena guaranteeing the structure. Life quality includes quantitative and qualitative aspects as goods distribution and services and materialistic needs of human being and subjective and qualitative aspects as social relations, life satisfaction, participation and unity, and all spiritual needs of human being. Indeed, objective indices of life quality consider observing environmental conditions as housing, nutrition, environment, etc. and subjective indices are achieved based on the questions of the researchers asking via questionnaire about satisfaction, happiness and the like (Abdollahpour, 2012). Life quality is as the result of three concepts of sustainability, access and livability and livability is the good result with environmental and social dimensions and it views the present time in terms of time. Sustainability is mostly affected by environmental and economic aspects viewing future in terms of time.

2.7. Life quality has three features

- Life quality is defined based on condition of people
- Life quality is a multi-dimensional concept
- Life quality beside objective indices is evaluated by subjective indices (Qanbari et al, 2013).

Generally, urban life quality approach is an effort to create healthy city and providing suitable urban services for all people in sustainability framework (Mosavi et al., 2013). Thus, the research about life quality attempts to evaluate the combinational effect of these subjective and objective factors on human welfare. Indeed, discussing about urban life quality is not meaningful without considering urban sustainable development. When discussing about urban sustainable development, the term urban life quality is emerged (Lotfi, 2009).



Figure 2. Conceptual model of urban life quality.

Table 3. The principles and criteria of urban life quality

	Dimensions	Index
Urban life quality	Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Diverse green spaces ➤ Avoiding air pollution ➤ Recreational areas and parks ➤ Natural resources
	Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Social or public security ➤ Leisure time spaces ➤ Pedestrian spaces ➤ Open and green spaces
	Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Providing primary resources ➤ Purchase power ➤ Value of residential land ➤ Job satisfaction
	Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Residential space ➤ Major housing facilities ➤ Housing ownership ➤ Number of rooms ➤ Arrangement of buildings ➤ Spatial order ➤ Perspective sequence ➤ Readability ➤ Image ➤ Spatial perception
	Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Communication tools ➤ Public transportation ➤ Traffic flow ➤ Satisfaction of intracity trips

2.8. The effects of sustainability on life quality

In order to make life quality of citizens in present and future time better, we should put it on sustainability framework. Thus, we cannot ignore the stable relationship between life quality and sustainability. By revealing the role of local gatherings and keeping local features in planning, this aim was considered in life quality studies. The emphasis of sustainable development on value of citizens in specific environments was effective on life quality researches. The life quality studies have been conducted at international, national levels namely urban levels but with sustainable view, local level is suitable for life quality studies (Fathalian and Partoyi, 2011). A model is presented in the following and it shows that based on urban village components and life quality we can achieve sustainability of township and urban sustainable development (Figure 3).

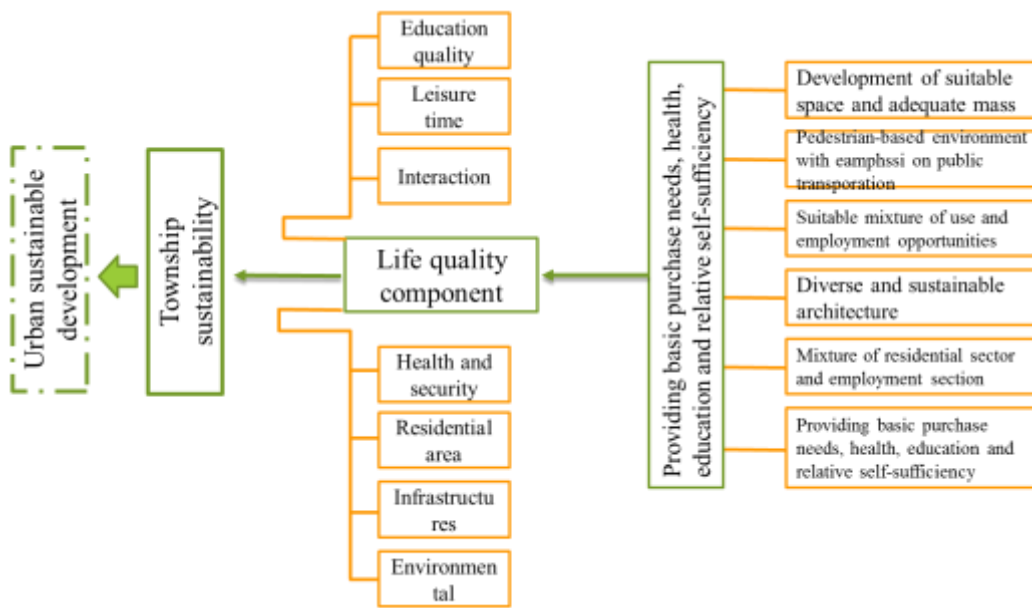


Figure 3. Sustainability of township and urban sustainable development.

3. CONCLUSION

Generally, the urban village approach at global level is applied as a solution for new urban and rural development and achieving sustainable development. This approach considers specific principles of design consistent with nature and natural resources protection and this model is effective along fulfilling sustainable development. This model by considering the existing facilities and improving them avoided the migration of citizens to other regions and fulfilled human needs well and this led to the satisfaction of people of fulfillment of their needs at specific place. Urban villages by combining the positive features of city and village can create a good environment for people and fulfill their needs. The obtained indices in the various dimensions of this model show that various sustainability issues exist. One of the examples is priority of using public transportation and walking and this can prevent different environmental pollutions in cities and citizens can present in the urban environment easily. Life quality and transportation system namely in urban areas have mutual effects on each other. If a person has good image to the urban environment, he can achieve satisfaction and happiness. if there is a healthy village with some features as natural resources protection and combination of natural and anthropogenic environment, using efficient, integrated and human-based transportation, the presence of leisure spaces for all people, belonging, identity and other items, the residents feel safe to the urban

environment and they can receive satisfaction and happiness well.

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