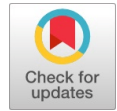


Unveiling Instances Of Participatory Planning In Urban Development

Anika Kapoor, Ekta Singh



Abstract: *Fast pace of urbanization is often complimented with inefficient urban infrastructure, a mismatch between demand and supply of urban services and poor quality of life. These are few of the driving forces for planners to introduce grass-root level planning process as an approach to facilitate local urban governance. The purpose of the paper is to present a methodical review of literary instances on participatory planning and its successful implementation. The paper includes review of 98 articles and research works that embodies the development of the subject over time. The findings of the study are suggestive that local area planning as a subject has witnessed tremendous change since its inception in 18th century till date, in terms of topics covered and methodologies employed. The paper explicate that despite formal existence of participatory approach to planning since 18th century, the paradigm has not yet achieved its objectives in true sense. There are reported gaps in terms of stakeholder analysis, framework of comprehensive local area planning and its implementation, which offers opportunity to the researchers to explore the subject further.*

Keywords: *Local Area Planning, Governance, Public Participation, Urban Development*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the last few decades, planning at local level for the development of urban areas has received a lot of attention of the urban planners and policy makers. Historically, local area planning, as a term is used interchangeably by the different scholars. The other terms used commonly are community planning, participatory planning and people participation plan. It is primarily, based on an ideology that seeks a common consensus for a public action. Jean Jack Rousseau, 1762, a Genevan philosopher of 18th century is one of the pioneers who promulgated the idea of planning through public participation. He promoted the role of common man as decision maker, at local level for effective governance [3]. This ideology faded and there is very limited literature on participatory or local area planning between 1760 and 1960. This has been validated by researches that elucidated the problem of low rates of political participation among citizens of liberal democratic states [39, 44]. By late 1960's, the traditional top down models and theories of planning were replaced by new models of planning like Transactive Planning of Friedmann [17], followed by Advocacy Planning

of Davidoff [12] and improved version of Mazziotti [36] Hall's Marxist approach [21], McDonald [37] bargaining model and then emerged the Communicative Model of Healey [22]. Though, varied theories have been advocated by different scholars, but none has been credited with being the most efficient planning system for addressing the issues holistically [30]. Tina Nabatchi [39] elaborated upon the concept of local level planning by involving the people in participation at one or more tier of the planning hierarchy. According to her, the relevance of public participation is in the identification of needs and concerns while institutions are important for effective decision-making.

In the above review, it is realised that there exist remarkable studies in the field of local area planning, inclusive planning and allied subjects. However, there is a dearth of comprehensive and systematic review mainly pertaining to the academic research. Systematic Literature Review (SLR) is a tool through which research studies and allied papers are compiled, collated and critically analysed. It enables the development of the subject and provides probable direction for future research. This paper attempts to unveil the instances of various approaches to local area planning. Formally, 98 research papers for the period 1981 to 2016 are studied and evaluated.

II. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

There are many studies pertaining to the involvement of people in planning processes that concern the development of socio-economic and basic infrastructure. However, all these studies have different focus and are conducted at different scales. Hence, it is appropriate to assess these different focusses and varied scales of investigation. Marcus B. Lane has discussed the various models of planning at local level practised across the world on a time line while there are studies [26, 30, 32, and 33] that focus on different forms of participatory plans, factors stimulating and inhibiting stakeholder's initiatives, impact of stakeholder's participation on final decisions, explicitly through an individual research. It is suggestive that few scholars have researched discretely on one aspect of local level planning while certain studies [26, 33] comprehensively analysed many aspects. Some papers stress on tools and methodologies [7] while others supported legitimacy of the concept of local participatory plans [49]. Since there is no systematic analysis of the varied studies, it is critical to identify the main topics of interest and therefore, the first objective of the paper is to identify the main topics of discussion in papers related to local area plan and evolution of topics over time. With this objective, this research attempts to decipher 'What', 'Where' and 'When'.

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Another important question is “How” i.e. research methodologies employed in various studies. It is discovered that there are papers that deal with the subject in depth with detailed examination of attributes [13], some indulged in statistical modelling and simulation [43], some highlighted the role of technology [28] while few studies are based only on the perception of a small sample [2]. It has never been realised that which research tool and methodologies are best suited while examining bottom-up approach to planning and local area plans. Such analysis can yield an interesting insight on the most used and suitable approaches when dealing with the topic. Subsequently, the second objective is to identify the main research methodologies employed in the papers and their relation to the identified topics.

Having identified topics and various research methodologies, the last objective is to understand the main challenges pertaining to local area planning. Thus, the third aim of the paper is to detect the key research issues, gaps in the literature and future lines of research on local area planning.

Systematic Literature Review has been chosen as a tool encounter the above-mentioned objectives with a special focus on planning at local levels and the methods employed for the successful implementation of the approach. First part of the paper discusses the classification of the selected papers, followed by the descriptive analysis of the mass of the papers. First objective is addressed with the analysis of the findings and distinguishing the main topics with their evolution over time. The proceeding section discusses the tools and methodologies employed in the corpus. The last segment reports the results of the analysis of the papers and identifies the key challenges, thereby addressing the objectives. The paper establishes the need for research in the field and identifies possible areas of future research.

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A systematic review of literature is chosen as a research method for this study. This research method also aims to consolidate the upcoming fields and topics not only in the concerned fields but also in other fields and areas like web-based technology in planning for local areas [28]. Public participation Geographical information system (PPGIS) [46], crowdsourcing tools [38] etc.

According to Fink’s definition, A literature review, must be systematic in following a methodological approach, explicit in explaining the procedures by which it was conducted, comprehensive in its scope of including all relevant material, and hence reproducible by others who would follow the same approach in reviewing the topic [6, 16, 27]. A SLR describes the quality of the available corpus and establishes the importance of the previous works, thereby helping the professionals in decision-making [14, 50]. Additionally, the stepwise documentation of SLR enables in-depth evaluation of the conducted study [29]. Finally, SLR is a reliable research tool for manifold purposes.

This study is based on detailed guidelines of many significant papers [4, 5] to develop a replicable study. The research methodology involves 4 stages to identify the valid search of literature [29].

First stage involves scrutiny of key words. Creating a strategy is essential for successful search results [10]. Search terms are very important as they help in finding the possibly

relevant articles. Therefore, as a first step, alternative terms and concepts that relate and address the same research areas were identified. Synonyms, Singular/plural, adjectives, different spellings and macro and micro concepts were recognized to find the relevant papers. This facilitated in documentation of varied concepts, contextual terminologies, associated facts and policies at the very first stage of SLR. Figure 1 defines the selected criteria for identification of search terms. In this stage, 230 papers from peer reviewed and other journals were extracted, which are contextual and relate to the research area in one or the other way.

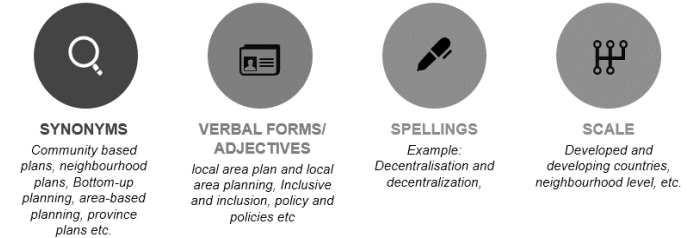


Figure 1: Criteria for identification of search words for paper selection.

In the next stage, from the list of 230 papers, shortlisted in the first stage, a precursory list of allied terms and concepts were identified as inclusion criteria. This step involves reading and assessment of each publication to ascertain its relevance before it is included in the list of literature [42]. Since, the database is voluminous; there is a need to exclude papers. It is done when repeated searches by whatever means result in the same references, with no new results [31]. However, new literature is added and carried out all the time until the end of the research.

However, the concept of inclusive planning is not novel but decentralization of powers of decision making in most European and in developing countries started in early 1980’s. Therefore, the research is focussed on the papers, articles and policy documents published in refereed journals for the period 1981 to 2016. Conference papers, proceedings, technical reports and works in progress were excluded from the mass of papers. The review is restricted to peer reviewed publications as peer review improves the quality of manuscripts that go through the process [20], and help to identify the most impactful contributions to science [51].

The selection of papers is based on Inclusion criteria as reported in Table 1. Major publishers, selected for the analysis were Science direct, Emerald, Francis and Taylor etc. Further, to avoid biases in the selection of literature, each paper is verified with the inclusion and exclusion criteria, thereby making a final corpus of 186 papers.

Table- I: Name of the Table that justify the values

Criteria	Description
Terms and concepts	Local Plans, Community engagement plan, citizen participatory plans, Inclusive plans, community integration, inclusive planning, participatory planning, local area planning, Local economic development, local partnership.
Language	English
Document type	Articles, Reports and policy documents

Source types	Peer reviewed Journals, Reports of Multilateral organizations like OECD, UN- HABITAT etc.
Time Interval	1981-2016

In the succeeding stage, researchers reviewed the titles and abstracts of the selected papers and those, which appeared to be out of scope, were removed from the List of papers. In this process, 123 papers were finally selected. The papers that did not focussed on local area plans or planning but instead focussed on Local level environment, Micro- climate change, health and education services, etc. were excluded from the corpus.

The final selection of papers was based on full text reading, in it was discovered that 35 papers are not in the scope of the research and were therefore excluded. Another reversed approach called snowballing was used to identify the most cited and referred papers. Snowballing refers to using the reference list of a paper or the citations to the paper to identify additional papers [25]. In this process, the papers those were cited more frequently were selected, other than those, which are already selected. 10 papers were added in the list through snowballing, leading to the final corpus of 98 papers. The number of papers selected in each stage of SLR is summarised in Figure 2 and complete list is a part of references of the paper.

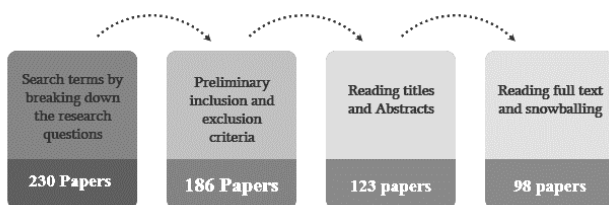


Figure 2: Results of Systematic Literature Review in different stages

Finally, descriptive analysis of the literature was performed for the 98 papers. In response to the first two objectives, descriptive analysis of the papers was accomplished. This included classification of papers based on the topics, timeline and methodologies employed. Besides, citation index analysis for the corpus was done to identify the main papers on the subject. The details of these analyses are reported in the succeeding sections of the paper.

IV. DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

Figure 3 represents the distribution of the papers in the corpus by years. For the convenience of analysis, the voluminous data is grouped in the interval of 5 years. The graph reveals that despite of the slight fluctuations in the given period, there is a considerable increment of contributions regarding local area plans or participatory plans in the last 5 years, thereby confirming the relevance of the subject.

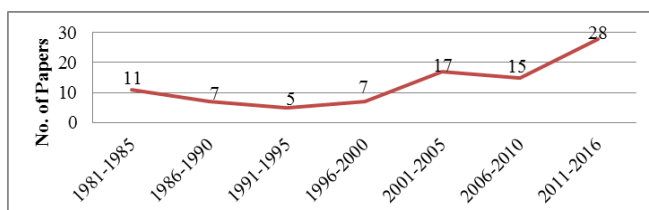


Figure 3: Papers distribution by year of Publication

The increase in the number of papers post 2005 is partially due to the efforts of UN-HABITAT, where the relevance of

local level plans was established. In 2006, at the Third World Urban Forum in Vancouver, ‘Reinventing Planning’ was widely accepted by planners from all continents. Ten principles that define the ‘added value’ of the New Urban Planning were recognized and “Plan with partners and stakeholders” is one of the main principles.

The SDGs address the most pressing global challenges of our time and SDG 16 “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels” [1]. Therefore, United Nation seeks the prospects and practical solutions for a more bottom-up and transformative approach to implementing the new global framework. In addition, OECD Prepared a handbook on entitled “Citizens as Partners: Information, Consultation and Public Participation in Policy-making” in 2001 [40]. All these global level initiatives inspired research in planning for local areas.

Altogether, the corpus includes 67 different journals and there is no dominant journal addressing the subject. The local level planning is addressed as the secondary topic by the journals. The journals are categorised according to their main subjects of investigation. Figure 4 shows the number of papers in journals of varied disciplines in the corpus.

It was discovered that despite of variations, local area plans as a subject is dealt with journals pertaining to urban and regional planning, public administration, environment, society and most recently in the journals related to web-based technology.

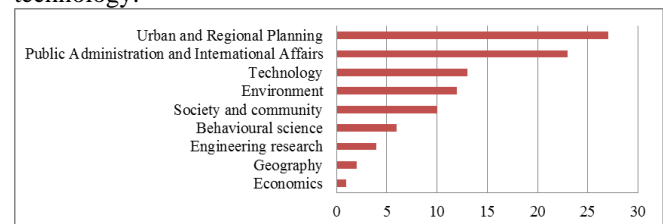


Figure 4: Number of papers in each Journal of varied subjects in the corpus.

Source: www.trends.google.com, Accessed on 12, May 2017

A. Classification of the Corpus

To respond to research questions 1 and 2, the papers were classified, based on main topics covered. The classification involved two- staged approach, where topics of each paper was analysed in the first stage and then the related and allied topics were clubbed together to acquire a list of frequently addressed topics, in the second stage.

It is assessed that each paper discussed one or the more topics. Therefore, the frequency of occurrence of the topic as they appeared in the papers is compiled and shown in figure 5. The four most frequently addressed topics are conditions for local level planning, tools for local area planning, hurdles for effective local area planning and role of web-based technology.

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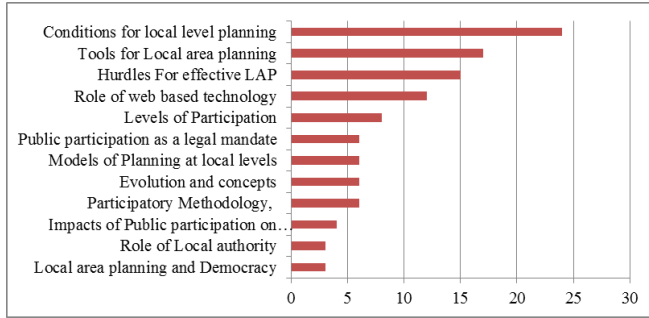


Figure 5: Number of papers addressing each topic

B. Relevance of the topics over time

The research topics have been changing over the years as shown in table 2. At the beginning of the considered time (1981-1990), only certain topics were being explored, primarily pertaining to the models of planning, conditions for local level planning and levels or stages of stakeholder's involvement in planning etc. In the succeeding period (1991-2000), new interests emerged along with the existing topics. These were mainly pertaining to exploring the tools and techniques of successful local area planning. In the next stage (2001-2010), the focus on some topics like evolution, models of planning and levels of stakeholder's participation diminished whereas new topics surfaced such as hurdles in the planning process, role of web-based technology, role of local authority in democracy etc. In the recent years (2010-2016), many of the interest areas remained unchanged but the number of researches increased drastically.

Table- 2: Topic relevance over time

Topics	1981-1990	1991-2000	2001-2010	2010-2016
Conditions for local level planning	9	5	6	4
Tools for Local area planning		3	6	8
Hurdles For effective LAP	2		4	9
Role of web-based technology	1	1	4	6
levels of Participation	4	1	1	1
Public participation as a legal mandate			3	3
Models of Planning at local levels	5	1		1
Evolution and concepts	1	2	1	2
Participatory Methodology	2	1	1	2
Impacts of stakeholder's participation on decision making			2	2
Role of Local authority			2	1
Local area planning and Democracy			2	1

C. Main Research Methodologies employed and relationship with the main topics

To classify the research methodologies employed, the analysis followed an inductive approach, like the one previously discussed for the classification of the topics. Authors have independently classified the methodologies used in the papers of the corpus. Then the comprehensive classification table was developed by grouping the various identifies methodologies. For instance, questionnaires and interviews were clubbed together as they appeared jointly in the corpus.

The classification of methodologies is reported in Figure 6, where each paper adopts one or more methodologies. In addition to the research methodology, it is critical to consider the type of data collected and used in the study. Therefore, the papers were also distinguished based on the type of data.

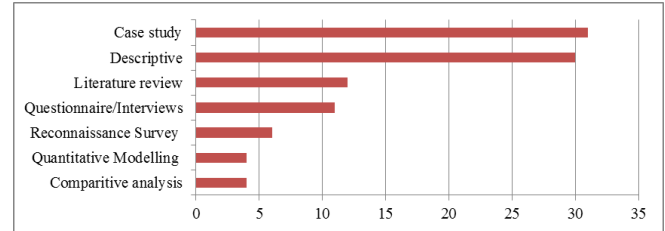


Figure 6: Types of research methods in the corpus

The papers were classified as those based on quantitative data, qualitative data and both. Quantitative data is information about quantities that can be measured and compared. Such data include number of respondents, measurable output of the public opinions, financial budgeting etc. Contrariwise, qualitative data approximates or characterizes a thing or phenomenon. Putting it simply, quantitative data helps in statistical analysis and qualitative data helps in descriptive analysis. Therefore, combining the two yields the better results and leads to complete examination of the phenomena being studied. The results of the classification of data are shown in Figure 7.

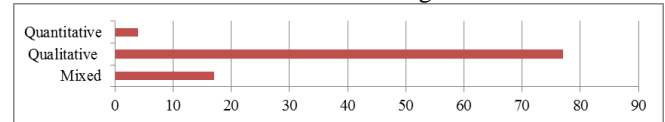


Figure 7: Types of data used

Finally, the topics and methodologies employed were mapped together to understand the relationship between the two. It was observed that qualitative methods are mainly used for research as expected since this topic is more associated with social science-based disciplines and there has been little use of quantitative methods. Mainly case study based [47, 48] approaches are used to explain the issues at local level or to highlight a prototype [19] of a successful model. Similarly, descriptive analysis is used to elaborate the criteria or attributes for local area planning [11], tools for local area planning [39], hurdles [35], models and levels of participation [18].

Table 3: Mapping of topics and methods used in the papers

Topics	Methodologies						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Conditions for local level planning	4	4	1	8	4	2	1
Tools for Local area planning	5	4	3	4	-	-	-
Hurdles For effective LAP	10	2	1	2	-	-	-
Role of web-based technology	1	1	1	7	2	-	-
levels of Participation	3	3	1	-	-	-	1
Public participation as a legal mandate	1	1	2	-	-	1	1
Models of Planning at local levels	-	3	3	-	-	-	-
Evolution and concepts	-	3	3	-	-	-	-
Participatory Methodology	2	3	-	1	-	-	-
Impacts of stakeholder's participation on decision making	2	1	-	-	-	1	-
Role of Local authority	2	1	-	-	-	-	-
Local area planning and Democracy	-	3	-	-	-	-	-

1- Case study, 2- nalysis, 3- Interviews, 4- Reconnaissance Survey, 5- Quantitative Modelling, 7- Comparative Analysis.

There are few papers based on literature review, especially pertaining to evolution and concept [30], models of local area planning [22] and tools of local area [44]. However, reconnaissance surveys, quantitative modelling and comparative analysis are less adopted methodologies. This result highlights the theoretical character of the subject rather than applied as the discipline that focusses on developing the shared vision of the key topics and concepts instead of focussing on the identification of the issues and solving them.

V. DISCUSSION

To complement the analysis demonstrated in the previous sections, one attribute of citation index analysis, out of many, was performed. Citation index analysis is done to provide a better understanding of the literature in the field of planning at local level, its changing patterns and to predict future research. It is an index of citations between publications, which is used to establish the main papers, which are cited by other scholars in their papers. The citation index analysis assumes that researchers of the same field tend to cite each other to upgrade their scholarly work [23]. Instinctively, the most cited papers by other authors are recognised as the key contributors in the field.

The citation index analysis was done for 98 selected papers resulting from SLR. This analysis is based on automated citation indexing by Google Scholar. The Coverage of current information and retrospective data is from 2004 to the present. The indicator used in the paper for citation index analysis is Global Citation score (GCS). GCS refers to the total number of citations and measures the overall relevance of the paper in the literature. Figure 8 shows the citation indexing of the papers in the corpus.

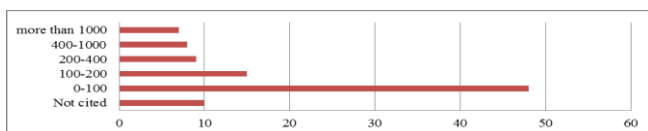


Figure 8: Citation indexing of the papers in the corpus.

Among these, almost two-third of the papers, which are not cited, or lies in 0-100 category are those which are relatively recent works, i.e. published after 2010. Therefore, the citation count is limited due to the limited exposure of these papers globally. On the other hand, there are works which are cited by almost all the allied researches and accounts for 14071 GCS [3] and thus becomes one of the important documents in the corpus. This paper is “A Ladder of Citizen participation” by S.R. Arnstein. Table 4 reports the ten most frequently cited papers according to GCS.

Table 4: Top ten most frequently cited documents in the corpus.

Title	Author	Year	Publication	Global Citation score
A ladder of citizen participation	Arnstein, S. R.	1969	Journal of the American Institute of planners	14071

Participation and democratic theory	Pateman, C.	1970	Cambridge University Press	7358
Planning in the public domain: From knowledge to action	Friedmann, J.	1987	Princeton University Press	2698
Public participation methods: A framework for evaluation	Rowe, G., & Frewer, L. J.	2000	Science, technology & human values	1872
Advocacy and pluralism in planning	Davidoff, P.	1965	Journal of the American Institute of planners	1828
Urban and regional planning (3rd edition)	Hall, P	1992	Routledge, London	1446
Planning through debate: the communicative turn in planning theory.	Healey, P.	1992	Town planning review	1289
Public participation geographic information systems: A literature review and framework.	Sieber, R	2006	Annals of the association of American Geographers	821
Evaluating public-participation exercises: a research agenda	Rowe, G., & Frewer, L. J.	2004	Science, technology & human values	748
Assessing consensus: The promise and performance of negotiated rulemaking.	Coglianese, C.	1997	Duke Law Journal	652

These papers act as the authority in the reference to the later works and continue to be cited for the development of the discipline of the research.

A. Main research issues, gaps and future lines of research

To provide an answer to the third research question, the perusal of the literature on local area planning allowed us to identify issues and gaps in the prevalent research on the subject and helped in recognizing direction for research in future for practitioners and academicians. However, the future direction of research is purely based on hindsight analysis of the evolution of the literature. Thus, the suggestions for the future research presented in this paper focus on those areas that can help the subject to combine and unite to evolve comprehensively while highlighting challenges noted in the literature. Therefore, three main areas, whose absence or limited focus leads to the gaps in the existing literature, are proposed.

An element that emerges from the literature review is that the local area planning is complementary to stakeholder's perception and it can yield desired results only with the involvement of participants in the decision-making process. Jean-Claude Garcia-Zamor, [19] realised that local spatial form in physical, economic, social, cultural, and political dimensions of any city cannot be a result of globalization.

There are many hidden factors that impact development process. It is important to involve all those who will be affected by the decisions, to ensure balanced urban development. He further stated that “all stakeholders’ values and concerns are legitimate and should be considered”. Therefore, the factors affecting public participation are yet to be explored fully to understand the flaws in the effective participatory planning. Nancy Roberts [44] correctly stated that for the first half of the 20th century, citizens relied on public officials and administrators to make decisions about public policy and its implementation. The latter part of the 20th century saw a shift toward greater direct citizen involvement. This trend is expected to grow as democratic societies become more decentralized, interdependent, networked, linked by new information technologies, and challenged by unexplained problems. The literature regarding involvement of stakeholders in the making of decisions related to planning at local level very limited and fragmented. Recent research has begun to address this issue [8, 9, 15, 24, and 45] in the developing countries but still the researches are unable to yield the adaptable solutions.

As rightly stated by the researchers, once people are given power in the decision making, it may lead to effective governance [2]. People prioritise the efforts of the government since they are more concerned about meeting their immediate local needs. Moreover, nothing is “not important” for them, it is just the matter of priorities. Next to people, it is the planner who understand local situation better [34]. Planner gain understanding about local customs, resources, issues and local solutions through in depth communication and investigation. Therefore, involvement of stakeholders of different levels is important for successful implementation of plans at local levels. Since the rationale behind stakeholder’s involvement is well established through literature review, this topic offers tremendous scope for research in future.

Another aspect that needs attention is the framework of the comprehensive local area planning. Local area plans are smallest level of plans in the hierarchy but cannot yield desired results in isolation rather it represents a plan within a larger plan. The literature is found in bits and pieces and not consolidated. Local level planning is meaningless in the absence of administrative hierarchy of government and formal strategies, policies and guidelines for community participation [47, 48]. Also, it has been realised that lack of structure and resourcing of local authorities, conflicting interests within the area and advisory role of planners are few of the factors resulting in inability to deliver promises to the community [35]. Moreover, Jean-Claude Garcia-Zamor [19] realised that there is no universal model of local area planning that can be applied to all cities since each city has its own socio economic, political, and legal systems that provide a framework for workable solutions. Therefore, in the absence of a framework and model, it is difficult for authorities to implement the public participation in the urban governance.

As emerged from the analysis, many papers are based on in-depth case studies as shown in figure 5, thus creating a library of experiences but these studies are not comparable as the time-frame, data collection methods and context of the cities are very different. To overcome this issue, a common

framework to collect and analyse data can be developed for the ease of comparison and analysis.

According to the systemic review, Local area plans have four critical attributes that are people, planners (experts and think tanks), authority and democracy. Pateman [41] argued that it is ironical that the idea of participation is becoming popular in democracy. Democracy is more of an orthodox doctrine where participation has a minimal role. With this background, he urged to either revise the idea of democracy that propagates maximum participation or reject it. Also, stability of the political system has been considered as a core-requisite to ensure a participatory local area planning process. In support, literature stated that it is critical to involve people in planning process as they give importance to solutions that meet their immediate local needs, and nothing is categorised as low priority as local people are more concerned about their immediate needs instead of not so critical actions [2]. Another important stakeholder is a planner, according to Huang Luxin [34] and Lowndes Vivien, Pratchett Lawrence, Stoker Gerry [32, 33] highlighted the role of authority in the entire planning process, in the absence of which, and no plans can be formulated. Therefore, democracy is all about participation where people seek to get solutions to their problems with the help of efficient Planners, who understand local customs, resources, issues, and local solutions and the accountable legitimate authority that feels participation initiatives are positive and meaningful. Unfortunately, all the attributes are studied in isolation and not comprehensively as a whole that make this an opportunity for the researcher to formulate a framework for comprehensive local area planning in totality. Lastly, the study suggests that developing countries are yet to catch up with the pace and explore the benefits of local area planning in its true essence.

India, being one of the largest economy is lagging in exploring the prospects of local area planning in Indian context. Dr. Yogeshwar Shukla (2012) stated that in the last 50 years, the central focus of Indian development strategy has switched from poverty reduction to raising economic growth and inclusive development. In this regard, 74th Constitutional amendment act was passed by the Indian Parliament in 1992. This act provided for autonomy to the Urban Local Bodies in urban India, through decentralization of the governance structure. With this, the relevance of participatory planning at local level is established in Indian planning machinery and sooner or later every local authority must adopt this approach. Despite of efforts, Local Area Plans have not been able to achieve its deliverables in the absence of quantitative and qualitative research.

This demand for investigation of many veiled issues in the local area planning process, there is a need to address the issues pertaining to participatory planning to establish Local Area Plans as a qualitative and quantitative tool for assessing public satisfaction and participation in the planning process in India. Therefore, local area planning in Indian context becomes the other area for future research.

VI. CONCLUSION

The paper intends to provide a systematic review of the scientific literature pertaining to local area planning and its implementation for effective governance in urban areas. Such an effort has not been undertaken in past. Nevertheless, the existed literature on the subject was found to be fragmented.

It is difficult to be exhaustive, while evaluating and examining a topic such as local area planning as it forms a part of many research areas. Consequently, the paper focused specifically on local area plans and participatory solutions. As a first result, a broad variety of topics was found, some of which have remained popular over time like models and tools of local area planning while few topics have emerged recently, for instance role of web- based GIS in planning for local areas. Furthermore, the research methods by which the focus and gaps in the present planning process are identified have been elaborated. It is discovered that there is a room for further quantitative methodological investigation in the subject. Moreover, considering the citation index analysis of the corpus, it was observed as how few papers form a critical part of the entire research on the subject.

Through systemic review, the issues and gaps in the existing literature are identified and finally, this paper identifies three areas for further investigation, specifically, stakeholder analysis, comprehensive local area planning and local level planning in developing economies like India. Research in these areas, in the opinion of the authors, may contribute to consolidating the existing body of literature on local area planning and maintaining the necessary multidisciplinary character of the research field.

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