Figure 10.18   The suburban environment. (a) Sedgwick County, Kansas and (b) Salt Lake City, Kolkata.

provided. The approach was pioneered in Africa and Latin America but has also been widely used in India. The example included here, Aranya Township in India, had much more thought than usual put into its design. In sites-and-services projects, the houses are literally built by the owners themselves although skilled craftspeople often assist. For wealthy people, in contrast, the division of labour is sharply defined. Contractors build their houses.

Middle income and wealthy people have the purchasing power to make the choices that fit their own needs, as they perceive them. Yet questions are being asked as to whether the market place is providing a sufficient diversity of neighbourhood types to give people a real choice. Most plug-in residential neighbourhood designs are highly conservative in nature and not responsive to the emerging demographic characteristics of the population or the needs of the people who are not actually doing the purchasing. For instance, the journey to school on foot independently by children is seldom a topic of consideration nor are the needs of the fragile elderly. The neighbourhood design types tend to be standard subdivisions. If they can be sold they are regarded as good.

The sites-and-services approach has had mixed successes. It works when the areas selected for development are close to jobs and it works when the projects are not heavily subsidized by the public sector. If a site is distant from jobs nobody wants to live there and if heavily subsidized the cash-strapped poor are likely to sell their plots at market rates to higher-income groups in order to obtain cash in hand.

Major references

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