

Reviving Underutilised Urban Spaces in Indian Cities Through Architecture: A Review

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51584/IJRIAS.2026.11090111>

Received: 25 September 2026; Accepted: 30 September 2026; Published: 19 October 2026

ABSTRACT

Underutilised urban spaces in Indian cities—including river edges, heritage landscapes, historic commercial streets and residual areas beneath elevated infrastructure—are often treated as isolated design problems. This paper re-examines them as public, ecological and institutional assets whose regeneration must be assessed alongside questions of access, livelihood, heritage and long-term stewardship. The study undertakes a qualitative comparative review of four implemented Indian projects: the Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad, Sunder Nursery in Delhi, the Chandni Chowk redevelopment in Old Delhi and One Green Mile in Mumbai. The cases were selected for typological contrast, public-space orientation, operational status and availability of project documentation. A six-criterion matrix evaluates the retention of existing fabric or infrastructure, ecological performance, heritage sensitivity, accessibility and public-realm quality, community inclusion, and governance and maintenance. The comparison shows that adaptive layering and place-specific public-realm design are transferable strategies, but the evidence base is uneven: project documents commonly record physical interventions, while independent post-occupancy, distributional and displacement evidence is much less available. The paper contributes a context-sensitive typology–evidence–governance framework for Indian urban regeneration. It argues that a project should be considered successful only when design quality is matched by measurable environmental performance, meaningful participation, livelihood protection, transparent delivery arrangements and funded maintenance.

Keywords: Adaptive Reuse; Urban Regeneration; Underutilised Urban Space; Public Realm; Heritage Conservation; Community Inclusion; India

INTRODUCTION

India's urbanisation is producing cities in which growth and neglect coexist. Centrally located river edges, historic landscapes, market streets and spaces beneath flyovers may possess high public value while remaining physically degraded, inaccessible or poorly managed. The resulting condition is not simply vacancy. It is a mismatch between an existing spatial asset and the institutional, social and environmental systems needed to keep that asset useful.

Architecture and urban design can respond to this mismatch by working with what is already present. Adaptive reuse, landscape repair, pedestrianisation, public-space programming and the careful reinterpretation of heritage can extend the life of land, infrastructure and cultural memory. However, a new promenade, restored garden or landscaped under-flyover space is not automatically an inclusive public benefit. The same intervention may improve accessibility for some users while reducing access for others, shifting informal livelihoods or increasing the costs of occupying the surrounding area.

The central research problem is therefore evaluative: how can architectural regeneration be compared across different types of underutilised urban space without reducing success to a visual before-and-after claim? The

present study addresses this problem through four cases that differ in scale, spatial type, lead agency and heritage status. The cases are not treated as statistically representative. They are analytical cases that allow a common framework to be tested across a riverfront, a heritage garden, a historic market street and an under-flyover public-space intervention.



Figure 1. Conceptual typology of underutilised urban spaces examined in this review. The illustration is schematic; project dimensions and outcomes are assessed from the sources cited in the text.

Here in the above **Figure 1**, the study pursues four objectives: (i) to establish a defensible basis for selecting contrasting Indian regeneration cases; (ii) to synthesise design and planning principles relevant to adaptive urban revival; (iii) to compare the four cases using a common outcome-oriented framework; and (iv) to translate the comparison into actionable recommendations for architects, planners, municipal agencies and project partners. It asks three questions: What spatial and institutional conditions make a site a useful candidate for regeneration? Which strategies recur across different urban typologies? Which benefits and risks are documented, and which remain claims or evidence gaps?

The paper makes two contributions. First, it replaces a descriptive case summary with a transparent six-criterion assessment that distinguishes documented evidence from partial or unverified claims. Second, it proposes a typology–evidence–governance framework: the site's physical type determines design priorities, the available evidence determines the confidence of the findings, and governance and maintenance determine whether a project can retain public value over time.

The study is limited to secondary material. No original household survey, systematic pedestrian count, ecological measurement, post-occupancy evaluation or longitudinal displacement study was undertaken. Accordingly, the paper does not claim causal proof of social or environmental impact. Where project websites or design teams report benefits, these are identified as project-reported outcomes rather than independent evaluation.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Adaptive reuse and urban regeneration

Adaptive reuse is understood here as reprogramming an existing building, landscape, corridor, or infrastructure space to support contemporary public purposes without discarding its spatial, material, or cultural value. It is

broader than building conversion: a riverbank, historic street, or flyover can also be adaptively reused when an existing spatial condition is retained and given a new civic role (Bullen & Love, 2011). Urban regeneration adds the institutional and social dimension. It concerns coordinating physical change with mobility, ecology, livelihoods, economic activity, and public management, rather than delivering it as an isolated beautification exercise.

Public life, access and the quality of the public realm

The public-realm dimension draws on the proposition that urban spaces work through everyday use, permeability, human scale, visual and physical connectivity, and a mixture of activities (1936-, 2010; Row & Jacobs, 1962). Walkability research similarly treats accessibility, enclosure, land-use mix and the quality of the pedestrian experience as assessable design conditions rather than purely aesthetic preferences (Ewing et al., 2006). In the Indian cases, the relevant question is not only whether a site looks improved, but who can reach it, remain there, move through it, trade there and feel safe there.

Ecological performance and climate resilience

Ecological performance refers to a regenerated space's capacity to manage water, heat, biodiversity, shade, soil, vegetation, and environmental risk. This distinction matters because a landscaped surface is not equivalent to ecological restoration, and a flood-control embankment is not equivalent to a restored river system. Evidence should therefore move beyond the presence of planting and identify measurable indicators such as permeable area, shade coverage, water quality, habitat value, flood exposure, heat reduction, tree survival, and maintenance requirements (Programme, 2020; Sethi et al., 2021).

Heritage sensitivity and community inclusion

Heritage-led regeneration treats historic structures, landscapes and practices as living parts of the urban fabric. The Historic Urban Landscape approach is useful because it connects monuments to their setting, infrastructure, social use, and change over time, rather than treating conservation as the isolation of individual objects (2011). **Figure 2** depicts how community inclusion extends this principle to residents, traders, informal workers, visitors, and other users. It requires more than consultation: it includes transparent decision-making, protection or negotiated livelihood transitions, accessible design, representation in governance, and monitoring of distributional effects (Huq & Puthuvayi, 2024).



Figure 2. Conceptual framework linking adaptive reuse, ecological performance, heritage sensitivity, public life and community participation. Framework developed for this review.

These concepts are synthesised into six analytical criteria: (1) retention and reinterpretation of existing fabric or infrastructure; (2) ecological and climate performance; (3) heritage sensitivity; (4) access and public-realm quality; (5) community inclusion, livelihoods and distributional equity; and (6) governance, finance and maintenance. The criteria are intentionally connected. A project may perform strongly on physical retention and public access while remaining weak on participation or maintenance. The comparison should make that unevenness visible.

METHODOLOGY

Research design and case-selection criteria

The study uses a qualitative, comparative case-study design. The study selected cases purposively rather than randomly. A candidate project was included when it met four conditions: (a) it addressed an underutilised or degraded urban space; (b) it produced or was intended to produce a public-facing spatial intervention; (c) it had reached an operational or substantially completed stage; and (d) sufficient public documentation existed to describe the intervention and its institutional setting. To maximise analytical contrast, the final cases represent four typologies and three broad spatial scales: metropolitan riverfront, heritage landscape, historic commercial corridor and infrastructural leftover space.

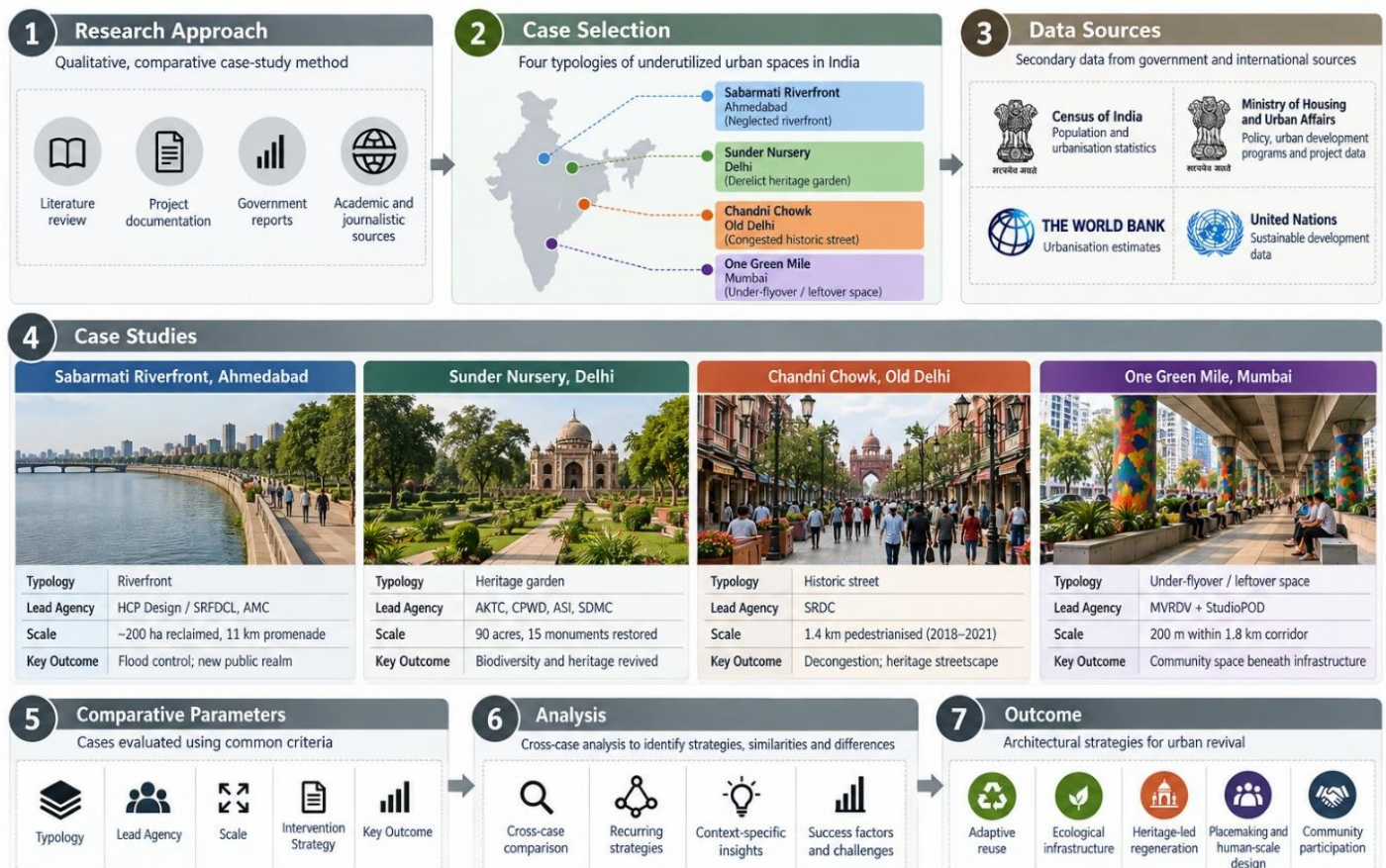


Figure 3. Revised methodology for case selection, evidence assembly and comparative assessment.

Sources and evidence hierarchy

Evidence was assembled in a defined hierarchy. Official project agencies and government departments were used for project objectives, institutional arrangements, dimensions and stated interventions. The project architects or landscape organisations were used for design intent and implementation descriptions. Peer-reviewed research was used for conceptual framing and independent critique. Reputable journalism was used only to identify implementation or maintenance issues not available in official project material. Promotional descriptions were not treated as independent proof of impact.

Each claim was classified during extraction as: documented intervention/outcome (D), partial or contested evidence (P), insufficient public outcome evidence (U), or not a principal objective (—). The classification is

conservative. For example, planted areas can be documented, but a claim of improved biodiversity requires ecological measurement. Similarly, a pedestrianised street can be documented, but a claim of improved safety or equitable benefit requires user or outcome data.

Comparative procedure

For each case, the review recorded the site condition, intervention, lead agency, scale, source type, documented benefit, limitation and evidence gap. The review then applied the six criteria consistently. The analysis does not create a single composite score because the cases differ in purpose and because a numerical ranking would imply a level of measurement not supported by the available sources. Instead, the matrix makes the strengths and limits of the public evidence visible, while the narrative explains the mechanisms and trade-offs.

Scope and limitations

The cases are not equivalent projects and are not compared as if they shared one performance target. The Sabarmati project is a large riverfront and land-reclamation programme; Sunder Nursery is a heritage and ecological landscape; Chandni Chowk is a historic street and utility-reorganisation project; and One Green Mile is a public-realm intervention under a flyover. The comparison therefore concerns transferable principles and governance conditions, not a league table. The absence of primary fieldwork is a central limitation and is carried into the interpretation of findings.

Case Studies And Data Collection

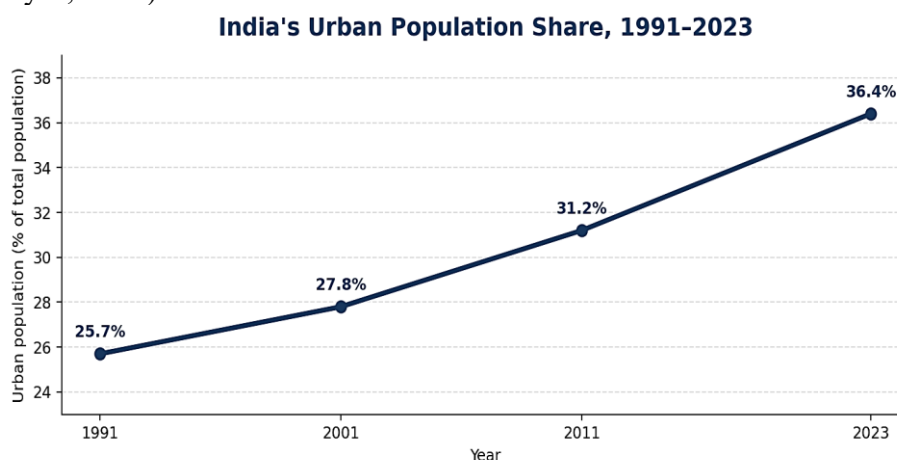
The following cases were selected because each demonstrates a distinct form of spatial reuse while providing accessible project documentation. **Table 1** below: The dimensions below are reported as project or official-source descriptions; they should not be read as independent impact measurements.

Table 1. Case-selection and evidence-base summary. Dimensions are reported by the cited project or government sources and are not treated as measured outcomes.

Case study	Typology and selection rationale	Lead agency/partners	Reported scale	Evidence base	Principal evidence limitation
Sabarmati Riverfront, Ahmedabad	Neglected river edge; metropolitan public-realm and flood-management project	SRFDCL, Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, HCP	204.91 ha reclaimed; approximately 11.25 km public riverfront on both banks	Official SRFDCL master plan; HCP project description	Independent ecological and distributional evaluation is not established in the reviewed material.
Sunder Nursery, Delhi	Heritage garden and ecological landscape	AKTC, CPWD, ASI and associated public partners	90 acres; 20 historic structures, including 15 monuments conserved within the park	Sunder Nursery; AKTC conservation documentation	Public access and conservation are documented; distributional outcomes and affordability require further study.
Chandni Chowk, Old Delhi	Historic commercial street and market corridor	Shahjahanabad Redevelopment Corporation and public agencies	Approximately 1.3 km principal redeveloped stretch; pedestrian-friendly street and integrated services	SRDC project page; government planning documentation	Maintenance, trader impacts and operational management require post-occupancy evidence.

One Green Mile, Mumbai	Under-flyover infrastructural leftover space	StudioPOD, MVRDV, Nucleus Office and Parks and MCGM	200 m under-flyover community space within a 1.8 km streetscape programme	MVRDV and StudioPOD project documentation	Most outcome claims are project-reported; long-term public access and maintenance need independent evaluation.
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Figure 4 below depicts that India's urban context reinforces the importance of this question but should not substitute for project-level evidence. Census data recorded 31.2% of the population as urban in 2011; the World Bank series based on United Nations Population Division estimates reports 36.4% for 2023. These series use different national definitions and estimation procedures, so the trend is presented as context rather than a precise forecast of future urban demand (Affairs, 2025; Bank, 2026; India, 2011). Nonetheless, these statistics underscore the persistent need for robust frameworks that evaluate public space quality across cities of varying sizes, as rapid urbanisation continues to challenge the functionality of existing urban commons (Praliya & Garg, 2019; Upadhyay & Vyas, 2025).



1991–2011: Census of India; 2023: World Bank/UN series. Definitions and estimation methods differ.

India's Urbanisation Trajectory: Concentric Pie/Donut Chart
Urban and rural shares of total population at selected years

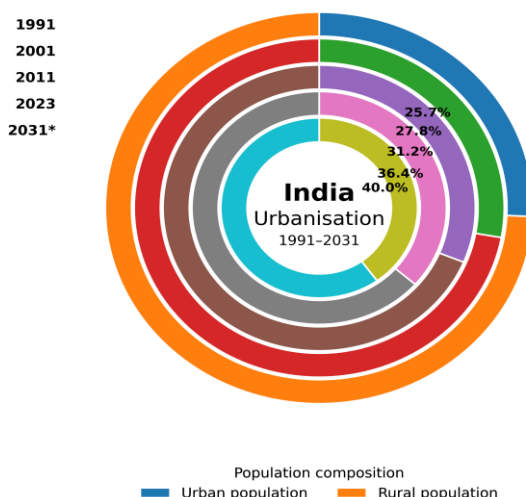


Figure 4. India's urban population share, 1991–2023. The chart combines Census of India observations with the World Bank/UN series; consider differences in definitions and estimation methods when interpreting the trend.

Sabarmati Riverfront, Ahmedabad

The Sabarmati Riverfront Development Corporation describes a public edge on both banks, with riverbed land reclaimed by channel regulation and a public riverfront extending approximately 11.25 km. The project documentation identifies promenades, parks, streets, markets, vending areas, and other public facilities, while

HCP describes embankments, sewage-interceptor infrastructure, and flood and erosion objectives (Bhatia et al., 2023). The project is therefore relevant as a case of large-scale adaptation of a river corridor into a planned public and infrastructural system.

The principal design strength is the integration of mobility, recreation, water-edge access and infrastructure in a continuous urban edge. The principal analytical caution is that land reclamation and flood-control works should not be equated with ecological restoration. The available project material documents physical works and intended public benefits, but the reviewed sources do not provide a common post-occupancy dataset on river ecology, flood-risk reduction, access by income group or the long-term effects on informal riverbank users. These questions remain evidence gaps rather than settled outcomes.

Sunder Nursery, Delhi

Sunder Nursery is documented as a 90-acre landscape with a micro-habitat zone, restored monuments and public ecological and heritage trails. The project website identifies 20 historic structures, including six World Heritage properties, and describes conservation of 15 monuments within the park. The partnership among AKTC, CPWD and ASI illustrates a conservation-led model in which landscape restoration, visitor access, interpretation and craft-based repair are organised together (Adie et al., 2020).

The case provides the clearest alignment between heritage sensitivity and ecological performance in the sample. It also demonstrates that a heritage landscape can be reactivated as everyday public infrastructure rather than preserved as an inaccessible monument. Nevertheless, the reviewed sources mainly document the project's physical and programmatic achievements. They do not establish whether access is equally useful for all nearby residents, whether visitor economies benefit surrounding communities, or how ecological gains perform under changing maintenance regimes. Visitor surveys, biodiversity baselines, and maintenance records should test those questions.

Chandni Chowk, Old Delhi

The Shahjahanabad Redevelopment Corporation frames Chandni Chowk as a project to improve the street, create a pedestrian-friendly environment, integrate services and restore a heritage setting. The principal redeveloped stretch is commonly reported as approximately 1.3 km and was opened to the public in 2021. The case represents regeneration within a living commercial and religious precinct rather than a cleared heritage district (Pati & Husain, 2023).

The project demonstrates the value of treating street design, utilities, movement and heritage character as one system. Pedestrian space and visual order can support public life, but the intervention also changes loading, access, vending, delivery, and trading routines (Zeido, 2023). Therefore, describing the project only as decongestion or beautification is insufficient. The available material does not provide a consistent before-and-after dataset for pedestrian volumes, trader income, accessibility for people with disabilities, safety incidents or maintenance costs. The review consequently records the intended and documented intervention while treating social and operational outcomes as partial evidence.

One Green Mile, Mumbai

One Green Mile converts a 200-metre section of unused space beneath the Senapati Bapat Marg flyover into a community space within an approximately 1.8 km streetscape and transport programme. MVRDV describes public rooms, seating, sport, reading, planting, pedestrian and cycling connections, lighting and crossings. Studio POD additionally describes tactical testing before permanent works and reports new trees, public space and improved daily movement along the wider corridor (Smith et al., 2017).

The case matters because it expands adaptive reuse beyond heritage buildings and landscapes to infrastructure. It shows how a fixed structural constraint can be reframed as shade, shelter, identity and public programming. At the same time, the project is a relatively small and highly designed intervention. The reviewed documentation does not establish whether the model has been replicated at scale, how the space is maintained, who controls

programming, or whether noise, air-quality and heat conditions have been measured over time. Such indicators are necessary before presenting the project as a universally transferable solution.

Comparative Analysis

The four cases share an approach of adaptive layering: they retain existing spatial conditions and give them new public functions. **Table 2** also highlights their differences. In the riverfront case, the main design problem is coordinating water, land reclamation, mobility, public access and resettlement. In Sunder Nursery, the priority is integrating conservation, biodiversity and public use. In Chandni Chowk, movement, utilities, trading and heritage character must operate together. In One Green Mile, the design must work within an elevated structure while addressing accessibility, shade, noise, safety and stewardship.

Table 2. Comparative assessment matrix

Case Study	Existing fabric / infrastructure	Ecological performance	Heritage sensitivity	Access / public realm	Community inclusion	Governance / maintenance
Sabarmati Riverfront	D	P	—	D	P	D
Sunder Nursery	D	D	D	D	P	D
Chandni Chowk	D	U	D	D	P	P
One Green Mile	D	P	—	D	P	P

In the table above (Table 2. Comparative assessment matrix. D = documented intervention or outcome; P = partial or contested evidence; U = insufficient public outcome evidence; — = not a principal objective. The matrix is an evidence profile, not a performance ranking.)

The matrix shows a consistent asymmetry. Physical intervention and public-realm provision are relatively well documented across all four cases. Ecological, inclusion and maintenance outcomes are less consistently measured. Heritage sensitivity is strongest where heritage is an explicit project objective—Sunder Nursery and Chandni Chowk—and is not a principal objective in the riverfront and under-flyover cases. This does not mean the latter have no cultural value; it means heritage is not the primary basis on which their interventions are presented or assessed.

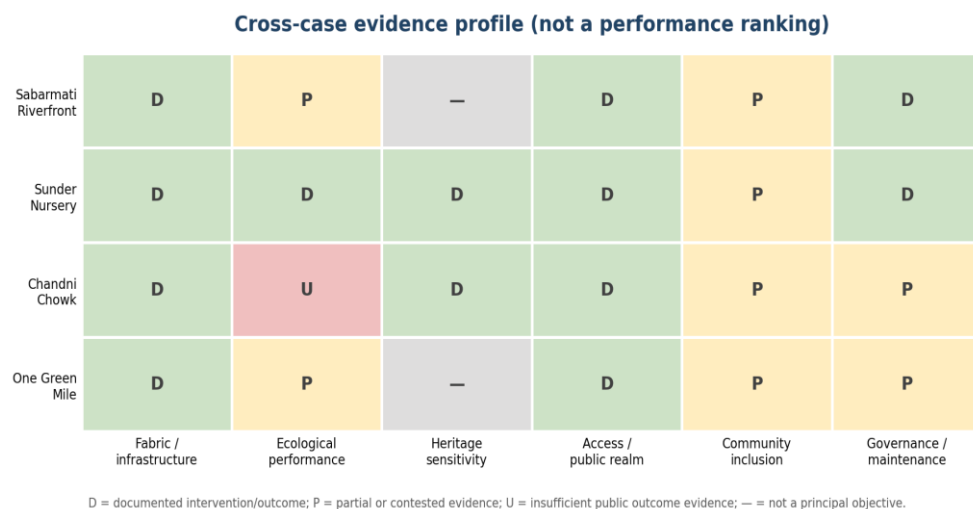


Figure 5. Cross-case evidence profile based on the six analytical criteria. The coding communicates the strength of the public evidence available for this review, not an overall project score.

Retention and adaptive layering

All four cases retain an existing spatial asset, but retention operates at different scales. Sabarmati retains the river corridor while substantially reconfiguring its banks and land-water relationship. Sunder Nursery retains the historic landscape and monuments while repairing ecological and visitor systems. Chandni Chowk retains the street and its commercial identity while reorganising movement and services. One Green Mile retains the flyover as fixed infrastructure and adapts the space beneath it. The transferable principle is therefore not “preserve everything” but “identify what carries spatial, ecological, cultural or infrastructural value before deciding what to replace.”

Ecological claims require measurable indicators

The cases demonstrate different ecological ambitions, but their evidence is uneven. Sabarmati provides documented sewerage, embankment, and landscape infrastructure; Sunder Nursery documents a micro-habitat, ecological diversity, and water and garden systems; One Green Mile documents planting and cooling or noise-reduction intentions; Chandni Chowk is primarily a movement, utility, and heritage project. These interventions should not be combined under the single label “green regeneration.” A stronger evaluation would specify the baseline, indicator, time horizon and responsible monitoring agency for each ecological claim.

Public access does not automatically equal social inclusion

Each case expands or reorganises public access, but the meaning of access differs. A promenade can be physically open while still being difficult for informal workers or displaced residents to use. A heritage garden can be publicly accessible while visitor costs, distance and programming shape who benefits. A pedestrian street can improve walking conditions while complicating goods movement and shop operations. An under-flyover space can be visually inclusive, while a limited set of institutions control its programming and maintenance. The review therefore treats inclusion as a governance and distribution question, not as a visual attribute.

Governance and maintenance are design variables

The cases also differ in delivery structure. Sabarmati uses a dedicated development corporation and a self-financing model linked to reclaimed land; Sunder Nursery depends on coordination between conservation, public works and cultural institutions; Chandni Chowk is delivered through a public redevelopment corporation in a dense, active market; and One Green Mile combines a private client, urban design practice and municipal context. These arrangements influence who decides, who pays, who maintains, who is accountable and whose knowledge is included. Long-term public value therefore depends as much on the institutional architecture around the built intervention as on the spatial design.

DISCUSSION: A CONTEXT-SENSITIVE FRAMEWORK FOR INDIAN CITIES

The comparison suggests that the most useful contribution is not a universal design recipe. It is a decision framework that connects typology, evidence and governance. The same design move cannot be transferred unchanged from a riverfront to a historic bazaar or from a heritage garden to an under-flyover corridor. What can be transferred is a disciplined sequence of questions: What existing asset is being retained? What environmental and public-life problem is the intervention solving? Which users and livelihoods may be affected? What evidence will demonstrate success? Who will fund and maintain the result?



Figure 6. Growth in under-flyover space revival initiatives in Delhi, 2017 vs. 2025.

In the above **Figure 6**. Future research must therefore move beyond individual case interventions to evaluate how geospatial methodologies and participatory governance can harmonise these projects with broader, city-wide sustainability objectives. All four case studies produced clear public benefits — flood resilience and new open space at Sabarmati, restored biodiversity and heritage at Sunder Nursery

Typology-specific design priorities

Table 3. Typology-specific translation of the comparative findings into design and monitoring guidance.

Typology	Primary design problem	Recommended response	Minimum monitoring indicators
Riverfront	Water edge, flood risk, public access, sewage and land-water ecology	Set back or grade public movement where feasible; combine flood management with habitat and water-quality targets; map affected users and provide rehabilitation and livelihood continuity before construction.	Flood exposure; water quality; accessible edge length; shade; displaced/rehabilitated households; vendor access.
Heritage garden/precinct	Monument conservation, landscape systems, biodiversity and visitor interpretation	Conserve fabric through compatible repair; retain ecological layers; integrate trails, interpretation and universal access; manage visitor pressure and maintenance as part of conservation.	Monument condition; biodiversity; tree survival; visitor profile; access cost; maintenance expenditure.
Historic street/bazaar	Pedestrian movement, loading, services, commerce and living heritage	Design for walking and trading together; provide loading windows, vendor and trader consultation, accessible crossings, utility coordination and a maintenance authority.	Pedestrian volumes; delivery access; trader income; safety; universal access; utility failures; maintenance response time.
Under-flyover leftover space	Noise, heat, air quality, structural constraints, safety and fragmented ownership	Treat the space as a complete street or civic room; test temporary uses; provide lighting, visibility, shade, drainage and low-maintenance planting; define programming and responsibility.	Thermal comfort; noise and air quality; footfall; cycling and walking continuity; user diversity; operating cost; maintenance frequency.

Table 3 above: Each typology requires a site-specific response because its problems differ in ecology, heritage, mobility, livelihoods, safety, and environmental conditions. Effective urban revival should therefore integrate physical design with social continuity, environmental performance and measurable post-intervention monitoring.

Actionable recommendations

For architects and urban designers: begin with an asset-and-risk audit that records existing fabric, land and water systems, movement patterns, informal use, tenure, shade, drainage and maintenance conditions. Use adaptive layering where it reduces demolition and embodied carbon, but do not romanticise existing conditions that are unsafe or inequitable. Make universal access, climate comfort, lighting, servicing and maintenance part of the concept design rather than post-design additions.

For municipal and development agencies: require a baseline and a post-occupancy plan before approving public-realm regeneration. The baseline should include users, livelihoods, access, ecological conditions, flood or heat risk and operating cost. Public agencies should nominate a single accountable maintenance authority, publish roles across partner institutions and ring-fence recurrent funds. Where land-value capture or commercial development helps finance a project, the public benefits, affordability safeguards and maintenance obligations should be explicit.

For community participation and social safeguards: identify residents, traders, vendors, commuters, visitors, people with disabilities, children, older people and maintenance workers as distinct user groups. Participation should occur before design decisions are fixed and should be linked to a documented response matrix. Where construction changes access or displaces use, provide a rehabilitation, compensation or livelihood-transition plan

and report its implementation. Consultation without an accountable response is not sufficient evidence of inclusion.

For monitoring and future research: use mixed methods combining GIS, environmental sensors, pedestrian counts, user surveys, interviews, maintenance logs and financial records. Research should compare conditions before and after intervention, track distributional outcomes and examine whether the project remains accessible and maintained five or ten years after completion. Primary fieldwork is particularly important for the social-cost questions that secondary project descriptions cannot settle.

Original contribution and limitations

This review's original contribution is integrating three analytical layers often separated in case-study writing. The typology layer identifies the physical and cultural problem; the evidence layer distinguishes documented action from claimed or unmeasured benefit; and the governance layer asks how the intervention will be financed, operated and maintained. This framework is specifically useful in India because regeneration projects frequently involve multiple agencies, rapidly changing urban pressures, mixed formal and informal uses, and uneven post-occupancy data. Its limitation is that it remains a secondary-source framework and must be tested through field-based comparative research.

CONCLUSION

Underutilised urban spaces in Indian cities are not a single category of vacant land. They are different kinds of public, ecological, cultural and infrastructural assets that require different forms of architectural and institutional work. The four cases show that adaptive layering, public-realm improvement, ecological repair and heritage-sensitive design can create new value without treating existing urban conditions as disposable. They also show that the strongest evidence usually concerns what was built, while the weakest evidence concerns who benefits, how ecological performance changes and whether the project remains maintained. The review answers the first research question by identifying four selection conditions: a recognisable underutilised spatial asset, a public-facing intervention, an operational or substantially completed project and sufficient documentation for comparison. It answers the second by showing that retention, contextual programming, ecological integration, heritage sensitivity and human-scale access recur across typologies, but in different combinations. It answers the third by demonstrating that physical benefits cannot be separated from participation, livelihood, governance and maintenance. The most transferable lesson is consequently procedural: diagnose the asset, define measurable outcomes, involve affected users, assign institutional responsibility and monitor the result. The paper does not claim that the four projects prove a universal model of urban regeneration. Rather, they support a context-sensitive framework through which architects, planners and municipal authorities can decide what to retain, what to change, what to measure and whom to protect. Future research should apply this framework through primary fieldwork, longitudinal monitoring and comparative analysis of projects that did not achieve their intended public outcomes.

Conflict of interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Funding: No external funding was reported for this review.

Data availability: The study uses publicly available secondary sources listed in the reference section. *Table 2* includes the analytical coding matrix.

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