

## Reclaiming the In-Between: Understanding Urban Voids and Their Impact on Urban Growth. A case study of Buldhana

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### Abstract:

Cities are living ecosystems woven together by the everyday lives of their people. Yet, driven by rapid, piecemeal growth, emerging Tier-2 and Tier-3 Indian towns often lack robust planning frameworks, leaving behind fragmented, underutilized parcels known as urban voids. Stranded under infrastructure or left neglected, these dead zones act as silent wounds in a neighbourhood. They breed safety concerns, invite decline, and slowly erode a community's well-being. However, in an era where shared open space is a luxury, these liabilities hold the secret to a town's revival—acting as hidden canvases waiting to be reclaimed.

This research steps into the gap, offering a human-centered framework to rescue overlooked spaces within the Buldhana Municipal Council. Choosing Buldhana as a classic archetype of secondary Indian towns, the study shifts focus from macro-level urban theories to the practical constraints of managing internal spatial decay. Instead of relying purely on satellite data, this study blends technical spatial tracking with lived experiences. High-resolution Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping and field observations are paired with community surveys, capturing the real frustrations and hopes of local residents.

To give planners an actionable tool for recovery, a Multi-Criteria Decision-Making approach was used to build an Urban Voids Priority Index (UVPI). This index ranks spaces based on community needs, accessibility, ownership, and safety. The findings reveal a deeply human paradox: while Buldhana has an abundance of trapped, wasted land, its families suffer from a severe lack of safe places to gather.

To bridge this disconnect, this paper advocates for tactical urbanism and place making. It maps out how low-cost, community-driven design tweaks can incrementally turn discarded corners into vibrant pocket parks or markets. Ultimately, this study offers a warm, scalable roadmap for local leaders, proving that by repairing broken, "in-between" spaces, we can fundamentally elevate the safety, comfort, and joy of everyday small-town life.