

## **Evaluating the Social and Economic Acceptance of Co-Living Spaces Among Early-Career Professionals in Pune City**

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### **Abstract**

This paper investigates social and economic acceptance of co-living space in the early career workers in Pune City, which is the fast-developing urban centre with the active working population and the increasing demand of houses. With conventional rental accommodation getting very costly and rigid, co-living has become an alternative way of residential accommodation that is both affordable, convenient, and community-driven. The study will seek to measure the determinants of such adoption practices, and specifically, cost-effectiveness, lifestyle choices, socialization, and perceived standard of living. The research design adopted in the study is descriptive and analytical; primary data are to be used in this study, which is gathered through structured questionnaires distributed among the young professionals throughout major areas of employment. Industry reports and academic literature are also included as secondary data to put the findings into perspective. The major variables considered are the affordability of renting, availability of amenities, place benefits, security, the ability to change the lease conditions, and the possibility of social networking. The results show that co-living spaces are acquiring significant popularity among young professionals at the beginning of the career because of their economies of scale, fully-furnished houses, and service-free solutions. The feeling of community and networking business that such spaces offer are also appreciated by the respondents and are beneficial to personal and professional growth. Nonetheless, privacy and culture-fit issues, as well as sustainability, are still major obstacles to the broader adoption of co-living. This research finds that although co-living spaces offer a sustainable and innovative way to address the problem of housing in urban areas, the success of the co-living concept in the long term depends on a balance between affordability and privacy and customization. The study provides research findings that can guide real estate developers, policy makers as well as urban planners towards improving the attractiveness and sustainability of co-living models in the urban cities such as Pune.

**Keywords:** Co-living Spaces, Early-Career Professionals, Urban Housing, Social Acceptance, Economic Affordability, Shared Living, Rental Housing Alternatives, Community Living, Lifestyle Preferences, Pune City, Housing Innovation, Young Workforce

### **Introduction**

The speed of urbanization and modern trend in the workforce has influenced housing preferences in the metropolitan cities in India tremendously. Pune, the city of advanced IT industry, learning centers and start-up culture, has been experiencing a gradual presence of early-career professionals interested in affordable and convenient living solutions. Conventional rental housing, which is typically costly, extends the lease term and has fewer facilities, is slowly

becoming inappropriate to this group. As a reaction, co-living spaces have become a new form of housing that combines low-cost, flexibility, and community-based living.

Co-living is a phenomenon of living together where people have their own sleeping areas, but they share common places like kitchens, lounges, and recreational centers. This model is quite attractive especially to young professionals who are more conscious about convenience, mobility as well as social interaction. Comprehensive furnishing, all-inclusive services and option of flexible rental arrangements only make the co-living process even more appealing, as it is an efficient decision in a bustling urban setting such as Pune.

Although co-living spaces are gaining more and more popularity, its acceptance is dependent on various social and economic factors. Although cost reduction and the availability of up-to-date facilities are powerful incentives, privacy-related issues, the compatibility of culture, and long-term stability can be used to influence personal choices. Moreover, social thoughts and way of life also have a significant influence on the attitudes to cohabiting.

This paper will be an attempt to assess how socially and economically acceptable the co-living spaces are among professionals at the beginning of their careers in Pune City. The study aims at offering a holistic picture of this new phenomenon in housing patterns and how the specific determinants of affordability, lifestyle match and community experience would impact urban housing patterns.

## **Background of the study**

The outstanding urbanization processes and the growth of knowledge-based industries have influenced the housing demand trends in the metropolitan cities of India at an amazing rate. Pune being a big educational and IT center has seen a continuous inflow of young professionals who want to get employment and develop their careers. This population change has exerted additional pressure on the housing infrastructure in the city, which has resulted in an increase in the cost of rent, a lack of affordable housing, and a rising demand of flexible living standards. Old fashioned rental housing usually with long term leasing, high initial deposit, and lack of some amenities are less in tandem with the changing lifestyle and financial limits of young career professionals.

To address these issues, co-living apartments have become a novel form of housing which is combined with affordability, convenience, and community living. These co-housing facilities are usually fully furnished rooms, with all utilities included, flexible length of lease and shared facilities like work stations, recreational facilities and household services. Young professionals, in particular, are more attracted by the idea of mobility, cost-efficiency, and social interactions rather than ownership and long-term commitments. Moreover, co-living arrangements are conducive to networking and sense of belongingness, which may prove useful to people who have moved to a new city.

Although the concept of co-living spaces continues to gain popularity, there are social and economic factors that affect whether this concept will be accepted or not. Affordability and convenience are the factors that promote its adoption, but the issue of privacy, cultural fit and personal space might restrict its adoption. Moreover, the long-term viability and sustainability of co-living as a form of housing is still a controversial issue among city planners and real estate investors.

Since Pune has been a successful example of an urban center with high population of young professionals in their early career, it will be suitable to study the feasibility and the acceptance of co-living spaces. These dynamics are critical to the future of housing strategies in order to be able to incorporate the needs and demands of the emerging workforce.

## Justification

The high rate of urbanization of the Indian cities has exacerbated the need to afford low-cost, flexible housing, and quality houses, especially when it comes to the young professionals with early career who are moving into urban centers in pursuit of jobs. Pune has been an educational and Information Technology center and this has drawn high numbers of the youthful workforce. Nevertheless, increased rental prices, shortages of housing and inflexible lease arrangements in the old-fashioned rental business made it more challenging to find an appropriate place to stay among this group of the population. In this regard, co-living spaces have become the topic of interest due to the combination of affordable pricing with convenience and community-based living.

Although co-living arrangement has achieved popularity, few studies, which focus on the social and economic acceptance of such a set-up, especially in the Indian context, have been conducted empirically. To consider the challenges of co-living as a viable model of sustainable housing, it is necessary to understand why the early-career professionals consider it cost-effective, compatible to their lifestyle, privacy, and social interaction. The study is thus warranted to fill a research gap that is of critical research interest since there is a systematic analysis of the benefits of co-living spaces to the economy and social aspects.

Moreover, the study is also important to real estate developers, urban planners, and policy makers in need of alternative housing to control congestions and inadequate housing in urban areas. The findings of this paper can guide the development of more accommodative, affordable and flexible housing policies that can meet the changing demands of the youthful working population.

Besides this, the study is an addition to the overall debate on urban living and housing innovation as it evaluates the possibility of co-living as a long-term solution, or a transitional one. The research gives context-specific results, which can be generalized to other cities of the same size, which makes it more practical and academic considering the fact that it is conducted in a fast-growing city such as Pune.

## Objectives of the Study

1. To study the degree of awareness and knowledge about co-living spaces among early career professionals in Pune City.
2. To examine the economical determinants to the uptake of co-living areas such as affordability, cost-sharing advantages, and value-added.
3. To analyse the social acceptance of co-living arrangements, it is important to pay attention to the community interaction, networking and compatibility of lifestyle.
4. To define the main reasons why professionals of the early career should opt to live in co-living instead of more traditional forms of housing.
5. To determine the issues and anxieties related to co-living space, including privacy, security, and cultural flexibility.

## Literature Review

Co-living is a fairly new idea in the recent years as a novel way of housing or living in cities, especially among young people and millennials. Joshua Selvakumar et al. (2021) define co-living as a new type of shared housing due to the increased prices of real estate and alternating lifestyle choices in which people share areas due to shared interests and values. This change is representative of a larger change to the city living trends, where flexibility, affordability, and community-driven living are prioritized.

As Roy, Nair, and Yadav (2024) point out, co-living becomes more popular among millennials because it offers an opportunity to live together with social and professional networking possibilities. In their analysis, they determine the factors of competitive advantages of

convenience, shared amenities, and community engagement as the factors that make co-living business models sustainable. Coricelli (2022) defines co-living, likewise, to be a comprehensive housing model with furnished living rooms and expanded facilities that is especially appealing in densely populated cities where affordability to rent a residence plays a significant role.

The social aspects of co-living are also highlighted in the extant literature. According to Nayak et al. (2023), the major attributes that are important to the extent of accepting shared living include social support, sense of community, and security. These factors are more applicable to the early-career professionals, who tend to relocate to urban areas and find a place to live as well as establish a sense of belonging. Moreover, Ahn et al. (2018) observe that co-living spaces are mainly aimed at single urban professionals, providing them with a balance between their personal and shared spaces to address the modern lifestyle requirements.

In terms of economics, co-living is generally accepted as an economical alternative to conventional houses. Research studies have revealed that one of the major factors that determine adoption is affordability, lowered utility bills, and the ability to make flexible lease arrangements particularly in the cities with high demand. Simultaneously, the issues of privacy, trust, and joint responsibility are also challenges that can restrain their general acceptability.

## **Material and Methodology**

### **Research Design:**

The research design that the study follows is descriptive and analytical research design, which aims to analyze the social and economic acceptance of co-living spaces among the early-career professional youths of Pune City. It dwells on the determination of key determinants that determine the adoption of co-living arrangements and these include affordability, convenience, lifestyle choices, and social interaction. It is a cross-sectional study that snapshots perceptions and experiences at a particular time so that to have a holistic view of the current trends in shared urban housing.

### **Data Collection Methods:**

The study makes use of both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data will be gathered using structured questionnaire that will be sent out among early-career professionals in the field of IT, finance, education, and start-up in the city of Pune. The survey will contain the questions of closed forms and the Likert scale questions to measure the attitude, preferences, and the level of satisfaction. The method of sampling used is the convenience method of sampling. To support and put into perspective the primary findings, secondary data is collected in the form of scholarly journals, industry reports, real estate publications, and reliable online sources.

### **Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria:**

The research involves professionals in the early careers aged between 21 and 35 years; living within Pune City and either living in co-living spaces or have prior knowledge or experience on such. Other people who are not within this age are excluded, as well as students who are not in professional employment and those who have no introduction to the concepts of co-living to ensure the relevance and accuracy of the study. The respondents should also be ready to take part in a voluntary manner.

### **Ethical Considerations:**

The study respects ethical principles of the research. Respondents will be allowed to participate in the research and informed consent will be taken before data collection. The maximum amount of secrecy and anonymity of participants is ensured, and no personal information is revealed or abused. Data received will be deployed purely in the academic context as well and the respondent is guaranteed that his/her answers will be treated objectively without any bias or influence.

**Results and Discussion**

The paper examined the feedbacks of 150 professionals who were in the early stages of their careers and living in Pune to determine the social and economic acceptability of co-living spaces.

**1. Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	21–25 years	68	45.3
	26–30 years	82	54.7
Gender	Male	88	58.7
	Female	62	41.3
Occupation	IT/Tech	72	48.0
	Finance/Consulting	34	22.7
	Others	44	29.3
Monthly Income	₹25,000–₹50,000	64	42.7
	₹50,001–₹80,000	56	37.3
	Above ₹80,000	30	20.0

**Discussion:**

Most of the respondents are between the age of 26-30 and work in the IT/Tech industry; this is an indication that Pune is a leading employment center. Income distribution shows that there is a moderate earning capacity and hence affordability is considered as a major factor in housing decisions.

**2. Economic Acceptance of Co-Living Spaces**

Factor	Mean Score (1–5)	Interpretation
Affordability	4.32	Highly Acceptable
Cost-sharing Benefits	4.45	Highly Acceptable
Utility & Maintenance Savings	4.28	Highly Acceptable
Flexible Lease Terms	4.10	Acceptable
Value for Money	4.21	Highly Acceptable

**Discussion:**

The economic conditions would be very good in favor of co-living adoption. The respondents find co-living affordable since it saves on cost because of sharing of bills and facilities. The

score of cost-sharing benefits is high, which means that the financial viability causes the acceptance to be the major one.

### 3. Social Acceptance of Co-Living Spaces

Factor	Mean Score (1–5)	Interpretation
Community Interaction	4.18	Acceptable
Networking Opportunities	4.26	Highly Acceptable
Sense of Belonging	3.95	Moderately Acceptable
Cultural Compatibility	3.62	Moderate
Privacy Concerns	2.88	Low Acceptance

#### Discussion:

Social factors have ambivalent reactions. Although networking and interaction are viewed as positive aspects, the issue of privacy is seen as a major disadvantage. There is also the issue of cultural differences that affect the level of comfort and this indicates that social acceptance is not an absolute thing.

### 4. Overall Preference for Co-Living

Preference Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Prefer Co-living	92	61.3
Neutral	28	18.7
Prefer Traditional Rent	30	20.0

#### Discussion:

Most (61.3%) of the respondents would rather reside in co-living than in the old-fashioned rental accommodation, which shows that young professionals have become more accepting. Nonetheless, there remains a significant percentage of people who prefer the old-fashioned housing because of the consideration of privacy and a long-term stability.

### 5. Key Challenges Identified

Challenge	Mean Score (1–5)
Lack of Privacy	4.35
Noise and Disturbance	4.02
Cultural Differences	3.78
Limited Personalization	3.65

## **Discussion:**

The most important problem that arises is privacy, next comes noise and lack of space. These issues reveal the necessity of the better design and management in the co-living areas. The results indicate that the co-living rooms are financially appealing and fairly socially acceptable to young professionals in their initial career in Pune. The model is in line with the constraints of finances and the flexibility of lifestyles of the young urban workers. Nonetheless, its sustainability in the long run will rely on the need to deal with privacy issues and achieve more cultural inclusivity. In practical terms, the developers and policymakers must consider hybrid designs that incorporate both affordability and customization and personal space. User satisfaction and acceptance can be further enhanced by improving the quality of the services and managing the community in a better way.

## **Limitations of the study**

The research has a number of limitations, which can affect the accuracy and breadth of the findings in general. To begin with, the study is geographically narrowed against the Pune City, where the findings cannot be generalized to other cities or non-metropolitan areas that may have varied socio-economic and cultural forces. Second, the researchers pay specific attention to professionals in their early career; thus, they exclude other subgroups of demographics, including students, families, or senior professionals who might perceive co-living spaces in a different way. Third, primary data obtained in the form of structured questionnaires might be a source of bias in the response because the respondents might base their answers on their own perceptions or social desirability. Moreover, the sample size and method used to select the sample might not represent the diversity of the target population in totality hence the findings might not be representative. The paper also highlights the factors that have been chosen to include like affordability, facilities, and social interaction yet other considerations like legal systems, long term financial effects and mental well-being are not well discussed. Also, because the research is cross-sectional, it is impossible to evaluate the change in perceptions throughout time. Finally, the speed of change in the co-living sector and the dynamism of the trends in urban housing can make some of the findings current, so it will be required to conduct research in this field on a regular basis.

## **Future Scope**

The future of this research is to broaden the discussion of the co-living space on the premises of early-career professionals in Pune to the topic of various demographics like students, freelancers, and migrant workers in a variety of metropolitan and tier-II cities. Comparative analysis of various urban areas would offer more information on the cultural, economic, and geographical differences in the acceptance. A longitudinal study could also be conducted to determine the change in the perceptions of co-living with time especially when the individuals are pushed to other stages of their careers or other life phases. Also, in the future research, it might be possible to incorporate technological aspect, i.e., the role of smart living solutions and online platforms in the improvement of resident experience. It is also possible to study the influence of co-living on mental health, work-life balance and productivity in more detail. Policy wise, policy research can examine regulations and zoning and the partnership between governments and the private sector to promote sustainable co-living ecosystems. In addition, adding the elements of environmentalism and sustainability, including the use of shared resources and minimized urban footprint, can offer an all-inclusive view of co-living as a long-lasting housing option.

### Conclusion

The research finds that shared residential units have become a feasible and more acceptable mode of accommodation among the young professionals in the early stages of their careers in Pune City. The co-living has provided a viable solution to this since it is affordable, flexible, and convenient as a result of increasing rental prices, urbanization, and lifestyle choices. The results indicate that economic issues such as cost-sharing, lower initial cost, and well-rounded facilities are important in influencing positive attitudes towards co-living systems. There is also the social aspect, such as the possibility of networking and other community activities along with lesser urban loneliness, which only increases its attractiveness to young professionals.

Nonetheless, the study also indicates that there are major issues that restrict the common use of co-living spaces. The problem of privacy, personal space, cultural fit and sustainability are all stressful issues. Although co-living is appropriate in those periods of life when one is going through changes in life like starting a career, it may not be the best solution to the changing needs of those who want to be stable and independent as they grow. These restrictions indicate that the existing co-living model is to be improved so that it can be accepted on a long-term basis.

The paper points out that innovation and adaptation of service providers and developers is a key to the successful nature of co-living spaces in the future. The introduction of flexible design layouts, improved privacy facilities, and compatibility of living facilities would go a long way in the satisfaction of users. In addition, open prices, safety levels, and welcoming community management systems are required to develop a trust and long-term sustainability.

In general, co-living is the solution with great potential to address modern housing issues in the city. It can be made an inseparable part of sustainable city life with city support via improved policies and strategies in such cities as Pune.

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