Overview: Social Spaces in Urban Areas

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Abstract: *Currently, cities are undergoing a dynamic process of social and economic transformation, in which urban spaces is playing an increasingly important role. Within such a fast developing context, the nature of social spaces in our urban areas gets transformed. Social spaces are the mirror of society; it shows the cultural realm of a city. A space where a human being does not feel as an individual entity but rather a people get together and interact with other fellow being of either same cultural or ethnic background or of different cultural people. Though the nature of social spaces get transformed from era to era; as because the needs of the people changed from time to time.*

Keywords Old city, Urban, Spaces, Eco Spaces, Social Spaces, Physical Infrastructure, Governance, Sustainability, Quality of life, Transformation.

1. INTRODUCTION:

The future of the human civilizations is going to be largely defined by the character of its future cities. This is especially important to reflect on at this point in time as humanity reached a special milestone this century by becoming a majority urban spaces. In 2007 for the very first time in our history, humankind has become a majority urban with more than half of the world's population living in the cities. The phenomenal rate of urban growth increasing from 13% in the 1900's to 20% in 1950, reached over 50% this decade.

Human being are social beings, and thus species beings. As such, they clearly live a public life. It is true to say that possession of a public life is an essential sttribute of human beings. However, public lives vary in their styles and degrees. Evident diversity exists not only among different religions, nationalities and countries in a given period but also among different period of the same nationality.

In India, urban age examined how the largest democracy on earth negotiates considerable urbanization and economic development. India's urban society is experiencing the effects of increasing affluence coupled with persistent social inequalities and a scarcity of resources ranging from personal living space to transport and drinking water. Climate change and other escalating pressures further compound urban developments in india, making its urban agenda a global issue.

2. SOCIAL SPACE:

Social spaces within the city are the places where local people gather, converse and rub together creating the intangible vibe and attitude of the city which you will long remember.The social space is the spatial implications of social institutions and is studied by socialists and geographers.

The concept of social space, which we understood as being at once physical and conceptual. Social space is the realm in which the cultural life of society is enacted, but it is not a form of container of a virtually neutral kind, designed simply to receive whatever is poured into it. Instead, space is secreted by the society. It is produced by the pattern of social interaction, but also imposes itself on its users and thus spaces society. Space encourages and discourages certain forms of interaction and gives form to social structures and ideologies.

Society and Space Relations:

It is obvious that space has significance for everyday life; surprisingly; in historical and sociological studies of everyday life the spatial dimension is generally missing or at best is taken for granted (Franzen 1992, 39).

To study the relationship between society and space the city needs to be recognized as both a physical and a social entity and urban theory and practical need to connect these (Hiller and Vaughan 2007; Franzen 1992; Olsson 1998). According to Franzen, society could be studied spatially through the buildings of the city. The buildings include most of the important activities in society and though the buildings and the activities some of the basic foundations of the societal structing of space

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become salient in a concrete, materialized form. It is argued that space affects the structure and character of daily life as well as political – economical outcomes (Franzen 1992, 38)

The built forms and arrangements of volumes that shape everyday social life in the city.
The spatial structure of the Indian cities reveals an intense and compact arrangement of buildings and structures, containing and compressing the open white spaces that constitute the public realm of the city. The central area of buleshwar market in Mumbai shows how dense urban blocks are arranged efficiently along main streets and side alletways.
The juxtaposition of Paharganj in old Delhi, the formal circular layout of Connaught place and other twentieth century free standing building blocks makes evident the different spatial logics and scale of this multi-faceted city. The Jayanagar and Bhunashankari district of Bangalore, surrounding a central park, demonstrate the regularity and fine grain of a well-planned city. While Salt Lake City district in Kolkata, a 1960's redevelopment of former wetlands, reveals clarity in space and urban structure with housing units arranged along a regular grid.

Need of social space in Urban Areas:

- To get interact with the other people or strangers who belongs to the same or different cultural background.
- To get a space where one relaxes can feel its own extension of life , where he canb recreate.
- A social urban space is necessary to imbibe different standard of the people together without any differences.
- Interaction between human being and the built environment, as architecture is an extension of human to the environment.
- Space that is used, and which feels emotionally nourishing.
- To get socializing in an individual world.

Types of Social Spaces in Urban Areas:

Open/Semi-covered Space: An urban space that is open and accessible to all, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, age or socio-economic level. This also often misconstrued to mean other things such as gathering place, which is an element of larger concept of social space.
Example – Parks and Open Green grounds

Religious and socio-cultural space: In the period of globalization and mass migration world cities have become multicultural, but constituent cultures do not always act in unison. Urban spaces act as an arenas in which different lifestyles interact and complete. Ethnic enclaves may be found on the periphery and in the city center, as a result turning the inner city into a social periphery.

Social Space in Commercial Areas: The indoor shopping mall as urban space – following the tradition of the great domed building of the past and the enclosed Bazaar – the covered street of stores in the Islamic world – milan's 19th century.
Galleria, an indoor space replaces an outdoor urban space: Mall define a piecewise concave surface enclosing a protected pedestrian area full of contrasting details – both visual and tactile – and potted plants. Parts of the information field. In many of today's cities, an indoor mall may be the only urban space in which high density human interaction is possible in the absence of cars. This proves our points about
- The need for information and interaction;
- The psychological safety of a pedestrian realm.
The indoor mall separates urban space from parking, which is free and conveniently near.Open markets or weekly bazaars.

Recreational space
Discotheque/bars: discotheque or pub culture in urban cities is no doubt, relatively new, wherein by and large the well – off sections of society visits for a drink or too. The elite class, which gets influenced by western ideas and lifestyle.
A large section of youthful era socializing at nights, night time daily life has become a main activity in almost all urban centers of India. Nightlife in Indian deviates from new music to pub hopping.
  Amusement park
  Cinema hall.

Community/civic spaces: Also known as public places which are favorable environment for public Engagement is vital for meeting a growing societal need for interaction. In urban Environment, such as town halls, Courthouses, parliamentary precincts, and city squares, continue to fulfill important functions in the local governance of a city. These are the engines for successful city growth and sustainability.

3. URBAN SPACE EVOLUTION:

Urban space is an element of the city that is its lungs ,where the collective memory of the city is expressed in the numerous layers that govern the order of the space , in Broader context the "space of man '' may be categorized as personal & social. Urban space reflects the sense of unity, extravert nature which reflects the urban space in terms of bazaars, streets & various public realms. The social field of man can be differentiating in to the public, private & parochial realms.

4. Dynamism or Transformation of Social Spaces – Delhi as Case Study:

4.1: Shahjahanabad, The Old City:

The historic city of Delhi, capital of at least ten different dynasties at different times, layers upon layer of distinctive culture in the time zone overlap, merge, interact and assimilate fusing into a continuum of inexplicable complexity.
Old Delhi is inhabited by a predominantly Muslim population whose lives revolve around work and local mosque, much as it was a century ago.
The ninth (Shahjahanabad) was built by shahjahanabad in 1639.
- Gardens and canals or baolis played an open social space.
- Mosques, Darghas and temples were religious social space.
- Chandni chawk, the market square large social spaces designed for all age group and for all class.

City level "Open space"
- Not for the common people.
- Mainly for noble class (rich class).
- All age group can use the park (from kid to older age)
- Example – Jama Masjid, Lal Jain Mandir, Naya Mandir, Gauri Shankar temple, Christian Baptist Church and Gurudwara.
- For Noble class and also for common people.
- Space around it use for social gathering same ethnic group.

Neighborhood Level –
Streets, bazaars and chowks
- Different social and ethnic group gather together.
- For common people of all age group.
- A semi open space.

Havellis
- Not for individual family but the followers, servants and craftsman.
- The strict distinction between public, semi-private and private space.
- For an individual family.

Internal Courtyard
- The private space for getting socializes within the family members.
- Climatically suited and enhance the living style.

OLD CITY PLANNING:

A Neo Delhi (The British raj)

A symbol of their political power and dominance over the Indian sub continental.

The vital underlying concept of design was to create a grand 'monumental' 'larger than life' city space and be symbolic of the implied socio cultural, architectural and political superiority and common to the imperialist British Empire.

Morphologies of Space

City Level

Political dominance

- Politically dominating space for high class people or government employee.

Open space –

- The central vista at India gate, green beautifully landscaped reflected the civil service hierarchy.
- For all the working class of people as users.

Commercial spaces –

- Connaught place, the commercial centre the central business district.
- A mixed proportion of open and covered space.

Neighbourhood Level

Bungalows –

- Reflected the civil services hierarchy with upper level employee segregated from lower level employees and the British separated from the Indians.
- Segregation along socio-economic lines.
- Transportation facility gives more opportunity to get socializes and gets equally connected.

SOCIAL URBAN SPACES

Physical division

- Open/Semi Covered space – South Delhi has more green areas comparative to other Zones.

Morphologies of open Space

Regional LeveL – Parks

- Large area of green chunk fall into this level.
- Regional parks and land preserved for natural beauty, historic intrest or other reason.
- Majorly used in weekends by family members/ tourists spot.

District level – Parks/Sports Complex

- District parks e.g. Jasola Park, Hauz khas district park.
- Used in morning and evening walk by all age group.
- But majorly used by old age group.

- Not used by family and higher income group.

Neighbourhood Level – Neighbourhood park

- Open parks designed in residential colonies at neighborhood level.
- For all age group irrespective for class or culture.
- An open social space for gatherings or for recreational space for family.

Analysis :

- The importance of open space gets shrinking to certain age limit.
- Regional parks connectivity is far from the residential areas to be used so used only in weekends or in a month.
- District parks location is not such that which can be access to everyone at least to the larger population mass.
- Neighborhood parks which should be given more importance while planning as mostly used by everyone residing in the society.
- But in today scenario those parks are used for parking space or only for gathering of old age group and kids found to play there.
- Young age groups do not bother to use the space.
- The sizes of these neighborhood parks are not designed such that to play games like football or cricket.
- As the changing lifestyle working women ratio get increased earlier these open space were used by them to get recreate in evening and socialize with other neighbors.

RELIGIOUS AND SOCIO CULTURAL SPACE:

Eidgah – open ground and Ramlila Maidan

- Urban city comprises of multicultural people of different caste or race.
- Urban space along mosques, temples, gurudwara or churches is used as Eidgah, Ramlila Maidan for Bhandara or for large summit/gathering.
- Space used along the religious building is used as socio cultural gathering in large mass of same community.

Analysis :

- These spaces are used once in a year during festival occasion.
- In today scenario these spaces are lesser used by huge mass.
- Old age group and age above 40 participate in this area.
- One of the largest gatherings happen of the decade is Anna Hazare Anshan, and Baba RaamDev Programme.

COMMERCIAL SPACE:

- Market space is dividing into various categories of urban space.
- Either division based on the physical condition of space (i.e. open or semi covered) or on the basis of class division.
- Divisions are
  - weekly bazzar on locality/neighborhood lvl.
  - Sub zones lvl. (lajpat nagar mrkt. Hauz khas mrkt etc)
  - Regional lvl e.g. shopping malls.

Analysis :

- The concept of shopping mall is replacing the traditional markets or bazaars.
- The changes happen due to the change in the urban lifestyle.
- In a busy hectic life every people want to go for easier option where the things are available under one roof not to run here and there for basic needs also.
- The architecture of mall are done in such a way that it cater to each group age of the society.

- Kid zone for small children, open space with green landscape for old age group who want to get relaxed and shops and food courts which are the fundamental requirement.
- The major drawback in shifting paradigm of market to the mall is it is limited to certain class of the society only.
- Low income group can't effort the facility of malls

RECREATIONAL SPACES :

Amusement Parks, Discotheque and Cinema Hall.

- These spaces are designed for recreating all the middle and high income group and of all age group.
- The purpose of entering large numbers of people.
- Most amusement parks have a fixed location.
- An upcoming trend of nightclubs and all.
- Mostly for youngsters and high income group people also sometimes for middle income group.
- The most popular forms of entertainment in the city of Delhi is cinema.

Analysis :

- The recreation spaces are designed in keeping view to high or middle income group of the society.
- Such spaces must also be planned for weaker section of the society or low income group so they can recreate.
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COMMUNITY SPACE :

- The community spaces provides not only the physical sites for civil society to function autonomously, but also provide a sense of place in the form of identity, meaning memory, history and linkages with wider world.
- Is open and accessible to all regardless of gender, race, ethnicity or age.
- Community centre function for social gathering and interaction.
- To gather for group activities, social, support, public information, marriages and other purposes.
- Sometimes be open for the whole community or for a specialized group within the greater community.

Analysis :

- The community spaces in our urban cities are shrinking in larger way, earlier the concept of open area for community gathering are turned into commercial complex or parking zones.
- The lack of community space turn the human society into a individualistic way, the group interaction or meeting with different people regardless of gender, race or ethnicity get decreases.
- It has negative effects. First, all classes of citizens have fewer spaces for mass collectivity, rejoicings or for display from hectic professional or working life. Secondary, it leaves little scope for the poor also to look for collective enjoyment anywhere outside their homes.

TRANSITION IN NATURE AND VALUE OF SPACE:

Morphologies of space	Old Delhi	Colonial Delhi	Contemporary Delhi
1. Open Space	The gardens or parks were only for noble class family. Lavish gardens planned inside the palace area.	The central vista green, beautifully landscaped reflected the civil hierarchy. Users – for the common people.	Open are divided into different level. Users – for common people, no caste or class bar. But today its function gets limited.
2. Religious and Socio Culture Space	The social life revolves around the religious place and function. Every class and age group of people participates.	Religious and socio culture space were not dominating.	Space used once in a year at the time of festival or occasion. Certain age group i.e. old-age gets involved in this activities.
3. Commercial space	The street bazaars or open markets were used as commercial purpose.	Planned markets come like central business centre and local markets started developing.	Markets developed according to the class. The concept of mall introduced. Still weekly bazaar exists in some of the colonies for middle low income group.
4. Class division	The street bazaars or open markets were used as commercial purpose.	Planned markets come like central business centre and local markets started developing.	Markets developed according to the class. The concept of mall introduced. Still weekly bazaar exists in some of the colonies for middle low income group.
5. Recreational Space	Markets place or religious gatherings are there for recreation, no such space is defined for recreational facilities.	Class is the main factor of changes brought into the colonial periods. Semi open areas were design for recreational facilities, golf course, horse racing club, polo club, etc only for elite strata of society.	Closed recreational spaces are planned. Class acting as the main factor, no consideration for the low income group.
6. Community Space	It is a part of religious centre only. No such separate spaces are design. It was for common people where they share the things to other people.	Town halls, libraries were the places only for literate people or government servants. Not for common mass.	Government planned community centers for the population living nearby.

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