

URBAN SQUARES



Architecture

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INTRODUCTION:

Due to fast changing social and economic conditions have become important on how people use and shape their environments. The urban population has been intensely increasing in India and thus physical structure of the cities changes constantly, mostly in negative ways. Due to the increase in population, infrastructure and facilities demand also increases. Decentralization and Privatization are the two major concerns on the future of the cities and open public spaces.

Public squares are one of the important public spaces in an urban environment. Open public spaces which reflect the cities' cultural background and identity are the "Urban squares".

The nature of urban space concerns the most important and universal properties of the space occupied by urban space-uses. Streets and squares are expected to offer lively, diverse settings that can accommodate a wide spectrum of users and people who simply want to relax in the sun. Urban space should be attractive and fascinating, inviting residents and other users to meet and stay for a while.

HISTORY OF PUBLIC SQUARES:

6000 years ago the first city formations appeared and city squares were established at the

Crossroads of important trade routes. Greek's "Agora" is the best example of the public square. ...). all political, social and economic activities took place in open place which is situated in center of city known as AGORA. Greek Agoras were public spaces for all kinds of gatherings; such as political meetings, athletic and musical games, theatre performances and commercial activities.

Till industrial revolution, cities had only 10% of population which normally did not exceed 10,000. Mostly population consisted of military, administrative, economic and religious society.

In the 9th and 8th centuries BC. The trading posts along the coasts of Hispania were established by Greeks, but the real urbanization processes were done by the romans. Grid or checkerboard pattern of Greek hipodamos were copied by roman while moving from the camps of the legions to the Roman colonies .Two North-South axis (Cardo) and East-West (Decumanus Maximus) cut the grid, in the crossroads there is a forum, to which we must add other public spaces (theatre, amphitheatre, baths, temples, circus

CLASSIFICATION OF SQUARES:

Closed Square – An open space completely enclosed, which is



linked only by the streets leading to it. Primary element of any closed square is its layout of regular geometrical form. The repetition of identical houses or house types, facing the enclosed area. Spatial balance of the square will always be achieved by the equation of horizontal & vertical forces.

Each façade fulfills a dual function. On the one hand, it is part of an individual structure; on the other hand, it forms part of a common urban spatial order. Continuity and context of the framing structures were achieved by the Colonnade, arched arcades.

Dominated Square –Characterized by individual structure or a



cluster of buildings towards which the open space is directed. Nearby structures are related to them. Dominated building may be a town hall, an architecturally developed fountain, a church, a palace, a theatre. Usually the axis towards the dominant building established by the direction of a main street which opens into the square. Makes the viewer to move toward and to look at the focal architecture. Dominant square creates a directive of motion. It is not necessary that dominated building building be voluminous. It may be a gate, arch or other architectural feature which may dominate a whole square.

Grouped Squares – In Grouped Squares, Individual squares are



fused naturally and aesthetically into one comprehensive whole. In Each unit - the different square, characterizes an entity, artistically self-sufficient and yet part of a comprehensive higher order. A straight axis is established by sequence of square irrespective of their size and forms which develops in only one direction. In a non-axial organization, a smaller square opens with one of its sides upon a larger square, so that the individual axes of each square meet in a right angle. **IMPERIAL FORA,ROME**



New York's Washington Square

Amorphous Square – Amorphous is unorganized, formless having no definite shape. Aesthetic qualities or artistic possibilities are not represented by these squares. However, with the previously analyzed squares if it shares some elements, may appear like one of them. Example of the amorphous square is New York's Washington square. Its dimensions are so large. Proportions of many of its surrounding structures are so varied, so irregular, even contradictory. Location and size of the small triumph arch are so dissimilar to all the other given factors.

Nuclear Square – Nuclear Square consists of a nucleus, a strong vertical accent – a memorial, a cascade, an pillar. It is powerful enough to charge the space around with a tension that the impression of the square will be evoked. It will tie the heterogeneous elements of the periphery into one visual unit. Dimensions of nuclear square are restricted as the visual effect of the central monument is naturally limited.

'THE GOOD SQUARE'

A square is experienced as pleasant and attractive are determined by various factor. The surrounding areas, buildings and functions play an important role to how people experience the square. The square's other users have an impact on how the square is perceived. The users have a clear idea of what constitutes 'good' and 'bad' places and city spaces. Overall, there is broad agreement that a good, safe place is one where there are many people and a pleasant atmosphere. Good urban spaces are 'places with people and light', whereas deserted squares and streets are often considered unsafe. A common thread is

that personal familiarity with a location makes people feel safe and secure. For many users, the familiar and predictable are inextricably linked with the feeling of safety. This contradicts general planning and development goals for urban spaces. Planners strive to develop multifunctional, multicultural and flexible city spaces that meet the needs of different users and offer opportunities for a variety of activities. This means that use and users change, which is attractive to some people, but causes others to feel unsafe.

Users' perceptions of risk

The study shows that users' perception of crime is based on information from television, newspapers and hearsay. About half think crime rates have dropped or remained stable and that violence is the most common form of crime. The people surveyed had not personally been the victims of crime or experienced any violence, with the exception of some of the socially marginalised people. The study shows that users have preconceptions about ethnic minorities and housing complexes with a bad reputation. The topic of 'strangers' was important to the interviewees who brought this up themselves. Many said they felt unsafe near groups of young people, especially ethnic minorities. Interviewees also referred to certain housing areas as 'unsafe', although their only knowledge of these areas came from the media and hearsay. No-one had ever personally visited the housing areas in question. Interviews with users show that assumptions about dangerous people and places have a significant impact on their feeling of safety. The study shows that the feeling of safety is related to notions of danger. Feelings of being unsafe when visiting certain urban spaces is rarely founded in actual experience; rather, they have a mediated image and perception of places and people that pose danger – perceptions that are present when moving about in the city.

Challenges and measures

Spaces in cities have different functions and forms; for example, parks, city centres and pedestrian streets differ in their use and layout. Many spaces have overlapping functions such as a café on a pedestrian street or in the city centre that acts as a meeting place as well as a place to spend time. A park or a square can be a place to meet, but can also simply be a place people pass through on their way from one destination to another – a transit space. Some urban spaces function both as transit spaces and places to stay. Focus in the study was on three different types of urban space that combined account for the bulk of space in a city: transit spaces, parks, and city centres/pedestrian streets.

BENEFITS OF CREATING GOOD PUBLIC SPACES:

1. SUPPORT LOCAL ECONOMIES.
2. ATTRACT BUSINESS INVESTMENTS.
3. ATTRACT TOURISM.
4. PROVIDE CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES.
5. ENCOURAGE VOLUNTEERISM.
6. REDUCE CRIME.
7. IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY.
8. INCREASE USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION.
9. IMPROVE PUBLIC HEALTH.
10. IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENT.

Conclusions:

Urban squares explores the social and spatial implications of new lifestyles, values, attitudes to environment and sustainability, and the models for future city life and the patterns of urban open space that might accommodate these. The urban square provides space for the expression of diversity, both cultural and personal; this raises issues of self-governing provision for and access to public open space. The role of the urban street as public space may need to be re-thought. The cultural and social values of open space include approaches towards environment and the desire for contact with it; present understandings of ecology

offer new visions to serve both human desires and the broader ecological outline of urban open space structures. It has been recommended that the urbanity of public open space is threatened by the increase in 'virtual' transactions, preventing the need for real, social interaction, but there is also evidence that use of public open spaces can be enhanced by new communications technology; this may include engagement in the productive aspect of our landscape.

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