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URBAN DESIGN NEW CHALLENGES OF THE DEVELOPING WORLD

Climate change, decrease in biodiversity, increase of hazardous wastes and other global environmental problems are directly related to the development of industrial and technological societies and modern urban structures. Today's cities are notorious for their careless treatment of scarce and vulnerable environmental goods. City design has been ignoring significant elements of cultural pluralism, social equity and human behavior, giving rise to grave socio-psychological problems. Cities have thus become a symbol for the neglect of organic, cultural traditions and the destruction of the identity of places. This is where people centric design of our cities become important. Urban Design deals with the design of the public realm, while ensuring the safety of human networks.

India is facing rapid increase in its urban population, resulting in urban sprawl in all major cities that has created a huge deficit in percentage of distribution of public spaces. This has in turn affected the quality of life in these cities. Projects like SMART CITY have aimed at generating good quality urban environment in cities by providing public spaces as urban inserts. Projects started mushrooming in cities depending on availability of space. However, such place-making projects that did not weave the public space with local urban patterns and culture, often failed. Carefully curated design of the public environment is key to the success of such projects. The sequence of movement should bring interest in the user to continue to enjoy and explore, while seamlessly weaving it with the surrounding urban fabric. Aspects such as safety, accessibility, micro-climate, landscape, artefacts etc. play an important role in shaping the comfort levels of such public spaces. Successful placemaking happens by creating a sense of belonging, and when aspirations and dialogues in the city domain are expressed in the form of urban art, flea markets and festivals.

As the city developed and expanded, it often pushed its older fabric into neglect and blight. This has happened to most Indian old cities that suffer from poor and insufficient infrastructure. While these historic urban patches continue to thrive as shadows of their past glory, the younger generation typically want to move out, not only in search of better opportunities and infrastructure, also because they wish to become part of that new identity. Though the answer lies in urban renewal, large centrally initiated projects like JNNURM. They did not find much success, as renewal of public infrastructure alone wasn't enough to bring back the lost pride. In cities like Kochi, an art movement that started a decade ago, in the form of the Kochi - Muziris

Terrain Vague
Smart City
Tactical Urbanism
DIY Urbanism
Urban Acupuncture
Urban Prototyping
Pop Up Urbanism
Sim City
Edge City
Eco-Urbanism
Platform Urbanisation
Everyday Urbanism

Urbanization in future should happen by creating a network of public environment that are resilient, sustainable and strong. These networks, if carefully designed, could ensure protection of environmental and cultural assets.



'TASTY FISH'

ALLAPUZHA

ART | **Anpu Varkey**

PHOTO CREDIT | **Arun James**

Biennale, brought the historic port town of Kochi, a renewed identity – so much so that the youngsters of Kochi today feel proud of their city, heritage and culture. Every old building and street became a canvas of its expression as an art city, that is friendly, pluralistic and original. The celebrations of the Durga Puja resonate a similar story for Kolkata – a ritual that is full of creative engagement, consumes and unites the entire city and paints it in full glory.

In our fast-developing urban centers, public space is lost between the road and front door of the building. Demand for campuses and other public functions in small tight urban plots have risen due to very high land-value. That is where Urban Design projects are emerging in the form of a new genre of public buildings. The limitation of space has reduced the scope of buildings set in campuses. Instead, public space is carved out from within the building, separating it with careful treatment creating equitable and accessible spaces within and throughout the spine of such designs. This is a trend that is evolving as a new model of thinking for the design of public buildings.

Large cities have been witnessing an unprecedented growth in the number of census towns around their periphery. It is upon us to groom the rurban [rural-urban] areas. Although most of these are not slated to become full-fledged cities, one cannot merely classify them as residential suburbs either. They have to be considered as part of the larger urban resource network. Urbanization in future should happen by creating a network of public environment that are resilient, sustainable and strong. These networks, if carefully designed, could ensure protection of environmental and cultural assets. The 'net' is the archetype that will support all things economic, social and ecological. Such solutions would be the necessity for the future of building a democratic public environment throughout the country.

Idea Design, Cochin

CRAFTS VILLAGE

KOVALAM | 2021

TOTAL AREA: 8 ACRES

The site had some abandoned assets of an earlier attempted project and an abandoned granite quarry, with scars of the activity exposed in the landscape. Many existing buildings were disconnected in function and purpose. The concept attempts to reuse the buildings and develop a design based on curation of visitor's experience with the help of a cohesive master plan, circulation design and landscape design. Landscape design has been used as a tool to achieve the idea of place making by creating public open spaces interspaced along curated museum spaces and workshops. An Urban Design plan creates a functional zoning for parking, visitor movement, curated arrangement of crafts galleries and workshops, outdoor installations and public spaces such as courtyards, open air theatres, restaurant and auditorium. The entrance zone comprises of ticketing and visitor movement with parking in a segregated area. The visitor moves through a semi-covered walkway connected with craft galleries and craft workshops while connecting several old buildings, while enjoying a landscaped central courtyard. The craft village exhibits various traditional crafts of India with live workshops of the craftsman / artist / sculptor, giving a learning experience for the visitors - particularly school children.

Outdoor installations of crafts inside a wooded area with kiosks and clearings for the craftworks extend the experience. The hillock also gives the visitor an experience of the beautiful sea-side landscape of Kovalam. Restoring the granite quarry, an open-air theatre is designed with the theme of "Hastalokam" - meaning world of hand craft, and the radiating pattern thematically represents 5 fingers culminating at 5 elements, represented in the landscape as vertical columns crowned with sculptures of these elements. The remains of the quarry become the geological backdrop to the open-air theatre, where thematic and curated programs are hosted regularly.

The concept attempts to reuse the buildings and develop a design based on curation of visitor's experience with the help of a cohesive master plan, circulation design and landscape design. Landscape design has been used as a tool to achieve the idea of place making by creating public open spaces interspaced along curated museum spaces and workshops.

