Social Life on Commercial Street: A Case of Commercial Markets of Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh

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Abstract:- Indian streets have been always a traditional public space where social life of the people revolved and plays a diverse role in one’s life socially. The street constitutes the urban public realm where people gather, celebrate, interact and spend leisure time. Streets are being used as great public place as compared to Parks and Plazas. The main advantage of these commercial streets is to encourage the social interactions. This research paper will reveal how people are concerned with physical and social aspects of any street. The physical characteristic of the street identifies the actual uses of the street and is highly affected by it. People prefer the physical setting having more interactive community spaces to meet friends and observe activities going on the street. The main hypothetical basis of this paper is to examine and analyze the urban street in commercial areas of Lucknow as a living corridor that represents a city. The research paper also examine that the physical characteristic of a street can also affect or promote social life of any street by encouraging or subduing socially active environment This will never let the importance of street getting less by time and encourage people to spend their few hours outside for gaining a healthy lifestyle.

Keywords:- Social life, Livability, Urban Areas, Commercial streets, sense of belonging, Vitality

INTRODUCTION

Urbanization have been occurring at a very rapid pace in India over the last few decades. This process is rapid due to various forces, but migration of rural population is the major contributing factors. Historically, India has been an agrarian society of which 75 percentage of population engaged in the farming profession, with their life style of people who are closely attached and totally dependent on it. Due to this people are more dependent on streets for social customs at every climate. Open spaces that most people understands to be like parks, plaza, courtyards and playgrounds while people often ignore are Streets where people interact and celebrate and congregate (R.Fyfe, 2006).

Streets and pathways in such amorphous organic settlements are not just for motorists to drive past, but for trading, festivities and occasionally playing cricket. These are vibrant community spaces in the true sense of the term for people to congregate, deliberate and celebrate, as opposed to the sterile homogeneity of ‘people like us’ within the compound walls (Chatterji & Roy, 2018). The street has always held a particular fascination. The terrain of social encounters and political protest, sites of domination and resistance, places of pleasure and anxiety, the street is also the focus of many theoretical debates about the city concerning modern and post-modern urbanism (R.Fyfe, 2006).

STREET AS A PUBLIC SPACE IN INDIA

The Indian streets is a spatial complex comprising the fair and the bazaar by generating an unenclosed enclosure for people to meet. Streets has numerous openings and passages (Appadurai, 1987). Streets are many things other than Bazaar like a place from personal to political and from marriage to funeral procession. Indians eats , works , celebrates on the streets " (R.Fyfe, 2006). Street in India act as the ‘Women’s traditionally spend their most of the leisure hours on sitting and gossiping on the streets , doing their household chores like cutting vegetable, knitting sweater etc while interacting and conversing with their neighbours and hawkers or street vendors that passes from there. Now days with the changing lifestyles of peoples and the predefined zones of the carriage way that is also a wider one has ended the affect of street in Indian context. The shared spaces are segregated by boundaries and end of permeability from both the ends which is unfortunately sad. Indian streets have history of spaces that are shared by different street users like the owner, the employee, the vendors, the richshaw pullers, homeless peoples, stray animals, the 2 wheeler and 4 wheeler parking’s etc.

NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMERCIAL STREETS

It is strongly believed that now a day’s society no longer depends upon public square and piazza. People now days are very choosy with their choice of whether it’s any object, place or thing. Good urban spaces are required for modern generation where they can interact on daily basis along with their daily chores (Whyte, 2009). People want everything at walking distance within their reach limits. The most important advantage of neighbourhood commercial streets is to support the activities and functions desired by people who will live or work there.

KEY CHALLENGES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In India due to continuous pressure of development due to increasing migrated population and to accommodate them there is scarcity of land so proposing open spaces for the public is next to impossible as accommodating them is more prior hence ignoring the assets of open spaces in the city. These streets are not only mobility corridor nut also a...
place to celebrate, live and interact. Its a home for lakhs of Indian homeless peoples who rely on it for residing. There is need to identify the qualities of the streets that enforces various political, ecological, social, cultural, historical qualities that shape it or reshape any urban setting. Research question also includes
a) Under what conditions does a street change from subduing social life to enhancing it?
b) What is the rhythm of public life in the town?
c) How the physical characteristics or urban form of the street can affect in contributing or mitigating the social life on the streets.

METHODOLOGY

This dissertation includes Strategy of inquiry consists of Qualitative methods of inquiry to collect and analyze the data. Initially I selected a Case of Lucknow City due to better understand the spatial design of Indian streets in terms of specific parameters. After Selecting the city, three different streets with different characteristic both morphologically and socially are selected for case studies. Initially I aimed to build my research on the basis of qualitative analysis to understand the spatial and social character of an street. After the empirical study on the selected sites a questionnaire was also prepared to find out the users reactions and experiences to the distinct character of the urban streets.

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SITE SELECTION

From Mughal period, Lucknow was situated at important geographical position for Trading, administration, political, army. Economic activities of Lucknow urban were performed by native local businessmen. Economic leadership of Lucknow city in the contemporary period was in the hand of traditional Indian business community.
The three study area selected has its own importance. The first case study street is Akbari Gate to old Masjid Pakarya is a pre colonial settlement (in 16 th century) and is selected because Chowk, the nucleus of the nawabi city was the main market place. Rigid social segregation depending on caste and occupation and compact mohallas were the characteristic feature of the area. It has various historical, cultural as well as Religious Significance that can leave a great impact on social aspects of that area. The second case study street is of Bhootnath Market is a Colonial setting (Late 19th century to mid 20th century). The street is accessible from Faizabad Road as well as church road. It is a big area for commercial as well as institutional purpose. The commercial area caters population from the major part of Indira nagar, HAL, Nishatganj, Polytechnic etc. It is one of the famous city commercial centre for shopping relaxing and entertainment. Its significance also increases due to the existence of very old bhootnath temple. The third one is of Patrakarpuram Marketis a Post Colonial (Mid 20th century to Present), fully developed well planned with wide contemporary urban design features. It caters the maximum population from Gomtinagar and Gomti Nagar extension. Big Shopping Malls, show rooms, Restaurants attracts the majority of people making it also a big hub of social space.
STREET PATTERNS & NETWORK ANALYSIS

The analysis of pattern are used to indicate the movement, flow and network of the streets. It shows the size of the blocks, its neighborhood and locality. It also include the comparative analysis of these streets to understand the urban fabric. The Street network diagram identifies the pattern hierarchy within the locality taken of the city. It also shows the non physical characteristics of the area that can anyhow help in the studies. The narrow streets with irregular form and small and variable block are found in the organic setting of Chowk while straight road with linear patterns of urban form that is planned in every specific way are found in Bhootnath and Patrakpuram.

1.1. Akbari Gate to Masjid Pakarya Street

The area of Chowk was established as the main centre of commerce in akbari period. The famous street is said to have been built in of Asaf-Ud-Daula’s reign, but is probably of an earlier date. Besides being a centre for commerce the main spine of chowk was the central route to access the labyrinthine passage of a much larger area. Many of the finest poets, musicians, theologians, nobles and other luminaries of the city, along with the finest craftsmen lived in the vicinity of this lane. Also, the courtesan of Lucknow were located at the end towards Akbari Darwaza. There is a distinct activity pattern with different sections of the main spine being defined by the activity - Chikan work, sarafa, Zari gota, waeq, flower garlands, tobacco and itra and sweets.
These street were all in irregular pattern developed without the influence of any planned development. The oldest part of the city with streets with narrow streets of irregular shape with very narrow small intersections streets that are a break in the linearity of the street. The streets have very less open space and with very dense urban fabric. The streets constantly get narrower as much as we get inside of it. Cater the slow moving vehicle like 2-Wheeler and rarely 4-Wheeler and mainly pedestrian friendly street. Narrow street frontage with size of the blocks relatively small and very variable with each other.

The first image shows the area with a very higher foot traffic and very few NMV and 2-wheelers can be accessed in this area due to the narrow width and over crowd. A narrow typical oldest commercial streets where the informal markets is setup on weekends and a huge pedestrian traffic is found specially in the evening time.
Figure 5: Grain showing human footprints density and activity mapping of the Market street

Figure 6: Blow up Mapping of the central nodal area of the Market street

Narrow walkway entirely taken up by the merchandise spilling out from the shops. Sign are just out overhead.

Adjoining street are major hub of street vendors and hawkers creating more livable space.

A mosque that increase the activity and create visual interest.

Shops in front of the mosque of famous restaurants of that area.

A divider creating the buffer between the lane.

Carriage way shared by pedestrians and 2 wheeler & NMV only.

Building with shops selling various items such as clothes, personal accessories, household items, and residential on the upper floor in almost dilapidated condition due to old

Already narrow streets getting more narrower due to haphazard parking of 2-wheelers and space outside the shops occupied by the vendors creating unwanted vibrancy.
1.2. The Faizabad road to indiranagar road (Bhoothnath Market) - A big shopping hub

Located in Indira Nagar, Bhootnath Market provides a blend of Hazratganj and Aminabad markets. Filled with big showrooms as well as medium range shops, this buzzing place is a heaven for shopaholics. Be it products from latest trends or high-end brands, this market caters to all your needs. The built fabric is relatively less dense as compared to chowk because of its built form and its spaces left as setback by the commercial buildings where people gathers and interacts. The building height vary upto four floors with wide frontage. This is the main commercial street catering the near by residential neighbourhood population for institutional as well as commercial use on both of the sides of the streets.on the left size and one lane of parkingin the right side. the street accommodate medium to less traffic in the morning hours and medium to high traffic in the evening hours because of more pedestrian volume over there.
The street is well planned with defined spaces for parkings both open and ample and bigger building blocks on the western side of the streets and small daily core material shops on the eastern side of the streets. The street has intersecting adjoining streets at around 400 mts and breaking the linearity of the street. It is relatively very hard to walk on most due to heavy pedestrian as well as 2-wheel and 4-wheel accessibility that too in the evening hour because that is the peak hours to visit the market.

Figure 9 : View Of Bhoothnath Market

Figure 10 : Grain showing human footprints density and activity mapping of the Market street
Figure 11 : Visual Analysis and interpretation on the nodal intersectional streets of the market

Figure 12 : Typical section of the market
1.3. Street Pattern Analysis of Patrakarpuram Market (Shaheed Path to Dr. Akhilesh Das Gupta Marg)

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The street pattern is regular and rectilinear in size and the developed in plotted development. The block size vary along side of the street because of the big showroom and restaurant located here. The main commercial area of the Gomati nagar area .The street is divided by 2 side walked and one median footpath in the intermediate space covered by line of trees providing space for local vendors for their informal setup. Relatively a very few street vendor ,less activities on the street and Partially covered but fully air conditioned shops and restaurants. Market specifically used by upper medium class and high class peoples. Most of the street shops are kind of mixed used with shops on the lower floor and residence on the upper part of the building.

Figure 13: Street Pattern Of Patrakarpuram Market

Figure 14: View of the intersectional streets of the market
Figure 15: Grain showing human footprints density and activity mapping of the Market street.

Figure 16: Visual Analysis and interpretation on the nodal intersectional streets of the market.
FINDING AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Urban form of any city can be define the characteristic of the city and is governed by understanding streets layout, built fabric, block sizes of the buildings. These can easily help to analyze any street and social behaviour that is affected by the urban form of the street. These also provides clues about the urban development of the street, the change in the built form over the decades and how people manage to it so as not to affect the socially active streets. It is possible to distinguish about the spatial context based on the built character of the street. Traditional streets had more interactive spaces even though they were narrower and congested. They are more familiar to human scale and easy to access with original characteristic of the city. These characteristic of the street can help in the future development of the streets. Authorities are need to understand that any standard norms can’t be implemented in these different streets and standards should be made after analyzing the relation of the urban form with the people related to it in any sense.

The central areas of the cities which are the oldest part of the city brings a variety of people in the neighbourhood commercial streets. The three of the markets caters people from different socio economic groups. The Chowk market although being a old settlement with narrow streets actually they play a vital role in social life. As people there are more active and more happier one to spend their time on streets. People frequently visit these areas with their family members that are why it is overcrowded due to more populated. People from lower income group and medium income groups are the main visitors over here or the people who are living here from more than 50 years in the neighbourhood residential parts. Small crime like Chain snatcher and pic pockets merely happens in these area because of its liveliness.

When talking about Bhootnath market it is also a socially very active market for the people of all economic groups who visit here for regular basis. This market attracts people from middle age group to old people. Very rush and crowded specially in the evening hours because of the Shops and institutions located here. It is also significant Markets due to the presence of the Metro corridor. Crime rate is low here too because of its liveliness. In morning hours sometimes the streets is used by the children’s for playing and less activity happens there.

Relatively Patrakarpuram Market is the most developed area in terms of the spatial analysis and but socially it is less active. The crime rates of this street is more because of different type of crowds in different area. The main crowd is in the junction point of the patrakarpuram market. While less crowd as we move towards the southern part, this lead to major crimes because the big showrooms and restaurant located are fully enclosed and people don’t interact with outsiders, they stay there spend their times there and leave without observing or interacting with the informal activities in the area. This is also the reason that less hawkers and vendors are there in this stretch. When it comes to recommendation it is important to analyze the physical setting the street patterns, the changes in the street pattern with development and all the physical qualities that accommodate or obstruct the various activities going on the streets. This includes the basic infrastructure provisions, the accessibility to the streets, the connectivity and all the major forces that any how contribute to encourage the social activity on the street and minimise the subduing street life and preserving the traditional Indian streets by understanding in depth about it.

CONCLUSION

Indian cities are unique in the way that they respond to diverse cultures and traditions, and it is Essential that the physical environment of the city continues to allow them to do so. Urban Designers need to be sensitive and respective to the way in which they conceptualize and plan interventions, extensions and new developments in the city such that they respond to the local physical, socio-economic and Ecological context within which they are located in order to maintain the urban identity and Image. There is a need for understanding the city at multiple scales and the ways in which these scales Interact with each other in order to create plans and designs for the city that respond to its existing Image and identity. The central areas of the cities which are the oldest part of the city brings a variety of people in the neighbourhood commercial streets. It is seen that the area with mixed land used spaces are more contributed towards social life because they balance the various activities within their reach of the users. So any type of uses and users of the street is directly associated with the character of the street. The street typology is directly proportional to the activities and the users. The change in the urban form can affect the social life on ground level hence it is necessary to analyze the streets on the very ground level to make it more useful to contribute in social environment.

Informal activities contribute a great role in any streets of India for its safety, attracting customers. So it cannot be replaced in the newer development or while revitalisation of the street just because it creates hinder and encroachment but it is necessary to segregate space with in the area to provide them a small spaces on the street that results in less encroachment. Because the economic condition of street vendors are dependent on street which they use as a work place. Remove that totally can affect the liveliness of the streets. Policies should be made by authorities to standardise some space for them to control encroachment on the streets as it can affect the user and made them feel uncomfortable due to hindrances. The street pattern can affect the social life of the commercial streets in many ways. Like the parkings of the two wheeler and 4 wheeler vehicles in front of the shops creates hindrances to accessibility to the shops, the pedestrians and results in reducing the activities on the streets. So provision of parking should be provided in every street so as to encourage pedestrians and reduce vehicular traffic and people will feel free to roam here and there. The street will be more accessible and spaces will be segregated for the street vendors and hawkers.
REFERENCES


