

Study of Effects of 'Public Square' on Pedestrian, on Streets, on Surrounding Areas and User Interaction with Space and Other Activities with A Case of 'Teen Hatti Chowk, Dhankawadi, Pune'

Ar. Asmita Santosh Kale

Associate professor in Sinhgad College of Architecture,
Vadgoan. Pune
J-304, Astonia Royale, Ambegaon Bk., Pune 411046

Ar. Avani Amit Topkar

Associate professor in Sinhgad College of Architecture,
Vadgoan. Pune
Flat no.905, Arwana Towers, Karve nagar

Abstract— In Pune, the public places are always streets or chowks of streets. So, 'Public square' are mostly along with main streets or at meeting points of streets. This 'Public square' is a very important element for city life, in functional aspect, in the cultural aspect, commercial aspect, and even leisure aspect. Form of the space and internal function of space largely dependent on pedestrian users, adjoining land and buildings, connections to it are also contributing in formation of the public square.

This study aims at the study of the particular typological arrangement of the particular square, elements which contribute to accentuating the activities, arrangement of surrounding streets or buildings or lands, nature of joining of roads.

The society who are the users of the square is from varied age groups, living classes, professionals, occupations, even a wide spectrum of mind set up. These square not only gives lung space to that particular neighborhood or city but also cultural contribution as a whole.

A good design or formed square gives a place to meet, to sit to interact, to shop, to hang out, it provides amenities to pedestrians, to surrounding residents of the dense urban environment.

Keywords— Chowk, public square, streets, activity

Relevance of the study:

1. In India except for a few urbanized cities rest of the India has small and medium size cities. Many of them are growing since the last decade. The cities usually have traditional settlement as an urban core, developed in the medieval period with an organic pattern. (Sharma, 2015)
2. Public space is defined as ability to see, hear or become aware of something through the senses. Public spaces can be a symbol and are the pulse of the city, they form nodes or focal points,

symbolizing shared identity and culture. (Gohringer & Davis, 2017)

3. Urban is a word that pertains to or relates to a city. Urban fabric is the physical aspect of urbanism, emphasizing building types, through fares, open space frontages and streetscapes but excluding environmental, functional, economic and sociocultural aspects. (Walters, 1989)

4. Spatial analysis:

Criteria for public spaces in India:

Accessibility

Activity

Spatial organization

Squares are often designed as formal and informal spaces. The informal ones being more prevalent and used in India. Formal spaces have a strong sense of enclosure with ordered flooring, lighting and street furniture. The surrounding buildings also enhance the formality by their symmetrical layout. Informal squares are more asymmetrical and relaxed in character with a variety of architecture. But in both types the designers pay respect to its boundaries. (Corrigall, 2015)

1. INTRODUCTION

The typologies of public squares have been thoroughly investigated to define. Basic definition, the square is a basically voids which is surrounded by built mass. But in Indian context, square is a pause space along the moving elements. So, major squares in India are along main streets or at the junction of streets, like chowks in Jaipur or Delhi. In every village of India, there is central square in core village in front of panchayat or in front of temple, which majorly acts as a get-together space for festivals or for some official meetings at village level. But this type of squares are used even for daily different purposes even. (Heng & Chan, 2000)

The arrangements and scale of surrounding buildings or road gives huge effect on the void which many times formed or sometimes created. While studying any square, four important properties of square need to understand, the proportion, the enclosure, and the placement of accentuating elements, feeder points to that square.

The proportion of square in Indian context:

In many theories' proportions are considered as ratios of length to width to height, Vitruvius set this ration at 2:3, Alberti at 1:2 and Palladio set seven different ratios which should be followed for any indoor or outdoor room. Site suggests to be a rectangle of more than 1:3.

But in Indian context, there is no fixed proportions because majorly public squares are formed and now a days in many metropolitan cities, this kind of public squares are created. By observation it is not always in rectangular shape, they formed in many different shapes, circular, triangular, etc and there are no fixed proportions to it

Enclosure: -

Beyond proportions, enclosure plays vital role in formation of public square. Sense of enclosure imposed by the periphery. Many times, enclosure is in combination, combination of arcades and streets, combination of one side street and other sides are enclosed with build form. In Indian context, many times enclosures are streets or combination of street and build form, sometime enclosure form due to natural elements like sea, river, mountains, etc e.g. Marine drive, Mumbai.

Placement of accentuating element: -

Sometime enclosure may orient focus of visitor to particular elements, sometimes open spaces focuses on one building which strengthen the inward orientation of that square. In Indian context, placement of seating platform at the centre with tree or some seating platform at one end of public square. In some cases, religious activities become the centre of square. All these situations form inward orientation of place. Squares which are along street they are many times outward orientation which forms lungs spaces.

Feeder points: -

Entries are the feeder points to particular squares. In some cases, all sides of square are act as a feeder points to the space or in some cases limited entries to the square it depends on surrounding situation.

2.1 Objectives:

2.1.1 To understand the meaning of city squares and effective use.

2.1.2 To determine factors and elements that caters to the effective use of public squares.

2.2 Methodology:

Online research was conducted to understand the public spaces in Pune region. The area where the underutilized parts or portions are converted into public plaza. Then the area that has more public gatherings and earlier was a complete dump yard situation was identified and selected for study. this scene was observed as 3 Hatti chowk in Dhankawadi.

1. Case study:

3.1 Location: Located in Dhankawadi, in Pune the square is the junction point of three main roads.

3.2 Chronology of evolution of the square:

The area was a barren land piece with no specified use. It was part of the narrow road that served as a passage from

Padmavati to Dhankawadi areas. The google images give the refence of the land area in chronological order.



Figure 1 Location of the Chowk.



Figure 2: Year 2003, site not developed.



Figure 3 Year 2005, Site not developed



Figure 4 Year 2007, Site not developed



Figure 5 Year 2008, Site development started



Figure 6 Year 2010 Development in progress



Figure 7 Year 2012 Development complete

During the years 2007-2008 the chowk was reformed into a public space. Initially the area was not utilized and people were not using the gathering space as the concept was new. Slowly they familiarized the space and then the public place got its real beauty with people flooding in during the evenings.

Public places always served as a meeting place, market place and traffic space. Over the years these public spaces lost their meaning of being meeting and market places. Public places as a market place also underwent dramatic changes where trading from open booths was moved to shops and ultimately to giant enclosed malls. Public space: in a broader sense, it is a space in which people can choose to be at regardless of their ethnicity, age ideologies and gender.

As important as public spaces are, they are also faced with innumerable constraints. Designing and maintaining a public space is highly challenging. Public space needs to be protected against various impediments such as crime etc. A public place should be a space that people just don't use as a transitional space to pass by but a space that tempts people to slow down stop and experience the place.

3.3 Design Intentions and analysis: -

Squares or spaces for public are very successful urban public spaces in most of the cities of world. And they are always considered as 'built for people or society'. This kind of places attracting large number of users. Most of the time, this space attracts different age groups, residents, non-residents of the immediate surroundings, shopkeepers, office workers, labours from nearby construction sites, vendors, housewives, children and teenagers using the space in their own ways. The count of users many times fluctuates it depends on day or evening or night. Even count fluctuate depends upon season of the year. Peak hours of users are during evening time, even in summer evenings and late-night count of users is very high. (Canniffe, 2010)

This place is with constant activity. Some may be there to sightsee, to relax, others are just happy sitting and watching around, chit-chatting, waiting or simply enjoying cool breeze and open space. Even street vendors, newspaper sellers are even attempt to make space more active and live. Main streets and chowk, sports complex and small food stalls are making that complex more successful.

The success of this place was not an accident. The place was incidental place or left out place. By development and designing this place currently functioning and active. Policies and intentions were very well articulating. Due to development it creates pause space between movement and highly dense area. In this identification of which area where people will walk along. Identification of which kind of activities are required for this surrounding area. Sport's complex development adds gear in keeping active this space. In this identification of area where people will like to sit, to rest, to hangout. The space, according to users, it is pleasant to walk, it is enjoyable and safe so the condition of space which encourage more of the pedestrian movement, through the vocabulary of the space and the elements of the space links with function and vision which frame the space and makes space more meaningful. Wide footpath, in the morning it is used by newspaper sellers, in the afternoon, resting area for hawkers, in the evening it is walking track and space for children to play. Design of seating in the form of steps, width of tread is big enough where users can sit formally and even informally, individually or in group. Whole composition is so flexible to cater various activities and must appreciate by everybody. This area is not differentiating 'that this area is exclusively for particular group or only for commercial activities and that for locals or residents.

The factors, which are listed in introduction are very useful to us to understand the success of 'Teen hatti chowk' as a public square. Under the heading of amenities for users, there is fountain, seating and streetlighting, etc. The focus of this paper on three important factors which are context and linkage system, edge interface and spatial system.

3.3.1 Context and linkage system:



Figure 8 Showing the linkages to and from the site

One of the reasons, for the success of this square is access. Though this square doesn't have parking facility, but people are using road edge as a parking space. But it is just on the banks of road, while passing through the road, people can be part of that square. Where doesn't need to make plan to access it. The location of square that it is not only linking residential area at its edges but it is also linked small newly developed commercial area beyond this it is linking major areas of this part of city.

So, it collects much number of pedestrian connection and it becomes the major path. Bus stop for the public transport is even at the edge of hat square. Although the vicinity of public square is a vital factor, the deliberate advent of a context of linkages reinforces its power and in addition decorate its success.



Figure 9 Context and linkage system

3.3.2 Edge interface and Spatial system:

Edges of this square, majorly front edge is road. One edge of square is huge retaining blank wall of sports complex and back side edge is with small parapet with backdrop of residential area. Seating area is clearly visible. Physically accessibility from road edge. Other edge with retaining wall is completely blank edge and physically, visually this edge is not at all connecting any element beyond this square. Back side of this square which is physically direct accessibility is not possible but visual connection is possible. This even possible due to level difference. In case of large gatherings or festivals like political gatherings, Ganpati Mirvanuk, Dahihandi celebration, even for this kind of celebration, users are standing beyond this square, still users are connected and part of celebration. So due to the multipurpose use and informal atmosphere, it promotes more intensive use and benefaction.



Figure 10 Edge interface and spatial system

Due to the observation, understood that important fact that instead of just edges, 'alive screens', word can be the proper term. Which are linking public square to a moving element and same public square to a balcony, terraces of the surrounding residential area. So, this public square is easily merges with road and even beyond the road it is merging with natural drainage stream and other side even it is linking visually but it is not merging with surrounding buildings.

Composition of public square and surrounding is making spatial system that is connected not only visually but also by orientation of activities. This system is in term linked via triangular connectors in the form of road, to fountain, retaining wall and parapets.



Figure 11 Elements present at the chowk

2. CONCLUSION: -

Today due to extensive use of social media, public get-togethers are rendered, so even importance of public squares is even reduced, but the design, development, context and convenience can increase the liveability of square. Users are the main contained of the public square. Without this ingredient it is very difficult to establish connection between public and urban environment. Public spaces and squares are very important fundamental element in liveable cities. Dimensions of the space, design and even psychological aspect need to take into consideration while designing and developing of public square.

Policies for successful urban public squares: -

- Promote multipurpose public use and participation of different layers of society.
- Enhance the character of local ambience
- Encourage social gatherings, activities, thought exchange and social communication.
- Enhance a space with the help of local artist and space should be available for local cultural celebrations and even for entertainment.
- Space should be with minimal maintenance and long lasting.
- Need to rich in feeder sources, physically and visually even.
- Space need to cater all age groups of society so, it creates psychological connection with locals. And it creates identity in immediate surroundings and even contributes for creating lung spaces for city.

This kind of public squares are not just a physical identity for people but it is symbolically meaning for locals. Even public squares developed from incidental space, even there is lack of

facilities for that square but due to implementation of policies. Hence, it is urgently needed to develop design and management strategies for urban public squares in order to prevent losing a vital part of the city and the community. (Memluk, Designing Urban Squares 2013).

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