

# Survey of Citizens' Interest to Native Architecture Case Study: Sari City

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**Abstract:-** Today, the architectural process based on the era of modernity and economic trends is moving towards the modern era of Western architectural constructions. Most of the new buildings were created without any connection to their native culture. The use of symbols and principles of indigenous architecture, which is consistent with the audience's mental schemas, makes it easier for them to understand space and thus to communicate better with it. This research seeks to determine whether people are actually interested in native architecture in reality. The research method is descriptive-analytical. Surveys based on local questionnaires were conducted in Sari city. As a result, it seems that people are inclined towards it if they know correctly and are aware of the quantitative and qualitative values of the native architecture.

**Keywords:** *Native Architecture, Citizen Interest, City Identity, Sari City.*

## INTRODUCTION

Pre-industrialized architecture in any area is capable of meeting the material and spiritual needs of the people from single family to the whole community. At the material level, architecture has embodied knowledge for centuries, using decorations, climates, building materials, and construction techniques. On a spiritual level, the form of the building is the result of pure harmony with daily life and seasonal rituals and investigates the unity of socio-cultural and religious ideals of each individual and community. In order to achieve such unity and to integrate material and spiritual needs, great importance was given to nature and its fundamental laws [1].

The density of the city plan, including buildings with thick walls and a variety of intermediate elements such as balconies, leads to the integration of symbolic and social meanings. Applying such realistic approaches and oriented values to the community made a feel confident and self-sufficiency. The non-spontaneous considerations were accepted and gradually absorbed to facilitate the continuation of the assimilated lifestyle. In this process, the role of architect was similar to the role of a shareholder in a firm. In the same way, all forms of Indian art have created unique indigenous dialects and preserved their culture and preservation for centuries [3].

Throughout history, the inhabitants of the vast land of Iran have been the creators of remarkable and enduring works of human civilization, and scholars and architects have contributed greatly to the development of culture, architecture and urban development, their scientific and artistic creations and masterpieces in the form of memorable and influential works have been unique in all fields, including urbanization and the creation of admirable and unique monuments that are a source of honor and exemplify in the eyes of the world. During the Qajar dynasty, with the advent of modernism in Iran, there were many changes in the architecture and urban design of Iranian cities, which presented many challenges to the architecture and urban design of the country.

Before modernism, non-modern European architecture had influenced Iranian architecture but was not compatible with it, because in its combination and application, elements of the principles Iranian and European architecture were intertwined and elements were used one after another, but in the process of forming the urban space with modern architectural and urban design patterns did not conform to Iranian architecture and urban design, for this reason, it was used as a tool and in places where the creation of quasi-modern architecture was avoided, only the original Iranian architecture was imitated without any change in content [7].

Modern architectural patterns had their own order and logic and it was in conflict with earlier architectural patterns and wanted to replace their order, but because this immense change in Iranian cities, modern architecture was used in a non-traditional way and renovated significant portions of the urban texture with its own patterns and it imposed a kind of anonymity and incoherence on the city's space. The earlier urbanization and architecture of Iranian cities, although technically simpler and less expensive, provided a more harmonious and meaningful environment in terms of appearance and urban space, and the human scale was favored.

Many factors include the rapid expansion of urbanization, population growth, industrialization of the world, inefficient educational systems, the lack of accumulation and conversion of single and dispersed commerce into a collective experience space, as well as insufficient tact in the use of modern-day knowledge and technologies and other social and political factors,

made the construction and urbanization of Iranian cities not well advanced and not only affected by Iranian urban spaces and original architecture but also incompatible with modern architectural and urban patterns.

## NATIVE ARCHITECTURE

Architecture is a branch of architecture based on needs and building materials that reflects regional traditions. Over time, native architecture has evolved based on the environmental, cultural, technological, and historical background in which it existed. Native architecture, with its lightweight design elements, is coincidentally united for aesthetic purposes that go beyond the essential requirements of the building. The term of native architecture should not be confused to traditional architecture, though there are links between the two [1].

The first name given to this architectural phenomenon was Giuseppe Pagano's "spontaneous" architecture. In an analysis of this name, Dr. Adriano Alpago Novello writes: "Spontaneity is not meant to be accidental, but to be natural, because there is nothing accidental about it. On the contrary, any choice is made strictly due to certain necessities. Necessities do not represent material and functional aspects". In native architecture, buildings are built with the utmost intelligence and talent of the people and the use of available resources and that mean that architecture meets the basic requirements of society in the simplest form.

## THE DEFINITION OF VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE IN TERMS OF ESSENCE AND ITS CONCEPT

If we speak with someone about the vernacular architecture, they unintentionally start turning the pages of a notebook which contains the words and the shapes of the past and they all look at the vernacular architecture as a heritage of their ancestors and they do not doubt for a second that they themselves can be the creator of an architecture consisting those kinds of beauties, attractions and singings that remind us of this architect's name.

Pagano (Leonard Pagano) expresses his own definition of the vernacular architecture that this type of architecture teaches us how to conquer time by cleaning the redundant and closing our eyes. He also says that this type of architecture is created upon the utter spatial value which itself is created from the most primary geometrical shapes and its focus is on the free composition and often asymmetric forces of thick walls and on regard of sceneries. This is why that today's architects are making examples of the unknown creators of the useless rural houses for their composition and their sensitive artworks. Valuable aesthetics lessons can be learnt from these examples. [6]

Finally, we point to Falamaki's definition of vernacular architecture, who said: "the vernacular architecture is a set of architectural units – a town which is gathered on the ground and by its harmonies in shapes, applied plan volumetric, coloring and tones of empty and full surfaces and also in the field of materials and its visible constructions regulations, containing a major and basic secret and has a harmony based on variety, a diagnosis based upon criterions, traditions and tastes originated from environmental culture, a unity coming from a mutual respect or full of environmental behaviors based on conditional freedoms of implied social contracts, contracts which are unwritten but alive." [1]

## VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE'S CHARACTERISTICS

One of the paths of understanding the vernacular architecture is by experience. Dr. Mansur Falamaki studied three inseparable ways of comprehending the empirical understanding which is mentioned below:

First: any architect or any person who builds a building regardless of orders, provides and presets patterns and builds it in harmony and among the existing ones, in condition of being free in thought and implementing his own taste in compositions, measures, color, and material selections and innovating new shapes that are not completely new but a variant of the existing shapes and they have a freedom which provides them with the ability of expressing a special point.

Second: any architect or any person who builds a building regardless of orders, provides and presets patterns and builds it in harmony and among the existing ones despite its freedom in editing the concept of the shape of the building, it cannot be ignorant of his living comprehensive cultural environment and is directly or indirectly influenced by. In fact, this is the nature of the vernacular architecture that respects two basic bonds: on one hand, the bond with the cultural environment, or with the chain cultural values, with chain of cultural behaviors and with the chain of implied regulations which are running inside it, on the other hand, the bond with the natural environment, or with what the land provides for man, things which are tools for thought, tools for operate, proportionate in materials and in details and in building elements and also have the same color.

Third: Any architect or any person who builds a building regardless of orders, provides and presets patterns and builds it in harmony and among the existing ones despite his freedom in editing the concept of the building's shape is not ignorant to the relatively rough environment of economical, administrative and productive which is made and contains its own particular culture. Whether he likes it or not, the architect or anyone who is constructing a building intervenes what is more originated from embodied tools than thoughts in implementation of his creation and this is done by saving and counsel based upon the construction regulations of an environment which is using the vernacular architecture.

It seems that these three perspectives are inseparable unless in analytical surveys some chains of understanding can be entered among them which keep the understanding of the vernacular architecture far from individual-subjective interpretations to a considerable amount. [2]

Adriano Alpaonolo states that there is a vast relationship between the vernacular architecture and the trend of regional dialects that marks the differences between each human population. It is worthy to point out the regional dialects which are the representative of a community or a particular group of people." He also points out two other characteristics of vernacular architecture as not having a production date and being anonymous. Its first characteristic is that its creators are not known (though knowing the name of its creator does not suffice for understanding its true value) and its other characteristic is its needlessness of having a production date which though knowing it would make confusions.

The main characteristic of vernacular architecture is that each tradition depends on its own social and economic condition. This characteristic is used in responding to the needs of each region. It does not matter whether it is a region, village or a town, the larger the scale of a place, the solutions are more comprehensive. The citizenship regulations and other traditions and laws can influence the way a region grows. In many cultures, spatial provisions are needed for work, sleep or food purveyance. This is a general fact and what is different is the way this space is responded to. The native constructors usually rise from societies that obey the regulations and that is why they are self-made constructors (they construct their own buildings) and pass this process and this type of architecture from generation to generation.

The vernacular architecture generally contains the condition and features of each environment and in some conditions, it can contain a special icon of a form, a belief or credence penetrated inside that region. Thus, even the smallest and simplest house can be the expression and reflection of the spiritual world of its maker. It is obvious that the range of construction forms, users' variety, conceptual and meaningful layers of culture all influence the vernacular architecture. Thus, in order to reach the slightest definition in vernacular architecture, we should look inside the main current. Instead of having surplus decorations, overstatements, and exaggerations, the vernacular architecture tends to have quality and simplicity in definition and tends to implement them on different process' (levels).

In short, the implemented solutions are presented below:

- The vernacular architecture consists of every houses, spaces, and building constructed for mankind
- These buildings which are constructed by the owner or the society rely on the available sources and benefit from all the traditional technologies.
- All vernacular architecture forms are created for responding to particular needs, defined living qualities and cultures' lifestyles created by them [3]

#### VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE IN MAZANDARAN

As we know, scholars divide Iran into four different climates including warm and dry climate of the central plateau – warm and humid climate of the Persian Gulf area – cold and mountain climate and finally the humid and mild climate of Mazandaran sea areas.

The provinces of Gilan, Mazandaran, and Golestan are categorized in the last climate category. They have mutual characteristics, which depending on the geographical position they slightly differ. For instance, extraversion is an issue which can be seen throughout Mazandaran borders.

The placement of the house in the middle of the yard is for a better building breathing from all four sides. The other issue is living in places higher than the ground which can be seen in all Mazandaran regions and as we move toward west and the humidity levels become higher; the residential spaces are built higher than the eastern areas. The tilt in the roofs is another mutual point which this has a direct relationship with the amount of rain and as we move toward Gilan (west) the tilts become steeper and what we finally reach is a moderation between the minimums and the maximums which are placed in Mazandaran.

#### THE QUESTIONS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

In order to do the fieldwork of this research, there were no sample sources or comprehensive patterns. This questionnaire was created and completed in six months. It is the result of recording and studying the field observations, many discussions with scholars of social, environmental psychology and anthropology, literature review and finally analyzing the obtained information. Some primary questionnaire samples were provided in order to measure the questioning results. However, what is presented in this article is the conclusion of the final questionnaire.

Both questionnaires include the approaches, tendencies and architectural interests of this study. It is worth mentioning that the questionnaires are presented here the same way they were asked so that there should be an opportunity for people to express a particular opinion and being in the position of those who were asked and think about whatever is hidden inside each question. Finding the respondents and entering houses was difficult, and we had to make a particular solution for each one and if there was no collaboration given from our native coworkers, it was nearly impossible to create a relationship aside with trust. It was not suitable for this article to present both the answers given to the questions related to the historical houses that were weather vocally recorded or written as consented. The same goes for contemporary houses. Some answers were too private and some were unrelated and we accept the fact that we were unable to ask more appropriate questions. This is why we tried to gather what was mutual among the answers. The questionnaire that was provided for the owners of the contemporary houses included 28 questions. Each question was provided for a particular purpose according to the contradiction between lifestyle and spatial understanding.

The questions are more focused on the following issues, so as to understand more about the architectural space and its relationship with the residents and the way of life, to gain an understanding of the degree of interest in native architecture. These are as follows in Table 1.

Table 1: Questionnaire items

Ability to identify and distinguish the building from the outside	Inside recognition and perception, by the spatial layers separating outside from inside
Space organization upon arrival	Entrance recognition, entrance space, and space influence on arrival
Creating a sense of place (which is the home)	Home space in the realization of lifestyle
Understanding the impact of space on the comfort of home people	Observing the backyard and crowd space and identifying them in the home spatial organization
Spatial diversity and refreshment	Emotional space experiences (detecting the relationship between resident and home space and understanding the interaction and tangible effect)
Factors of dissatisfaction with space	The relationship of home with nature and neighbors
Home spatial organization and environmental factors	Space proportion to the needs of the inhabitants according to the number of inhabitants, the age of the inhabitants, etc.

The results of the citizens' responses to the questions highlight the research points as follows:

- Half of the respondents said that the house is much different from the outside than it is from the inside and this difference is more in comparison with the neighboring buildings according to their heights, materials, colors, scuttle and some special marks. Half of the answers indicated no particular distinction.
- Usually, the set of factors that individually or collectively exist in the entrance path are yard (in the contemporary concept), pilot parking, wall, steps, and hall. In addition, in studying the answers we figured that in most contemporary houses, most houses entrance areas are dedicated to the entrance activities such as taking out clothes or shoes. The spatial system does not propose something special for moving toward the inside of the house and there is no sense of leaving a public territory and entering a private one.
- It can be figured from the results of the research that those who enter the house are more affected by the inner and private feelings because of the opposition and distinction between the congestion of the town and the privacy of the inside of the house and the first feeling they experience as they walk in the house with comfort, which is due to being relieved from the huddle of outside. None of the answers were related to the impact of the inside area on the moment of entry and in two cases points out "lack of a considerable space" and "presenting the whole space on the moment of entrance". In addition, of course, we figured that because of the intensity of the outside pollution, the distinction was felt in the moment of entry and we cannot say that it is because of the houses inside space.
- After the entrance, if the people come home exhausted, they do the following activities as was already mentioned in the answers: changing clothes, lying down, eating and drinking, watching television, listening to music, taking a bath, working in the kitchen and if there are any open spaces or garden they said that they sit by it. There is no significant impact on the role of the house spatial system in such activities unless there is an open space or a garden.
- From the findings of this research, we can conclude that resting style depends on different habits of people. Some respondents could only rest in the bedroom and some others could rest in other areas and among family members. They were asked if they could have privacy if the bedroom door was closed and their answers were "to some extent, but the noise is not stopped". In few cases the comforting impact of spaces was pointed out, however we found out that things like television, radio, music player and books play a role in providing comfort.
- The comfort of the houses was mostly related to the family affairs and the role of the spatial system was not mentioned, however they were unsatisfied with living in an apartment.
- Also, we can conclude that if the family affairs are well, the spatial insufficiencies are not felt. 84 percent of respondents complained about the disorganization of the spatial system of the house and said: "if it was a duplex" or "there was a scenic view" or even if there was an "under the stairs" space in the house, some of the house residents needs were fulfilled. One of the responses is presented here: "to some extent, yes, because they are defined and determined well and somehow because of that in my opinion, the private spaces should have the complete set of supplies for a person's life and also have an appropriate decoration and have some green spaces as well."
- In comparison with private spaces, space satisfaction is much lower than in public rooms, because the most of the usable spaces of public spaces are wasted and to quote from of the respondents, they have neither a view nor a scene, neither a spatial complexity nor a richness or ambiguity. In some responses, the issue of fitness or the inability to clean the place was mentioned instead of the spatial satisfaction factor and it was complained about that when guests came there, the large spaces looked small.
- From the findings of this research, it can be figured that the spatial variation in new houses is low and their residents were vulnerable to it and they complained from the unity of the inside spaces of the house. These responses were few. What is meant by variety is the little distinctions in lighting, coloring and having one or two steps in the surface-level variety?

- Having a personal and suitable space and having a sense of belonging in the spatial system of the inside areas of the house can create a play an important role in elevating the favorability levels of the houses.
- A large percent of the responses to the comfort inside the house attended to the general lifestyle and did not show any vulnerability to the spaces. Most of the houses that were studied by presence and spatial experience lacked the provision of comfort.
- We can conclude from the findings of the research that disturbance in residential complexes and apartments are different from the disturbances in single unit houses. In the first one, the residents complained about the lack of the apartment residential culture and in the second one, they complained about the unsuitable spatial system with the residents' lifestyle.
- Having a natural wind inside the house was barely experienced. Lack of roofed and open spaces minimized this possibility.
- The new houses residents wanted to have a relationship with plants and flowers, but the supplies of living inside apartments have limited this relationship and those who have a yard have a better relationship opportunity. To eliminate this relationship and ignoring it in the spatial system of the houses is to ignore the creator principles of lifestyle.
- We have measured the response with regard of the houses spatial systems and their proximity and we found out that the outer formation and mixture of those houses did not play any role in having a relationship with the neighbors.
- The responses, which complained about the territory intrusion of inside spaces, held the lack of foundation and lack of having a room for each person responsible for it.
- The spatial system of the houses that was not built according to the vernacular architecture does not basically consider the issue of age and the only thing worth mentioning is the two-dimensional characteristics of stairs which in one hand can create a variety in space, and in the other hand, can cause the danger of falling.
- Houses that are not built according to the vernacular architecture had a tendency to change the spaces inside it and the owners acted upon it. The main direction of these changes is to enable more light to come in and widen the spaces and ease the relationships.

## CONCLUSION

Considering the responses of the citizens and with their interest in having a relationship with their neighbors, nature, using the natural elements such as wind needs the implementation of vernacular architecture and the affection of people. Also by having a look on the answers we can find out that the owners of those houses which was not built according to the vernacular architecture are unsatisfied with the lack of private and public territories inside their houses and in many ways, they confess to the heterogeneity between what they need and what the space provides them. The vernacular architecture is what that can provide the resident with the elements, which is lost in today's architecture in climate, social, cultural spatial and other aspects.

By the studies presented here, we conclude that those who live inside houses without any color or scents of vernacular architecture have less satisfaction and interest toward the vernacular architecture. It is because of the heterogenic spaces and the residents' characteristics that the vernacular architecture cannot still have a relationship with its users and cannot respond to their needs and the new spaces only if its purpose is to create a space as such as the vernacular architecture and of course with consideration of the current matters of the society can respond to its users' needs.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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## Appendix

### Questionnaire questions:

1. Is the house distinctive from the outside (in terms of shape, color, materials, etc.)
2. How is the house separated from outside? (by staircase, yard, wall, etc.).
3. What do you do when you get home?
4. How do you feel when you come home from outside?



5. Are the interior light, air, and sound distinct from the outside?
6. What do you do when you get home tired?
7. How do you relax at home? In which space? Do you feel comfortable by closing the door? What about silence?
8. Do you have comfort at home? (Why yes? Why not?)
9. Are you satisfied with the privacy of your home? (Why yes? Why not?).
10. How about the public and communal spaces of the home (Why yes? Why not).
11. Do you have spatial diversity at home? How? (Depending on the level of difference of height difference of light difference, air difference)
12. Is there a space in your home that will keep you home? Explain.
13. What do you know as the comfort of home?
14. What issues are bothering you at home? Describe as far as home spaces are concerned.
15. Has the wind ever been naturally in your home? How?
16. What is the position of green plants in your home?
17. Don't you feel the privacy of family members overlap? If so, why? If they don't, why?
18. Are your home spaces suitable for children? What about the elderly?
19. Have you changed your home spaces? What's the difference?