

Dimensions of Public Spaces: Feelings through Human Senses

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Abstract : The significance of public spaces is on a rise in Indian cities as a strong interaction space across cultures and community. It is a pertinent gathering space for people across age and gender, where the face keeps changing with time. A public space is directly related to the social dimension, people, comfort, safety, and security, that, it proposes to provide, as inherent qualities. The presence of these and other dimensions of space, together with related equitable environments, impart certain quality to a public space. The higher the optimum contents of these dimensions, the better the quality of public space. Public is represented by PEOPLE through society and community, and space is created by dimensions. Society contains children, women and the elderly, community is composed of social, and religious groups. These behave differently in a different setting and call for varied quality of spaces, created and generated. Public spaces are spread across a city and have more or less established their existence and prominence in a social set up. While few of them are created others are discovered by the people themselves in their constant search for desirable interactive public spaces. These are the most sought after gathering spaces that have the quality of promoting social interaction, providing free accessibility, provide desirable scale etc. The emergence of public space dates back to the times when people started forming communities, display cultures and traditions publicly, gathered for religious observations and celebrations, and address the society. Traditional cities and societies in India were feudal and orthodox in their nature and yet had public spaces. When the gathering of people at one point in a city became more frequent the point became more accessible and occupied. Baras (large courts, Chowks (public squares) and Maidans (large grounds) became well-known gathering spaces in the towns and cities. As the population grew such points grew in number, each becoming a public space in itself and with a different and definite social character. The author aims at studying the various dimensions of public spaces with which a public space has power to hold people for a significant period of time. The human senses here are not referred to as taste, sight, hearing, touch or smell, but how human senses collectively respond to when stationed in a given public space. The collectives may reflect in dimensions like comfort, safety, environment, freedom etc. Various levels of similar other responses would be studied through interviews, observations and other scientific methods for both qualitative and quantitative analysis.

Keywords : society, interaction, people, accessibility, comfort, enclosure

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