Looking beyond Lynch's Image of a City

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Abstract : Kevin Lynch's Theory on Imeageability, let on explore a city in terms of five elements, Nodes, Paths, Edges, landmarks and Districts. What happens when we try to record the same data in an Indian context? What happens when we apply the same theory of Imageability to a complex shifting urban pattern of the Indian cities and how can we as Urban Designers demonstrate our role in the image building ordeal of these cities? The organizational patterns formed through mental images, of an Indian city is often diverse and intangible. It is also multi layered and temporary in terms of the spirit of the place. The pattern of images formed is loaded with associative meaning and intrinsically linked with the history and socio-cultural dominance of the place. The embedded memory of a place in one's mind often plays an even more important role while formulating these images. Thus while deriving an image of a city one is often confused or finds the result chaotic. The images formed due to its complexity are further difficult to represent using a single medium. Under such a scenario it's difficult to derive an output of an image constructed as well as make design interventions to enhance the legibility of a place. However, there can be a combination of tools and methods that allows one to record the key elements of a place through time, space and one's user interface with the place. There has to be a clear understanding of the participant groups of a place and their time and period of engagement with the place as well. How we can translate the result obtained into a design intervention at the end, is the main of the research. Could a multi-faceted cognitive mapping be an answer to this or could it be a very transient mapping method which can change over time, place and person. How does the context influence the process of image building in one's mind? These are the key questions that this research will aim to answer.
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