
SOCIAL PERCEPTION ON DESIGNED AND UN-DESIGNED PUBLIC SPACES IN KOCHI

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Abstract: The intention of an architect while designing a space and the perception of the same space by diverse user groups would be different. Urban planning and city planning has made most of its suppositions and proposals based on the user groups- their time, identity and needs. The formulation of 'designed un-designed spaces' is necessary for the successful working of a space, with 'chaos in order' and 'life in activities'. The un-designed spaces fill the gaps in designed spaces, giving life and energy to it.

Keywords: Adaptation, Chaos, Customization, Designed and Un-Designed Spaces.

Introduction: Architecture is one of the supreme imperative mediums through which we perceive the surroundings. Architecture defines the current age, from the ground to skyline, from thoughts to experience and from space to time. How well have been the architecture utilized to control these, to make the current scenario most habitable, is a question of debate.

A narrow road with shopping street on both sides could make one forget the time, or the wide road could make one feel the time dead, with improper traffic control and un-interesting streets. When a region is provided with a designed public space such as a park, the region is exposed to a new opportunity and hence a new dimension, that may or may not be the dimension intended by the architect. The reaction of the user to a new designed public space, the stimulus it will have on the life of the user, and the subsequent adaptation of the user to space or even the customization of the space is to be realized at the scenario.

The growth of cities is rapid. The growth is both designed and un-designed. The city which the people needs and the city which works for the gross domestic product of the nation are both poles apart. Same is the case for any residential area, a public space, a market and so on. Many of the spaces formed are character based with no sagacity of background or apprehension for the people. This creates a consequence which is to be looked at, studied and applied in the future to make better spaces to live and let live.

The paper is intended to understand the rejoinder of people to the designed and un-designed spaces they are dealing with and then understand what factors encompass the major aspects of the evaluation. The study based on the social perspective can be indeed obliging to make spaces better and inclusive.

Designed Spaces: Spaces with dispensed new or already prevailing activity with apposite time, space and other resources formulated from studies and experience by a group of architects, engineers and people of related fields. These are predetermined and stable.

Un-Designed Spaces: Spaces that are created as a result of constant use, naturally evolved or created naturally by the people using it so that they get the best out of the space.

Process: The idea was to compare designed and un-designed areas of the spaces having an analogous function, natural features and transport options. The prospect of studying different stretches of the same place was then adapted. For this, Panampilly Nagar, which was designed as a residential area in 1976 was selected, due to the un-designed activities witnessed in the recent years. The major residential zone of Kochi is to be announced as a 'mixed-use zone' by March 2017 (Reporter, 2017). The appraisal of the spaces and the growth, evolution and feedbacks are taken from the public which includes the

permanent residents of Panampilly Nagar and the users of the space. The spaces are visited daily for about five months starting from December 2017 to April 2018. The study is done compulsorily on four times of a day, which is in the morning, afternoon, evening and night. All the studies were based on five factors: time, activity, space, accessibility, need and response. Spaces studied are:

The central park, Panampilly Nagar

The Chilavannur Kadathu

The front space of Alibaba hotel, Panampilly Nagar

The market around the central park, Panampilly Nagar

The Government higher secondary school front, Panampilly Nagar

The football ground of Government higher secondary school, Panampilly Nagar

The football ground near Chilavannur



Spaces Studied (Maps)

Panampilly Nagar: Panampilly Nagar was a muddy land with cultivation before designing the area as a residential colony in 1970. The area with its large residential complexes, neat and clean premises increased the demand for the area, which then was a hybrid residential-commercial zone. A large number of residences was converted into commercial buildings, which revealed the narrowness of the roads and lack of parking areas within Panampilly Nagar. This, in turn, made the premises busy and higher income group who could afford the premises took over the areas. Later, amenities and provisions for the high-end group came up. The premises of Panampilly Nagar is designed with the proper road, service road, parking areas, greenery, and shade. Panampilly Nagar Welfare Association is a group within the area who take care of the premises. Panampilly Nagar is now a mixed-use zone (Reporter, 2017). The other two areas studied are from Chilavannur. Chilavannur kadathu, which was earlier a water transport way to the other shore, and a football ground, both of which are around 2 kilometers from Panampilly Nagar.



Example for necessary, optional and social activity as described by Jan Gehl in front of hotel Alibaba



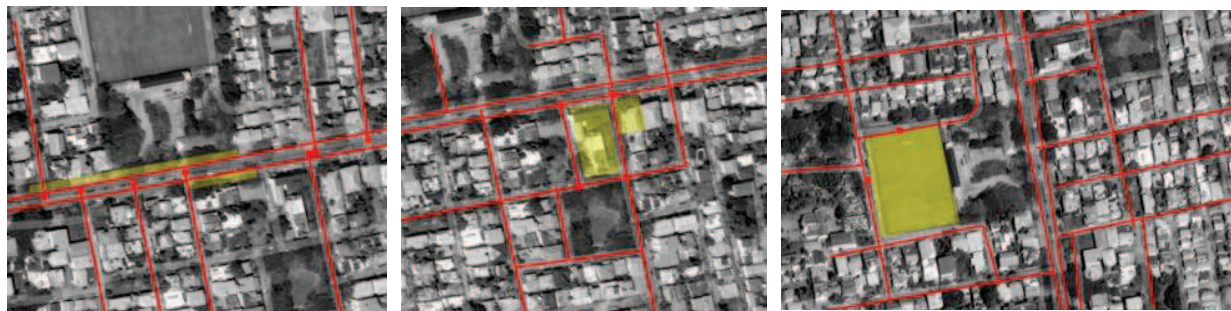
Example for perceived, conceived and lived spaces as described in Henry Lefebvre’s conceptual triad

Gestalt: The main street of Panampilly Nagar, the avenue had one or two street food shops before December of 2017. The number of food stalls has increased tremendously in the subsequent months. The Panampilly Avenue now is about to be a food street in the evenings. The introduction of more commercial settings inside this residential zone has introduced more workers which in turn lead to the opportunities for affordable food stalls rather than high-end provisions of Panampilly Nagar. The scenario is that both sides of the Avenue are turning into public areas with the introduction of shops, restaurants, boutiques and so on. Both permanent and temporary food stalls are aimed at providing seating in these areas. Restaurants like ‘Zaatar’, ‘Cold Stone’ have provided outdoor seating on the sides of service roads of the avenue. ‘Alibaba’ is seen providing outdoor seats in the evening when there are more customers. At other times, people also find seating spaces in the half walls built to separate the parking spaces in front of ‘Alibaba’. Other restaurants like ‘Aavi’ in the same stretch also witness people sitting in the half walls of the parking separation, where the crowd would be less and there will be enough shade from the trees. The central park of Panampilly Nagar also shows people sitting in the grass lawns, tree branches, compound walls, steps, parked bikes and so on rather than the provided park benches.



- Legibility of space- Kevin Lynch**
- █ Path
 - █ Node
 - █ Edge
 - █ Landmark
 - █ District

Connectivity Diagrams with Axial Lines



School front

Market near Central Park

School Ground



Central Park

Ground near Chilavannur Kadath

Hotel Alibaba front



1 pm

3 pm

4 pm

6 pm



7 pm

8 pm

9 pm

9 am

Activity Mapping in Front of Govt. Higher Secondary School with Respect to Time

Observations	Market	Football Ground	Public Spaces
Time	Used and erected utmost in the evenings, when public moves. The inflow of crowd are result of the fast service. Number of products offered is limited to make service faster. Supermarkets works well when purchased for a week or month.	Used by all in one way or the other at different times. Time cannot compromise the passion and enthusiasm for the sake of security. Methods such as creating more visibility, providing sufficient light, or assigning a security.	Used at the time in between the occurrence of other activities. Used at the time for leisure. Used at transition time from one place to the other.
Activity	Witnessed many stranger conversations and smiles. Spaces demand more than just purchasing and billing. Ordering from the car so	Most of the people use it one way or the other to make it active all the time. The grazing of the cattle, small meetings and games	Public areas should accommodate any of the activities of the user group. Some of the activities might demand

	that stall keeper feeds the demand.	are seen here.	visibility, some will demand privacy.
Space	Market spaces are to be of human scale so as to enable the customers to see and take the products needed fast and easy. Space will have a chaos in itself with lot of products and space.	Be not only for football. Should be flexible enough to meet different activities of people of different age group and gender.	Public gathering spaces must have an essence in itself to bring about an identity rather balance crowd. The activities and amenities should support the essence.
Accessibility	Markets pulled out into streets with billing and accommodation can mix stalls and supermarkets. People of city are in need of quick and best services, which is impossible in supermarkets.	Most of the grounds are of lesser visibility to the outside to create an artificial barrier for the people interested, talented and affordable to get engaged and learn.	Allotting zones for each activities will make a zoning inside the public space. The visibility and security factors should be properly maintained.
Need and response	Should not consume time for billing, purchasing and locating, yet provide provisions for parking, leisure and space to accommodate other activities. People are adaptive and are ready to save time to use markets in favorable conditions.	Should not call for restriction on rules, time or space. If not of professional needs, it may not be even assigned for single activity. It can be seen as a space accommodating various activities at different times with restrictions.	Balancing crowd in locality offering activities, stimulants, recreational spaces and so on. The crowd movement within is to be designed and the spaces should accommodate flexibility since it is a place which welcomes different people with diverse mindsets.

Traffic: The vehicles from Thevara, Vytilla are moving in through the avenue of Panampilly which has increased the traffic inside the zone. Vehicles in crossroads makes the pedestrians hard to walk.

Privacy: With the rise of commercial settings through crossroads, there are many residents who find it really hard with the inflow of the public from outside.

Interaction Areas: There are fewer areas to sit and have a talk in the open spaces. Most of the youth find the space for a chat inside a shop or inside the vehicles itself.

Walkable Spaces: Due to the increased inflow of outside public and temporary shops, some of these spaces are not an area of interest for the residents of Panampilly Nagar, rather than outsiders.

Smoking Zone: A smoking zone within the premises so that the rest of the areas will be smoke-free and to zone smokers. There are un-designed smoking corners seen near ‘The tea break’ near central park.

Public Toilets: There are no public toilets other than the ones inside restaurants and shops, which most of them find it hard at all the times. A public toilet near central park is now unmaintained.

Waste Bin: The public, regardless of the nativity, age and class point out the need for waste bins in the premises. The only waste bins are the ones provided by the street food stalls.

Conclusion: The designed spaces are seen to be in the similar state throughout the day, month or year. But the evolved areas are witnessing rapid changes in and around. Panampilly Nagar as such is designed area. But the small cavities are filled with evolved areas which are now affecting the designed areas. Designed activities, and hence, design can bring an inactive space active. The adaptation and transformation of the design and designed spaces are possible through in-designed spaces. A new design, 'The Streetscape' was inaugurated on 23rd July 2016 at the sides of Shihab Thangal road of Panampilly Nagar, which was least active before the installation. Now, it is the most active space at the evening hours after the advent of the project. Many associated stalls and commercialization are noticeable at the edges.

The designed and un-designed spaces co-exist with each other so as to transform and adapt to the environment. There can be no answer to the question for, 'which of the spaces, designed or un-designed, is better? A central square or a park within the city is equally important as naturally conserved and developed area for recreation. The possibility is to change the concept of the market, or park, or play area from the basic stage. The behavioral patterns of the people in both designed and undersigned areas are studied and analyzed. The legibility of the spaces based on experiences until now cannot be changed but is possible to change it from now on. The challenge is to incorporate un-designed physiognomies into designed spaces to create humane spaces. Some of the attempts from the areas studied are listed below.

The linear arrangement of markets with multiple activities, selling different things at different times.
Visible recreational areas capable to embrace different activities with spaces to see and to be seen.
Spaces with air flow supporting different activity zones and providing interaction areas with public/private/semi-public zones.

Interconnection of spaces with different characters and space for leisure, in-between spaces and activity oriented spaces.

Spaces designed with time, designing activities of similar peak hours or dissimilar peak hours based on the context, social and cultural practice.

No places are void except for the vacant, barren spaces. These areas are first designed to incorporate activities. The designed spaces cannot rectify all the needs of the public. Un-designed spaces are a result



Figure 1: The Streetscape Project During Construction And After

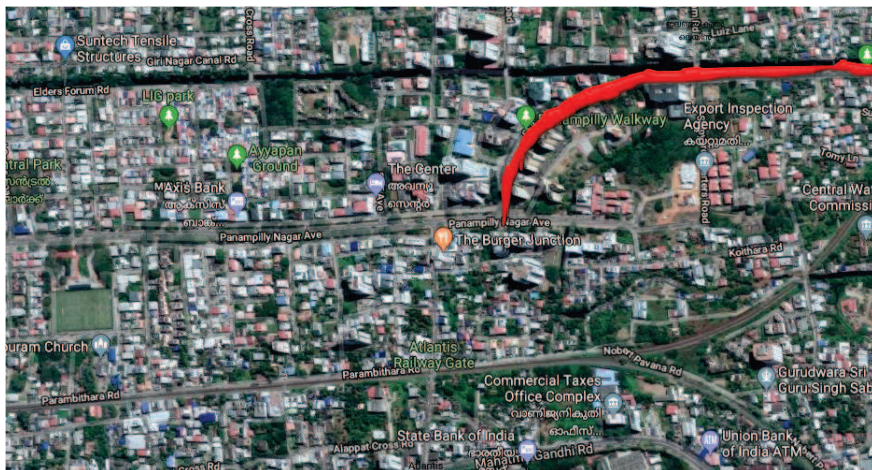


Figure 2: The Streetscape Project Location, Panapilly Nagar

of the transformation of the space into something which previously was absent. The voids within the designed spaces are filled in by the un-designed spaces which cater to the needs of the people. But these also have brain associated with it. Space is just absent in the records. The unforeseen chaos is being filled in the designed areas. The neglected chaos is humane and will be present at any of the designed areas. The design should incorporate any kind of humane development other than in the records, the un-designed spaces, so as to give life to the designed space.

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