

**THE ROLE OF ARCHITECTURE IN REJUVENATING
STREET LIFE: A STUDY OF SOME SELECTED STREETS IN
COLOMBO**

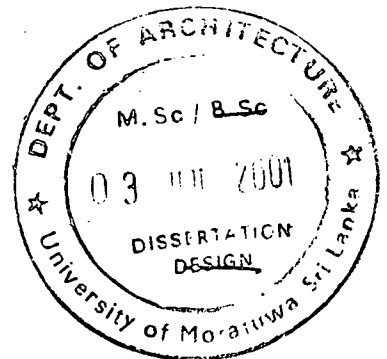
A Dissertation Presented To
Department Of Architecture
University Of Moratuwa.
Sri Lanka, for the final examination
In Master of Science in
Architecture.

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Abstract

Urban life in an urban street is valuable for a city and important to societies and becomes memorable when people are active in public spaces.

The urban street must be seen as the public realm of our city and its contribution to public life.

In urban design, the consideration relating to people, and the way in which they interact have tended to be neglected, especially in an urban street. Because of that there is an apparent crisis in public life, which results in the loss of public realm.

But if the urban street is given the attention required, there is a possibility of bringing back the public life, which is very important to the society.

Hence the essence of the argument relates to the public realm or street life in Sri Lankan context and, the study is based on the question of how to rejuvenate the street life when designing the urban space.

Acknowledgement

This study with many complexities and difficulties completed due to the assistance, guidance and encouragement given by all of the following persons, to whom I wish to extend my heart full gratitude.

- Prof.N. De Silva, Head, Department of Architecture , University of Moratuwa, for his assistance in this study.
- My tutor Archt.Madura Premathilaka,Senior lecturer, Department of Architecture for comments and criticism which encouraged me to do this study.
- I am deeply indebted to Archt.Ravin Gunarathna Senior Lecturer,Department of Architecture for his guidance, valuable comments and unreserved help given to me for the completion of this task.
- Archt. Chriss De Sarm and Archt. Dr. L.S.R. Perera , Senior lecturers , Department of Architecture, for their kind guidance whenever needed.
- The staff of Department of Architecture.
- Archt. Ms. Nisha Fernando and Archt. Kapila De Silva , kind guidance and help in the study.
- I'm also grateful to Ms. Neluka Senanayaka and Ms. Semini Samarasinghe for the assistance provided.
- D.I.G. A.A. Samarasinghe for his assistance for possible arrangements in having the Defense clearance to photograph the high security zones within Colombo.
- O.I.C. 's in Fort , Slave Island and Panchikawatta police stations for their great co-operation in photographing.

- I offer my heartfelt thanks to my dearest friends Dishmie, Sumudu, Wathsala, , Champika, Nileeka , Charmalee, , Nilakshi Akki, Hiranthi Akki, Chaminda and my batch mates for their valuable support rendered in completion of this task.
- Shimal , Isuru and Miuru for helping me with photographs.
- My cousins Tisara , Eranda and Premila, for their assistance
- My Aunts and Uncles, for their assistance.
- Finally I express my deepest gratitude to my dearest parents, brother and Nath for their support and for always being there to take my troubles in a most loving way.

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Introduction.

Introduction

Topic explanation

Public spaces as inherited by cities may have different forms such as streets, boulevards, avenues gardens, squares or markets. The public realm of a city depicts the continuity of these public spaces within the city and it is the most important part of our towns and cities, where the greatest amount of human contact and interaction takes place.

"Streets and their sidewalks, the main public places of a city, are its most vital organs. Think of a city and what comes to mind? It's streets. If a city's street look interesting, the city looks interesting; if they look dull , the city looks dull"
(Jane Jacobs 1965 : 39)

The public realm of a country like ours is mostly associated with the street and its activity pattern. It will incorporate all the buildings, which will open out to the street and its related activities or the usage of the space as a place.

When the urban street^{is} to be considered as the principle mode of the public realm in our culture, question arises what's the public realm and how it can be used in a logical manner.

Several authors have discussed the issue of the public realm in streets. Some would refer it as elements of a place and the usage of it and appreciating space in visual manner, referring to theories which depicts the qualities of the place. Public realm of a place mainly depends on the relationship of a design and the humane being.

This relationship can be understood via the understanding of the patterns of a place. The creation of a picture of a living city in large part on its complex permeable interfaces, are refereed with twelve selected patterns as



Alexander argues. His argument is more systematic and realistic design theory than the spiritual arguments on the same issue.

Hence the essence of the argument relates to the public realm or street life in our context. Therefore the study is based on the question of how to rejuvenate the street life considering the patterns of the place, when designing the urban space.

The objective of the topic underlies to study with reference to the above basis and analyze the segments of the place referring to the "quality" behind the patterns of the place.

Need of the study

In urban design, the considerations relating to people and the way in which they interact have tended to be neglected, especially in an urban street. Street as a public space, participates in the construction of the individuals as well as the symbolic experience of society in its diversity.

This neglect of street life embodied in street spaces has convinced the private sector to invest in the production of street spaces.

However these new spaces reduce the individuals to experience and seen as a living space. That is mainly focuses on the economic aspects as well as the social practices and has completely neglected the symbolic aspects of a street form.

The character, personality of the street and the spatial quality peculiar to that street, which differ from all other streets, should be experienced in its true form. Unfortunately we have lost sight of the traditional understanding of the

urban street, due to the neglect of pattern of the place while designing those spaces. Therefore it has lost the street life and become a dull place.

It is clear that urban development process mainly considered as a by product of economic factors, while cities like Colombo is faced with severe problems of overcrowding, pollution and corruption and along the way all community life has lost.

Intention of the study:

Main objective of the study is to understand the patterns of a place and the responsiveness to the environment with reference to a basis, which leads to create a livable city. Finally the analysis will proceed into the potentials to rejuvenate life in streets.

Therefore the study aims to focus on:

- 1 To study and analyze patterns of a place .In doing so it will try to introduce a basis which includes patterns to create a livable city.
- 2 For the analysis purpose of the life behind the patterns of the place it will introduce qualities of a responsive environment to create a livable place.
- 3 Using the fundamental basis of the public realm of a place is evaluated and this proceeds into see the relationship between the analysis and rejuvenating street life, and the quality of the life in a livable city.
- 4 The conclusion will provide the analysis and enabling potentials to use the urban street as the principle mode of public realm in the context of Sri Lanka.

In order to achieve the above mentioned, the physical configuration along the urban street in terms of its setting is explored, in terms of individual experience. Man- environment interaction in an urban street, how it's really experienced and comprehended, and the effects of such values and the accessibility of the street space is also explored.

Methodology

The study is based on three selected streets of Colombo metropolitan region. The streets are selected taking into account; their particular location, existing situation and importance and the value remaining regarding the form of the street, activity pattern and the permeability of the place.

The study is based on certain arguments on the public realm done by several academics. Out of whom the study is based on to analyzes patterns of a place. Therefore the methodology adopted here is based on the patterns of a place and referring to the qualities behind that patterns and the analysis will lead to rejuvenate life in urban streets.

Physical form mapping and behavior mapping is carried out specially containing on the activity pattern, form of the place and the permeability of the place. These are carried out in the selected streets in the settings of photographic survey, graphical survey and observation by the researcher.

In order to derive the above-mentioned strategy the content of the study is arrayed into segments as below.

The first chapter deals with the public realm of city. It will give a definition to our public realm and within the survey of literature it has formulated a basis for the study. With reference to the study the urban street has identified as the

principal mode of the public realm and this leads into the second chapter of where the phenomenon of an urban street is explained.

Chapter three is where the created basis applied into practice. It will extract illustrations and explain the street form and the public realm from the history. Then explain the crisis today in hand, with the understanding of things had and the decay of the public realm in our urban context and mirrored the need of this kind of study. For the analysis purpose it will select streets on a basis and map the pattern of the place and the associated behavior pattern within the space.

The collected material will be analyzed and from that the study will conclude with rejuvenating methods and the manner our urban street can be used as the principle mode of public realm.

Scope and Limitations

Public realm of a city can be a collection of spaces as streets, squares, boulevards, gardens etc. but the study here mainly focused on to the urban streets.

The study will not deal political, social, economics etc. aspect here it would examine the human behavior and related factors in depth. Yet it explored into the physical form, and the formal design aspects of a place. Therefore the study stresses the street form, accessibility and the related activity pattern (i.e.; in terms of community life and people).

The Reference

- 1 Jacobs, Jane. (1969). The Death And Life Of Great American Cities.
New York: Random House.

