SOCIAL CONSCIOUS ARCHITECTURE:
AN EXAMINATION OF THE CO-RELATION BETWEEN
'WAY OF LIFE' AND DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES.

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INTRODUCTION.

1.0. PREAMBLE.

Considering about exterior civic spaces, it comes up with widely varying images.

Roads filed by traffic, intense experience of human activities, both stimulating and stressful. Buildings used in a way that they are not to be designed for. Clean edged, blank surfaces, poverty and tension, as well as luxury and affluence, industry, offices, shops, apartments and people.

All of these are influenced by its built substances. Some of it is good to be in, some causes terrible human problems.

Within this environment, urban dweller faced with a problem of a change environment in which he has to achieve a goal of satisfying a more or less persistent psychological need. This is deep rooted need for belonging. There for it can be assumed that the need for belongingness exist all levels of people.

At the first level, family level, village or urban level and regional level. There for public spaces help to fulfill the deep rooted need for belongingness.

1.1. OBSERVATION.

Most of the contemporary Sri Lankan public spaces, are not fulfilling the user needs. User become 'machines' almost 'robots' with the lack of feeling towards it. As a result user unable to fulfill the deep rooted need for sense of belongingness.

It failed to generate and heightening the emotions and become a part of the life of user. Due to varies other reasons, such as context, regulations, technology,
economy, user requirement and the way of life of the user become less significant.

Therefore the most of the designed spaces are not respond to the actual user, but it is just a physical structure, that is not suitable to the user.

1.2. CRITICALITY.

When Architecture is unable to provide this primary need, it creates varied problems within individuals and society. Public spaces isolated both in Socially and Spatially. Social unrest and despondency and their marks upon the built fabric in terms of Graffiti and vandalism. And the buildings and spaces display obvious lack of happy use and care. Living within such conditions, undeniably is social unhealthy, because they create trauma and tension both within individuals and within the society at the same time.

1.3. CAUSES.

Well designed Public spaces, responding to the way of life of the user, diminish both in quality and quantity. It become an important issue within society. But solution for that situation lies so far due to three reasons.

1. Most of the designs are not aware of the close relationship with the user. Specially a Sociological issue, such as a way of life. The outcome is user may not get the maximum advantage from the design.

2. Most of the designers concern with the physical visual and spatial attributes of the built environment, rather than it’s social relevance. Other factors such as context, regulations, technology, economy become more important than sociological reasons such as the way of life of the user.
3. Lack of understanding of about the mechanism, to application of sociological theories in architectural design process, is another reason, which weekend the relationship between design of public spaces and user's way of life.

According to my point of view, awareness of the close relationship between public spaces and way of life is the most important issue to study. So, this study is focused to identify the relationship.

1.4 Remedy.

1.4.1. Intention of the study.

Intention of this study is to establish the co-relation between way of life and public spaces. Way of life is a sociological term. Measure what extent it co-relate with public spaces. Whether public spaces can completely respond to the way of life of the user, or some extent this response is happen or it is never happen in any situation is, is measure in this study. And from analyzing that establish the relationship between way of life and the public spaces.

1.4.2. Scope and limitation.

When selecting the public spaces, it is limited to Architect designed public spaces. There are varies types of public spaces, which are not designed or designed by non Architects. But those are not taken in to the account. It is limited to contemporary Sri Lankan public spaces. In designing public spaces, there are varies other facts such as context, climate, technology, economy, regulations etc. those are not considered. Here it is only considered about the user' way of life as a main design issue.
Respond to the user’s way of life is only one aspect in social conscious Architecture. There are another ways, respond to the user's nature, mind set, behavior, activity pattern, etc. are not considered.

Hierarchy of the public spaces considered as, neighborhood level, regional level and national level. It used to classify public spaces. But there are other methods to categories, according to the function of public space, commercial, recreation, and transportation. Which is not considered here. Study is not intended to discuss about the mechanism or other forces affect to design such as context, climate, etc. study only focused to way of life.

1.4.3. Method of study.

Social consciousness is defined as one attribute, that Architectural space should have and identify it's importance and relevance in Architecture. Then established Social Consciousness as respond to the user’s way of life. Analyze the morphology of the design of a public space which have the attribute of social consciousness, and identify critical features. Critical features which must respond to the way of life of the user. Based on that theories derived from available literature, select public spaces, which are responded well to the user’s way of life and which are not responded.

Identify user’s way of life, and environmental cues that are set by the ‘way of life’. Physical environment set by the way of life is measure using the definitions of Rapoport (1984; 24), environmental cues.

Relationship is measures in three ways.

1. public spaces, which are completely responded to the way of life. It measurers, when public spaces, in it's critical design elements, achieve all the features created by the user's way of life.
2. public space is not responded to the users way of life at all. It measures, when design features in public spaces is completely different to the features created by the users way of life.

3. public spaces are not completely responded to the way of life of the user, but it responded in some extent. Some of the physical features in way of life is reflect in the public spaces, but some are not. Then identify what kind of design elements mostly can be responded to the way of life.

Examine the end result of 1, 2 and 3, and establish how public spaces become successful, well functioning, and sense of belongingness give with it's design features, while responding to the way of life.

The necessary details collect by available literature, non participant observations, and photographs.