

IMPACT OF SOCIO CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON LIVABLE SPACE MAKING;

An examination of their effects in urban housing with special reference to Sinhala and Muslim community

**A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE (ARCHITECTURE)
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MORATUWA**



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72(043)

March 2005

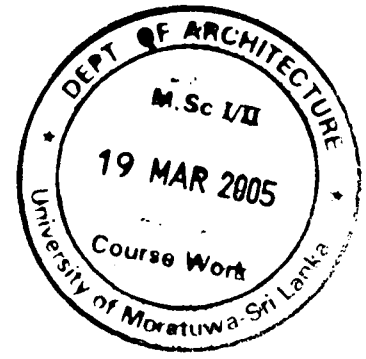
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Declaration

I declare that this dissertation represent my own work, except where due acknowledgement is made and that it has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted to this university to any other institution for degree, diploma or other qualification.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I offer my sincere thanks to Archt. Vidura Sri NAmuni, the Head of the Department of Architecture, University of Moratuwa and all the senior lecturers and lecturers of the Department of Architecture for the encouragement and guidance given to me.

My special thanks forwarded to Archt, D.P. Chandrasekera, senior lecturer of the Department of Architecture, Archt, Jayanath Silva, for the guidance, inspirations and encouragement given to me throughout the study and Archt. Prasanna Kulathilaka lecturer in Department of Architecture for being a constant source of information throughout.

And also I would like to express my gratitude to Mr. Ranjan, Mr. Antony, and specially my parents and Sumudu for shearing every experience of the study with immense encouragement through all time.



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ABSTRACT

The house a person builds embodies certain features, that are in effect outlets of owners character is initially fashioned by the inherent views and attitudes of the community to which he born and the social group which he belongs, play a significant part in moulding his outlook and ambitions in life.

How the socio cultural factors influence the livable space making in house is the theme of the present exercise. The livable space being the perfect expression of the self, family and the social group which a person belongs to. Belonging to a particular culture expresses different psychological aspirations and it varies with the context and the behavior pattern of the occupants.

The pattern of the relationship between livable space making of a house and the social sub groups, viz. new rich, business, middle level employee and professional is identified with examples drawn from two communities, Sinhala and Muslim in Colombo. The portray of sharp different features was the reason to prompted the selection of examples from there two communities in urban areas.

INTRODUCTION

House is a medium through which a person gives expression to himself. House is a place which gives shelter, physical comfort as well as psychological comfort to its dwellers. The concept of 'House' has a deeply rooted attachment between man and the place and it is a place which reflects his values, aspirations and future expectations as well as each person's socio cultural identity. Thus the house a person builds embodies certain features that are in effect outlets of owner's character. In creation of domestic architecture, a person's character is initially fashioned by the inherent views and attitudes, activity pattern, life style, of the community which he was born in and the cultural frame work of that specific social group.

Rapoport (1969:48) defines a culture as a total equipment of ideas and institutions and conventionalized activities of people, in more simple way a cultural may be thought of as a way of a community or other group.

i. Observation



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The different socio cultural organizations, Religion, ideology, techno economic systems, laws and politics together form the socio cultural aspects for particular social groups in livable space making in an urban context. These socio cultural factors modify the house form and internal space making on owner is not uniform even among the urban housing, because people were complicated to live in schemes adopted environment. ?

From the vast extent of space, the house became the private possession – the area that provided privacy, security, identity and territory of each. In the past socio cultural systems, the people depended on each other and their life style was fairly simple content and satisfying ; But with time, industrialized and urbanized society people became more independent and with their employment and their life style became more complicated with the ever increasing and numerous requirements.


Today the several factors influence the domestic architecture; among them are construction and technology, materials, climate, site, financial and other resources and socio cultural factors. Close examination reveals different types of domestic

architecture, in urban context existing according to the above factors, but the inevitable mastery role played by the socio cultural factors is most striking. Even though the rapid changes change the concept of house, the implication of socio cultural factors would be the determinant which bounded the expressional architectural quality of form and space making of the house.

ii. Criticality

The way different types of people react under identical situations; show interesting diversity. Each society is formed of people engaged in similar activities and possessing similar interests. These social subgroups integrate to form the society; the sub cultures integrate to form the culture of that society.

The culture of a society regulates the behavioral pattern of its members. Thus a person is influenced by the culture of community to which he belongs, as well as the social sub group of which he is a member.

The present circumstances,  *University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka*
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economy affects as a main determining factor of personal life pattern in many social groups. So the problems arise even the believes, views, attitudes, expectations and behavior of people largely dependent on the community to which the people belong in the present context.

iii. Possible causes

It is often attributed that the expression of a house is the reflection of the socio cultural background of its occupants. Hence in designing of houses special emphasis should be given to this aspect. The lack of proper understanding of the interrelationship between the socio cultural behavioral patterns and houses results in unbalanced and haphazard solutions.

The form, the expression and spatial arrangements of a house and livable space making as public, private, detailing and use of colours and textures, may differ with various groups of people. Thus the arrangement of spaces and various reactions arise due to specific cultural patterns. If the architect is not intimately acquainted with the cultural

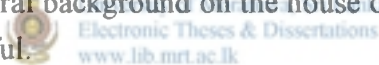
values of the users of his buildings, he is not likely to be able to predict how his design will affect them.

iv. Intention of study

The greater importance of architect is to identify the issues between people's activity pattern and supportiveness of socio cultural aspects in the living urban environment, in creation of domestic architecture with the client's requirements.

The intention of this dissertation is to explore the impact of socio cultural aspects in creating livable space and form in an urban housing. And also to identify the contribution these cultural aspects in create meaningful spaces, which is habitable to the urbanized people.

The poor identification of the cultural background of its users, leads to great failures of famous housing schemes like 'Chandigarh and united habitation in France'. Hence this study; impact of socio cultural background on the house on the house form and space is quite relevant and meaningful.



v. Scope of limitations

To make a comprehensive study of housing forms and space making in an urban context island wide should be brought in to focus. The study had to be greatly limited because of the different cultural situations in categorization of different community groups. Hence an examination of houses restricted to the urban context in Western province is undertaken. Difference arising, due to climatic and regional disparities were avoided by confining the survey to a narrow area.

For the purpose of comparison of selected communities in urban area and a number of case studies should be undertaken. Each example was taken to represent the attitudes; values of the way of life of subgroups belong to a cultural group.

vi. Method of study

A case study approach has been adopted as a methodology of the study, and the selected two communities Sinhala and Muslim with distinctive characteristics to assess the impact of the socio cultural backgrounds of the communities on their house form and space making; a study of their culture is initially undertaken. And these cultural groups are further categorized into subgroups according to the basis of educational and occupational classification.

The distinctive features of each sub group are identified and a comparison of the two cultures and their impact on the house forms and livable space making is the chief method of study.

