

Public Space As A Medium Of Communication In Chennai Metropolitan Area With Socio-Cultural Context

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ABSTRACT

The research is dedicated to the people's role and perception of public space and discusses the social life of people in public spaces with socio-cultural context of Chennai Metropolitan Area. Chennai is considered to be one of the multicultural cities with a very high volume of immigrant people and also provides a research context in various ways, in the present world the role of public spaces in social life has become more important. A qualitative study approach was used and the method focused on the study was a review of documents and maps, surveys, observations and interviews. This research raises the question that how public spaces help people to have interaction and how it helps them in social connection. Initially, it describes the clear information about Chennai and its public spaces. Thereafter, the study addresses the socio-cultural context from the human perspective. The aim of the work is to analyze that how public space connects people to have a social interaction and also to analyze the perspective of people about the public space. At end, the author tries to answer the question: would public space create a cultural communication? In the conclusions, the aim of the research is explained and new research directions are indicated for further research process.

Keywords: public space, socio-cultural context, human perspective, connection, cultural communication.

INTRODUCTION

Public space plays a vital role for social change and provides a place for gathering. This research reads the accessibility of public space by the people in open space and also focused on the reflection of public space among people. It also aimed to bring out the perception of people about public space in various elements like design, accessibility and conditions surrounding the public space and how these public spaces create impacts in the social life. This research examines Chennai and people in groups and individual, in addition by observations and interviews with users at the selected spaces. At last, the analysis contributes to discuss about the perceptions of people about the open public space in Chennai through the users response, knowledge and experience.

The research paper moves around Chennai metropolitan city, the capital of Tamil Nadu. Madraspatanam – shortly named Madras. Chennai is named for proud culture with different religious and traditions. Says that pallava, cholo, pandya, vijayanagar are the noticeable dynasties that ruled around places. After the independence, the name Chennai introduced. The place is like two sides of same coin which goes with big history of historical and cultural activities. Few places in Chennai like, guindy, nungambakkam, mylapore, T nagar, chetpet, marina beach, triplicane were taken for the research process.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

This study focuses on the concept of public space and public in socio cultural context, also focused on the analysis of people attitude towards public open spaces by using method specially designed for that purpose. This paper aims to:

- Analyze the significance of open public space in social life and social behavior of human.
- Analyze the connection between people and public space and its impact on social life.
- To explore the role of public space and how it acts as platform for social interaction with cultural communication.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Maher Mafoz A Summan (2019) noted in his study about social life in public open spaces. Author gave an importance to value, interaction, and role of open space in social life and also focused on space design, planning, management. In his study “the impact of open spaces in the social life; the case of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia” the aim is to explore how people use public space and the role modern and traditional public space. Qualitative methodology is used with theoretical and critical analysis. The focus given on immigration, immigration challenges, family and social life, attitude towards women, planning, attitudes, open spaces -social attitudes and the conclusion provides a perception of people on public spaces.

Armin Abbasian (2016) noted about the impact of technological growth on our society and people life and also stated how the public space in social life plays a dynamic role in “importance of urban spaces as public space in social life”. Certain issues in public spaces play a major role in changing the perception of people and exploring the relationship between public space and people. In his study he used a qualitative investigative study as a way to determine the research design and also undergone case study, site analysis. The concept that he portrayed about urban space, public space, and urban square played a role to move further. In the theoretical framework – the concepts of factors affecting the creation and promotions of sociability and environment psychology given a way to identify the problem that people are moving through. The conclusion of this research helps to move with concept of main research indicates.

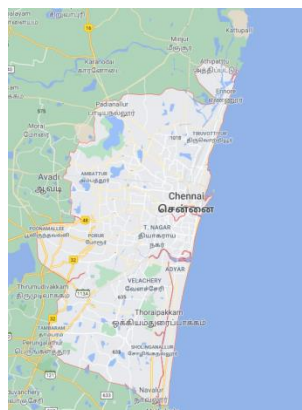
Bibeva, Lvelina (2012) explored about the role that how public space plays a role for triggering the people in day to day life and also the challenges faced by people in everyday life. In the paper “public space and its role for segregation, identity and everyday life” analyzed about the concept of public space and how the physical environment is responsible for facilitating public life. Author moved with the concept of theoretical frame work – including concept of public space, place, public life and design. Case study method is also chosen and qualitative methodology was also used. The case study on Ostberga square about geographical location, areas, planning, perspectives given a wide range of concept about public space. The conclusion part tells about how public space is functioning and also given input about the relationship between local residents and public space accessibility.

METHODOLOGY

This research is done through qualitative research methodology, nature of the research and its aim to increase the understanding on people’s experience of the public space and it include a wide range of relevant secondary data and interviewing citizens. The qualitative research also explains how people interact and behave in public space. The method used in this research must lead to the objectives of the research study and help to meet the aims of the work. The observation of open public spaces is used to identify the most favorite public open spaces among people. The results from observations, interview and other applied methods are used to describe the relationship between the people and public space in Chennai with socio cultural context.

THE CONTEXT

Chennai, formerly known as Madras, capital of Tamil Nadu state, Southern India with population of 11,235,018 and the government of Tamil Nadu changed the name of the city to Chennai in 1996. Since the late 1990s, developments were increased and many public spaces were developed and well connected with road, rail and sea.



Chennai is one of the regions in India where you can see the perfect blend of different cultural communities with various communication systems and also well known for different places like, St. George's fort, Santhome Basilica monument, Government Museum, Parthasarathy temple, Marina beach, Elliots beach, snake park, Valluvar kottam and many historical places. People in Chennai are in different economic conditions and different educational background. The improvement of educational and behavior learning process can also be taken place through public places and those public places provides a platform to connect with different community people and also to increase the interaction with society. The creation of these public places provides healthy social relationships. There are many public spaces in the city with good and poor in design, some places are really difficult to access by all people. Much of these public spaces are associated with social benefits. This research is focused on public space in Chennai, which will fill a gap in the research of socio cultural context.

India's largest beach is right around the corner when one is in Chennai and also one of the major tourist spot in the city with long shore. The beach has some of the famous political leader's statues and memorials. After the jallikattu protest in 2017, the Marina beach came up with different story and perception among public. An old lighthouse stands on the southern end of Marina along with several other structures like an aquarium, a swimming pool and a park nearby, the sunrise here is a classy example of breathtaking beauty. Entertaining activities are lined up when you are taking a stroll on the sands, at the same time, pony rides, beach games, and kite flying activities are also present to make your evening relaxing. Next to the marina beach Eliot has its own catch, also named Besant Nagar Beach. It attracts people because of the serene beauty and brown sands, huge number of people access to relax and to spread positive energy with people. In remembrance of a Dutch sailor, Karl Schmidt, the Schmidt memorial was built in the beach and this white built-up has given an extra tip to the beach for recognition and also attracted by film medium to attract the audience through visuals. Apart from all these, on the southern side, the famed AshtaLakshmi Temple and Velankanni Church are present, popular among the people.



Marina beach – Chennai, Tamil Nadu



Eliots Beach – Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Dakshina Chitra, is the museum built in 10 acres in order to explain the historical aspects of Tamil culture, also known by the term 'Living-history museum'. Living beliefs of art, folk performing arts, craft,

and architecture of India were placed in Dakshina Chitra and is a small village has been recreated using replicas of traditional South Indian houses. Traditional concepts were dating back to the 19th and 20th centuries. Regular events were conducted to attract the tourists which include classical dance and musical concerts. The Chennai city life has a special edition of a variety of species and the Guindy National park is the only national park situated in the middle a city with species like birds, animals, and reptiles as its residents, this makes the people to treat their eyes with the presence of blackbucks, spotted deer, jackals, tortoise and the snake park is home to cobras and pythons. This place makes anyone forget the regular city life and considered to be one of the best visiting places to share the connection with the social life.



DakshinaChitra – Chennai, Tamil Na



Guindy National Park and Snake park – Chennai

Madras war cemetery is one of the most famous places in Chennai, built in 1952 and the particular place is a tribute to the martyrs during the Second World War, the structure carved out of white marble with inscriptions detailing the names of people who gave up their lives during Second World War. Valluvar kottam in Chennai is considered to be one the most Chennai's love for literature & culture. The place and the monument created by 3000 stone blocks in 1975, in the shape of chariot and dedicated to the great Tamil saint, philosopher, and writer Tiruvalluvar. The auditorium in the valluvar kottam is considered to be one of the largest in Asia. 133 chapters of Tiruvalluvar's work Thirukkural inscribed in the monument and the place is open to public. The access of the people makes to understand the social life and culture which particularly comes through thirukural.



Madras War Cemetery – Chennai, Tamil Nadu
Tamil Nadu



Valluvar Kottam – Chennai,

Connemara library was considered to be one of the Asia's largest library constructed in the late 19th century, has its unique style of placement of books with centuries old publications with around 600, 000 books. Inspiration and knowledge comes from places like library which public are used to access and to share their emotions in different context. Another place to get inspired is historic place in Chennai, a permanent exhibition on Indian Culture and Swami Vivekananda's life. Positive vibe and new knowledgeable experience is possible for any individual in Vivekananda house.



Connemara Library – Chennai, Tamil Nadu



Vivekanandar House – Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Arignar Anna The zoological park is well known among public to have an encounter with more than 500 species of wild beings were some of which are endangered. The place is considered to be one of the biggest parks in Tamil Nadu. Large number of people used to visit in different days to experience different emotions with people and also with species. These types of emotion bring the connection between people and society. The other famous park named Semmozhi Poonga Park with areas of 20 acres and considered to be a botanical garden. People access the park for different encounters like relaxation, outing with friends, shooting and picnic. The park is not only with just relaxation, more medical herbs are also found here. Children were attracted to this park for reasons like ducks swimming in the ponds, dancing lights etc.



Arignar The zoological park – Chennai, Tamil Nadu



Semmozhi Poonga – Chennai, Tamil Nadu

FINDING

The fact that considered amount of data collected through watching and listening is often included. The non verbal communication also included for interpretation. Data collection like survey, interview and observation, secondary data plays an important role in framing conclusion. Observation of people in public open place helps to identify the behavior of people in social interaction. The body language and gesture among people in public place is often same to all age categories. The researcher spends a period of time in certain places by raising questions, interview with people, to identify the people behavior to include data for the research. As researcher, involved with people in public places to have a conversation with them to get social interaction and also visited the same place for multiple times to get variety of answers and perceptions to fulfill the research questions with different people. A qualitative interview is done with purpose to have a conversation with people. Depending on the interview conducted with people the research questions and answers were finally framed. Questions of the respondents were flexible in structure and did not need much time to think. Interview taken with around 100 people with different age categories in different places in Chennai with the questions framed. Around 250 participants were participated in survey to frame the conclusions.



Marina Beach and Vivekanandar House during the jallikattu protest in 2017 – Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Questions Framed
What is the reason for choosing this place to visit?
What makes you to visit this place?
Do you think the social interaction is taken place in public places? Why?
What type of behavior you learn from public places?
What makes you to unlike in public places like park?
Do you think that all people can access the public places without any gate keeping?
People can act freely in public places or any restriction is needed? Why?
What type of social interaction is needed in public open place?
In general what motivates you to come for public places?
Are there any public places in your area?
Do you learn any social activities in open place?
Did jallikattu protest give different perception for public place?
Did the cultural interaction is taken place in public place?
Social problem can be identified in public places through discussion; do you think the discussed problems are true?

Questions	Majority Participants
What is the reason for choosing this place to visit?	Relaxation
What makes you to visit this place?	Ambience
Do you think the social interaction is taken place in public places? Why?	Yes
What type of behavior you learn from public places?	Social gatherings
What makes you to unlike in public places like park?	Illegal activities
Do you think that all people can access the public places without any gate keeping?	No
People can act freely in public places or any restriction is needed? Why?	No, Restriction s in needed.
What type of social interaction is needed in public open place?	Positive
In general what motivates you to come for public places?	observation
Are there any public places in your area?	No
Do you learn any social activities in open place?	Yes
Did jallikattu protest give different perception for public place?	Yes
Did the cultural interaction is taken place in public place?	Yes

Social problem can be identified in public places through discussion; do you think the discussed problems are true?	No
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DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The research work has introduced findings related to the public space in medium of communication in Chennai with socio cultural context by examining the quality of research and design in public places. The study conducted in particular locations in the Chennai (marina beach, nungambakkam, guindy, chetpet, egmore) with interviews and survey method. The impact and importance were explained through the aim of the research which follows. This paper aims to: Analyze the significance of open public space in social life and social behavior of human. Analyze the connection between people and public space and its impact on social life and to explore the role of public space and how it acts as platform for social interaction with cultural communication. Based on the survey and finding it gives some conclusion that public places in Chennai plays a major in communication purpose but most of the places were not accessed to all people. In general, people choose open public place to have interaction and for social gatherings. But the recent times public opinion was changed due to the effect of jallikattu protest. Social gatherings became a question mark among them when it is huge crowd. Still people accept that usage of public spaces leads to behavioral changes also. The findings of the study develop the education and bring about the perception of people in accessing the public places and also the research has the potential to give contribution to academic research in social life and public interactions.

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