

Impact of Urbanization on Culture & Rural Spaces from Post-Independence to Contemporary India

*¹Prof. Vidya Singh

ABSTRACT

India is known for its rich cultural heritage and has played an important role in defining the architecture of a place or people with time. The objective of the research is to study the impact of changes in culture on architecture and community spaces of rural India from post-independence to contemporary India. The research is limited to rural part of Chhattisgarh state. Chhattisgarh state is a part portion which was separated from Madhya Pradesh in the year 2000. In an urge to develop the Raipur as a capital rapid urbanization is observed thereby influencing culture and its influence on the daily life and activities is seen. This also resulted in change in the use of community spaces, free spaces or left-over spaces within the city. Neighbouring villages got infested with rural urbanization with the introduction of mobile services, internet, television services, good hospitals, new opportunities of employment etc. Even the Government policies and schemes changed the way of living of rural people. The researcher took Village Math, 38 kms from Raipur as a case study. The paper concludes by learning and appreciating the changes in the way of living and suggesting an integration of culture and vernacular architecture with the contemporary knowledge and technology for reviving the community spaces for sustainability of traditions and cultures.

KEYWORDS: culture; architecture; spaces; modern; sustainable development

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I. INTRODUCTION

“The mother art is architecture. Without an architecture of our own we have no soul of our own civilization.”

– Frank Lloyd Wright

Inspired by nature, FLW introduced Organic Architecture and designed structures in harmony with nature. Today, human race is running behind technology and trying to find options for emergency survival situation ignoring the treasure that we have. To conquer the space is now the new competition among the developed nations. Technology is being upgraded. Automation, Artificial Intelligence, Internet of things, research on materials, food products are has taken a front seat in the budget of every Nation. How to create an atmosphere suitable for the man to survive in space is what everyone is looking at. The reason is simple, scientists, environmentalist, researchers and even the policy makers are aware that we have done enough of damage to Mother Earth and very soon we would require to find an alternate arrangement to survive. In this race of progression we forgot that our culture has survived more than 5000 years. It has survived all the challenges thrown by the nature and by the people. But today we are at the edge of losing our identity. Impact of westernization has cast its shadow not only on the cities and towns but on the rural part of India as well. Extensive use of automation, use of HVAC systems for thermal comfort, aviation, CO₂ omissions from cars has not only contributed to global warming but has also contributed to over use of natural resources. We have drifted away from our rich cultural heritage and conventional but scientific way of life. But thankfully, out of few states who still are away from getting spoiled, Chhattisgarh tops the chart.

The beautiful state of Chhattisgarh, thrive in natural glory, is an idyllic mix of the countryside and urban. Popularly known as the "rice bowl" of India. Chhattisgarh, carved out of Madhya Pradesh came into being on 1st November 2000, as a separate state, it claims 12% of India's total forest area that accounts for tremendous biodiversity as well as a rich collection of timber and variegated species of wildlife. In ancient times the region was known as Dakshin-Kausal. This finds mention in Ramayana and Mahabharata also. Between the sixth and twelfth centuries Sarabhpurias, Panduavanshi, Somvanshi, Kalchuri and Nagvanshi rulers dominated this region. Kalchuris ruled in Chhattisgarh from 980 to 1791 AD. The name **Chhattisgarh** is estimated to have

* Dean and Director, Amity School of Architecture and Planning, Amity University Chhattisgarh, Raipur, India.

originated from 36 forts in the area in the 15th century out of Raipur and Ratanapura area, 18 fort each. Prior to this period, this area was known as **Dandakaranya-Dakshinkoshal**. In the pre-independence period, the state of Chhattisgarh was part of the Central Province. After the independence of India in 1948, Chhattisgarh was incorporated into Central India. Chhattisgarh is the 9th largest state in India in terms of size. The state enjoys ample power supply and availability of minerals amplify the state's industrial and economic potential. The state is also a hub of Central India's cultural extravaganzas that is evinced by the simple and cheerful people, culture and festivals of Chhattisgarh. With mostly the talented and creative tribal population, their expertise is manifested in the exquisite world-famous traditional handicrafts.

Culture

Chhattisgarh is well known for its rich cultural heritage that reflects various aspects of this beautiful state. Cultural life of Chhattisgarh comprises varied forms of traditional art and crafts, tribal dances, folk songs, regional festivals and fairs and amusing cultural fests. Mainly, Chhattisgarh is occupied by tribal people who have preserved their rich tribal culture modestly and religiously. Eastern parts of the state of Chhattisgarh are influenced with Oriya culture. People of the state are traditional and believe in simple way of living following their traditional customs and beliefs. It can be visibly observed in their food habits, festivals and fairs, costumes, ornaments, folk dance and music as well. Chhattisgarh also hosts various cultural fests like Chakradhar Samaroh, Sirpur Mahotsav, Rajim Kumbh and other Festival and Bastar Lokotsav etc. that showcase vibrant cultural life of the state.

Chhattisgarh, the 'Gateway to Central India', has Raipur as its capital with diverse population from across the country. In a very short span, Raipur has emerged as a major business hub for cement, automobile, mining and agriculture. Going one step ahead the state launched Naya Raipur, India's first organic metropolis region, to replace Raipur as state capital. This planned city is a smart city with go-green concept. This fast development has also resulted in up gradation of satellite villages to enjoy urban amenities like mobile, internet, ATM, banks and other facilities of a city. Raipur today has a metropolitan city like infrastructure & lifestyle. The influence of this is also seen on the satellite villages. Arts, Crafts and literature forms the major part of Chhattisgarh culture and is derived from culture, nature and mythology. State has 1/3rd Tribal population who has kept the culture and art alive.

II. SOCIAL CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS

Customs and traditions of Chhattisgarhi people is influenced by folk –mythical Gods and Goddesses and play a very major role in the lives of people. Agriculture forms the base of all the social customs and traditions. The celebration is community based and women oriented. It is since ages that women have played a vital role in blending the rituals and traditions and continuing with the cultural heritage. The Gond tribal community has a social Institution "Ghotul". The custom followed in Ghotul is co-habitation and marriage where young boys and girls live in a dormitory and are taught the tenets of social, religious and artistic life. Chhattisgarh also has a tradition of hanging Neem strings on the doors to ward off various diseases, during the festival of Hareli. Cock fight, tribal dances like Salai, Suva and karma are a part of traditions. The traditions and customs are mostly celebrated by Rural people and a very limited urban population follows these customs & traditions.

Village Math, as a case study, also tells the same story. The people celebrate festivals like Pola, Hareli, Raut Nacha, Sua-Nacha, Teej, etc. These simple people have always lived in a close knit community and come together for celebrations. Family size has reduced to 4-5 people from 10-15 and ladies have taken jobs in nearby areas has changed the way these festivals are celebrated now. Ex. Teej, which was a main festival for ladies is now celebrated individually as per the working hours of the ladies.

III. RURAL SPACES

Traditionally, the rural spaces refer to places where natural landscapes and low population density predominate. Agriculture is the primary industry in most rural areas. Most people live or work on farms or ranches. Throughout the world, more people live in rural areas than in urban areas. This has been changing rapidly, however. Urbanization is happening all over the world. In Asia, for example, the United Nations estimates that the urban population will increase by almost 2 billion by 2050. These areas are of particular significance for the fulfilment of the needs of its residents and for the improvement of their quality of life; and any area favourable to establishing social contacts due to its location and both functional and spatial characteristics. Types of public spaces are as follows: representative spaces (most often a square built as a symbol of the prevailing social relations, in a developed monumental and geometrical form, usually associated with objects of particular significance), traffic spaces (streets, separate vehicle and pedestrian traffic areas), commercial spaces (used for commercial purposes, bazaars), ordinary spaces (intended for use, and with various functions, including mostly a residential one), green spaces (recreational function, combined with parkland),

recreational spaces – squares (leisure-related purposes, often within a residential zone)

Public spaces are of great importance both in people's lives and in the development of society. In order to better understand their functions, it is necessary to focus on how people build their social relationships. There are three types of bonds that each human being establishes in the course of their life. The first is the family bond, which accompanies human beings from the beginning and helps them to develop properly and become autonomous members of society. Secondly, there are bonds that human beings form when staying in places where they meet other people with whom they spend free time. And lastly, there are bonds which are the highest in the hierarchy and which are created through participation in various social groups. For all those bonds to exist, a place for their development must be created. Public spaces are just those areas in which such relationships can be formed and developed.

The village Math with just 50 houses post Independence, had abundant open spaces. The houses were in cluster with courtyard and community open spaces at strategic points. These spaces nurtured the bonding between families and people through various cultural activities. In 2001 there were approx 150 houses, now there are 453 houses. Joint family became nuclear, resulted into more number of houses. These separated members occupied nearby open spaces and made their houses. Open courtyard between cluster of houses is missing as new houses are built in a row. They have Open Air Theater for community activities. But daily interaction and bonding is reduced.

IV. IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT

Urbanization offered daily wages opportunities, apart from agriculture. Many villagers go to nearby district place Tilda, Baloda Bazar and also to Raipur city. Eventually these people were exposed to Urban lifestyle. TV, Mobile and other gadgets sought their place in houses and pockets of villagers. The influence of electronic media is high and has influenced not only on clothes they wear but also food and moreover has influenced their thoughts and habits too. People prefer to stay indoors in front of TV than interacting. Young population between the age of 18-35 got addicted to drugs like Ganja, alcohol etc. Better road connectivity and availability of vehicle gives easy accessibility to procure abusive substance. It's an alarming situation as these young people do not even contribute in continuation of cultural activities. These people earn only for spending on drugs. Unfortunately Government policies of freebies has resulted adversely.

4.1 People used to get free time after 3 PM after coming back from farms and hence evenings were interactive sessions. Every Muhalla has some or the other open space for congregation and also chabutara in front of the house became the adda. Today 60% of the females are engaged in nearby establishment or self help group to earn money to run the house and work almost 12 hours a day and finds it difficult to continue with every day rituals or pooja and cultural activities. In spite of facing difficulties, these ladies and young girls try their best to celebrate major festivals. The ladies have taken jobs in nearby 2-3 big organizations like Amity University, ITBP, Biotic Stress Management Institute etc.

V. CONCLUSION

- Pakka makan and other facilities made life easier and better. They do realize that RCC the pakka makan is not environment friendly and that the old houses were cool. But cost of maintenance for old houses is high. Conventional construction techniques and planning which were contextual based, are required to be reintroduced for sustainable development and living which will also generate employment for the villagers.
- Community spaces need reintroduction with more facilities and art deco to attract people.
- It is observed that people above age of 40 continue with the cultural activities and maintain cultural legacy. But with 80% of youth in the captivity of drugs and alcohol, the community as a whole is in danger. 30 years down the line, it would be impossible to conduct community rituals and festivals. A great threat of extinction of beautiful culture and simplicity of living would be lost. Intervention from all parts of society is required to deal with the current situation.
- Government need to formulate strategic planning and implement it.
- Cooperative societies to generate employment through agro based small scale industries.
- Forgotten traditional sports to be reintroduced which also would help to select talented sportsperson for further training. Government has sports quota for jobs. This can be promoted for more participation.

Urbanization has influenced life style and people has compromised traditions & culture. The open spaces once used for community activities is now used to play cards and drink. Young people on the other hand hide away during evening hours and smoke Ganja only to return late night and many a times sleep on the mat in front of the house, Though there are many issues like this but these simple people are happy that they have pakka makan which do not require daily maintenance and enjoy TV.

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