Proceedings of the International Conference on

REDISCOVERING CITIES 2K20

EDITORS

Aradhana Jindal
Nirmal Chauhan

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Culturally Responsive Urban Development

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Abstract

The settlement pattern in Chanderi is a response to centuries of traditional wisdom. The settlement has emerged from its work-live-play lifestyle woven around its handloom craft. These traditional settlements are rapidly being modified or abandoned under the pressure of modernisation and development. This has affected the live-work balance and socio-cultural behavioural pattern of the town. Lately, development and urbanisation has spread its influence on tier 3 towns, Chanderi being one of them. Though this growth is necessary, it has to consider the local culture and tradition which gives these towns its identity. This paper seeks to highlight the link between urban development and the cultural ethos in small heritage and craft based towns which when maintained will ensure that development and culture go hand in hand.

Keywords: handloom town, urban development, cultural ethos

Introduction

India is one of the oldest civilizations in the world with kaleidoscopic variety and rich cultural heritage. Architecture is not created in a vacuum. It is a compulsive expression of beliefs (explicit or implicit) central to our lives. When we look in to the architectural heritage of India, we find an incredibly rich reservoir of mythic images and beliefs which all coexist in an easy and natural pluralism. It is rich in the architectural content of its settlements replete with vernacular architecture and its immense treasure of architectural wisdom. Centuries of contemplation and synthesis have gone into traditional architecture to maintain its environmental coherence. The surrounding and the built form are both attuned to each other. The diversity seen in India is regional, climatic, and cultural. It is seen more in the rural areas than in the urban context. Urban cities show standardization in many aspects whereas the rural areas carry forth with age old traditions in place.

Background Study

Traditional settlements are a way of organising space from the scale of the house to the scale of the village and the town, using models and practices which are a legacy of the past. This means transmitting the same meanings or knowledge from one generation to the next through building or planning practices. According to Leach's (2005) theory, in a traditional settlement, traditions help to create, define, and defend territorial boundaries and this limit is applied to geographical areas to include both land and seascapes on which the people rely for their livelihood and ways of living (Lim, 2008, p. 58). A literature on the relationship between culture and development demonstrates a view that efforts to integrate cultural dimensions and development produce more sustainable ways of living for communities (Oliver 1997, 1989, 2006; Eder 1987; Lim 1999, 2008).