# The Changing Analogy In Indian Context : From Habitable to Adaptable Place

*Mrunali Balki*
*Assistant professor, Sushant school of Art and Architecture,*
*Ansal University, Sector 55, Gurgaon Haryana – 122003, India.*

*(Corresponding author: Mrunali Balki)*

**ABSTRACT: The urbanization of densely populated emerging Indian cities brings out new requirements, new development and thus change in the morphology of a place. To prepare these urban areas for adaptation to morphological changes requires taking social and urban policy issues into account, but its effectiveness eventually depends on the changes in individual and collective preferences for the particular precinct. The emergence of the issue is not in the newly emerging urban sprawls but precisely intense in the old / origin/ historic core of an urban setting. The development in coherence with the pace of technology and users is major theme to be analyzed. An idea that can provoke the sense of place making in an Indian context would help retain the habitability of a space, making it a Successful adaptive place. Thus the paper demonstrates the phenomenon in one of the core area of an Indian city.**

## I. INTRODUCTION

The expanding advent of the urban development in the traditional precincts has reduced the meaning of the places through transformation or new construction. The changing urban landscape is the quest that all the urban theorists are debating, hinting towards how the advent is becoming an inauthentic way of planning. Disconnect of the new urban landscape rather than only being in physical terms is more in the form of cultural, social and emotional front resulting in placelessness. In this discourse, Relph (1976) states the place is rather a combination of a) physical setting which consist of matter and b) Human factors/dimension that involves minds of collective, which eventually formulates a place. This duality results in various kinds of places in an urban setting, which ultimately contributes to be the identity of a place. Thus a little change in the fabric of the place affects the identity.

Identity largely dictates the habitability evolved over the years generating sense of the place and the attachment of the people to place. The change or transformations in the form of make shift spaces, rehabilitation, revitalization and redevelopment results in modification in buildings, spaces, usability and functional value. This gives rise in disintegration and loss of attachment within self or group identity. Sustaining the sense of place and habitability of urban fabric is important as they principally contribute to self/group identity, community building and attachment to places (Hull *et al.,* 1994). Thus current scenario requires a contextual approach and understanding of the complexity involved in habitability aspect that formulates its identity. It is also imperative to recognize the level/ type of association and sense attached, to unravel its connotation for further development.

The Demonstration is an illustration of an old historic core of two tier city called "Mahal" in Nagpur, Maharashtra. The area identified for demonstration is around 29acre. The existence of the precinct is since the origin of the city in historic times which is around 18th century. Thus this becomes a relevant study area in the existing urban fabric, to understand the changing analogy in a residential neighborhood of an Indian context.

## II. CONCEPT OF HABITABLE URBANISM

In the urban studies the predominant notion of the city is seen as unitary place (Alexander C. and Chermayeff S., 1963). Unitary place is defined as parcel of land on which buildings and other physical elements are closely placed, where habitation of people exist with interdependency of activities in their everyday life. But on the contrary the fact is the city is rather a collection of such different land parcels with several places of such different land parcels with several places imbibed with peoples association. Therefore all the places in distinct urban order exist with sense of attachment. It's an association of people to a particular physical setting and psychological inclination towards a place.

This attachment possibly relates to everyday life of each individual but certainly generates a spatial pattern leading to generation of a habitable place. As everyday life of each individual differs thus collective response to every place varies, that which defines exceptionality in habitability and everyday urbanism for a place. The everyday life of individual contributes to collective response to a place formulating a habitable (evolved over the years) place. The traces of everyday life of different age group are mapped in the mahal precinct to understand this phenomenonal response. Therefore everyday of different age group (typical family survey) is traced through out the day, and its influence on the place making is experimented. Which further aims to demonstrate how everyday routine formulates a spatial pattern, impacts the place value collectively and understand laying of fabric with virtual generation of network in urban context. Figure 2 and 3 demonstrates a routine of a female of age group 30 and above, which

concludes, the building typology is such that the main doors open on internal streets assuring the street safety and hygiene.
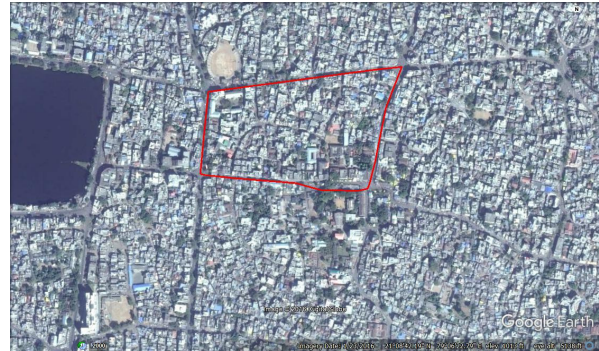


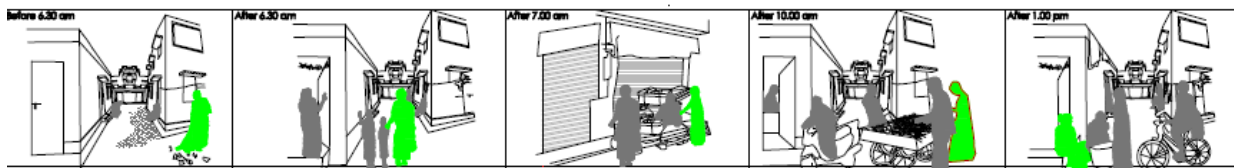**Fig. 1.** Location of Mahal: Old historic Precinct of Nagpur. (Source: Google earth).



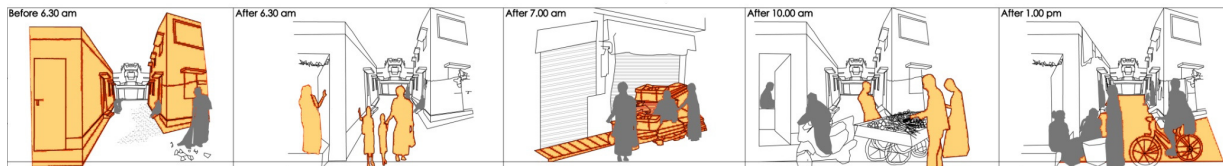**Fig. 2.** Everyday life of 30-55 age groups (Female) (Source: Author).



**Fig. 3.** Everyday life impacting a place by 30-55 age groups (Female) (Source: Author).

Also generates the internal street network with its perceptual ownership. The social pause point in residential neighborhood formed through squares (Intersection of streets), which are an outcome of fulfillment of their daily functional needs that is to cater the vendors. The abutting commercial dependency for daily needs lined on the periphery with a major vehicular road to accesses the surrounding areas assures a territorial limitation to the neighborhood. Therefore the idea of social pause points, safety, hygiene and territorial expanse are some of the resulting indicators for this neighborhood.

Figure 4 and 5 demonstrated the everyday life of 55 and above age group which infers how the open street pattern assures social interaction and attachment with people. How religious places at a comfortable walkable distance becomes a pause point in a precinct, which also demarcates the markers in the organically planned urban fabric. The commercial ('bazar' culture) allows order in an unplanned settlement generating community building. Therefore social interaction, walkability, establishment of markers and hierarchical order are few other key parameters towards place attachment for mahal precinct.



**Fig.4.** Everyday life of 55 and above age group (Female) (Source: Author).
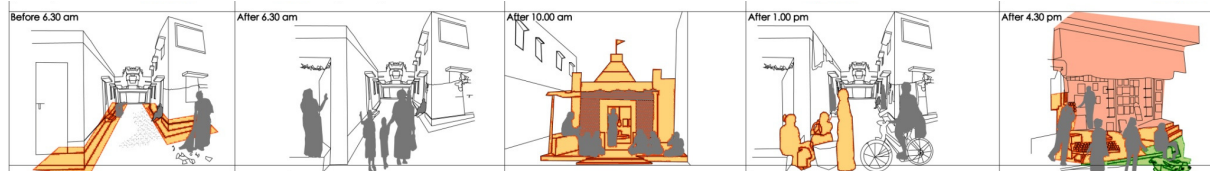
**Fig. 5.** Everyday life impacting the place by 55 and above age group (Female) (Source: Author).



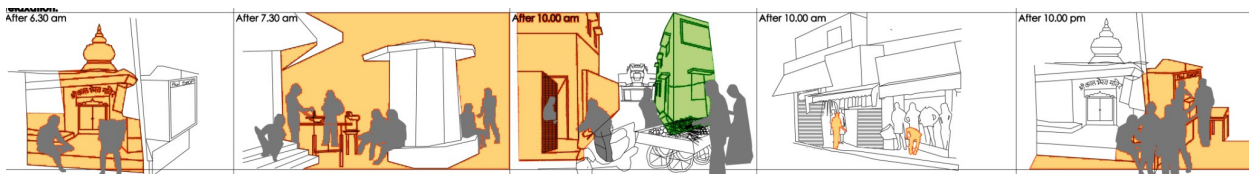**Fig. 6.** Everyday life of 33 above age group (Male) (Source: Author).



**Fig. 7.** Everyday life impacting place by 33 above age group (Male) (Source: Author).



**Fig. 8.** Everyday life of below 20 age group (Children) (Source: Author).
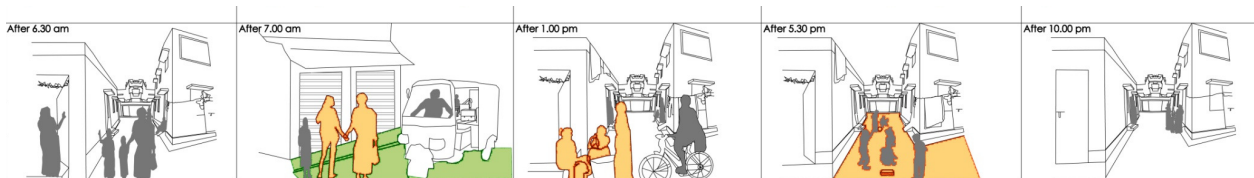


**Fig. 9.** Everyday life impacting a place by below 20 age group (Children) (Source: Author).

Figure 6 and 7 demonstrates the everyday life of 33 and above age group (male) which infers the presence of informal conglomeration places which leads to kiosk and temporary/informal stalls. The activity node formation in a neighborhood leading to social safety due to several activated zones. So social safety is a key intangible and transient places as tangible are inherent part of the neighborhood.

Figure 8 and 9 demonstrates the everyday life below 20 age group which suggests how the streets in itself due to safety constraints allows the commuting space to be community interaction space / play area and social space thus resulting in the multifunctional places in the precincts.

The above demonstration thus ascertains how the space relates to everyday life of individual collectively forming a place. Therefore the aspects of space attachment become an important umbrella to work on for all the city designers and planners. There's no place in any neighborhood (developed organically) exists by its own but through the phenomenal relationship between the everyday life and a place and vice versa.

## III. INTANGIBLE ASPECTS OF SPACE ATTACHMENT

Space attachment idea is developed with affective factors of meaning of environment (Altman and Low, 1992). Space attachment states to the relation between the people / an individual to a particular place (Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001) which is an outcome of intertwining events, behavioral response, and interaction.

A place is developed when people find potential in the space to fulfill their conditional functional needs, which eventually sustains their aspirations over other places (Williams et.al, 1995).

Space attachment thus could be considered as the major aspect that contributes towards space making. Thus it's important to consider the users emotions and aspirations towards the features and elements of an urban place.

**Interdependency of place:** Interdependency of place is an important indicator towards understanding of the conditions and the activity pattern. In this scenario, attainment of major valued goals will result in more positive emotion to a place than will the accomplishment of minor valued goals. Thus, the attachment to a place varies place to place and their degree depends on the how positive is the place felt by the user group in relation to a particular location. The degree of attachment also narrates how much the strength of association a particular place holds. As argued by Smaldone (2005), place dependence comes from an individual consideration of two things: (I) the quality of the existing place and (II) The quality of other comparable place to the existing place. This is linked to functionality of physical aspects that impacts activities thus indifferent from all the other places and is very explicit to a place. Thus is an important derivative for quality of place in urban studies.

**Identity of place:** Identity of a place informs the identity of residents, users or the people at large (Proshansky *et al.*, 1995) and also its parameters which are a part of urban design (Relph, 1996). The physical place or matter with human dimension plays a vital role in defining the identity of place. Thus places are inevitable when the self or group identity is in consideration (Anderson, 2005). Every place has a distinctive identity and character that defines these. To understand this character of place all the planners, designers should examine their process of existence. To define the identity of place all the urban designers majorly focus on the physical characteristics for understanding of its appearance and imagibility but falls short to consider sense of attachment as a parameter to identify the distinctiveness in places.

**Sense of place making:** As argued by Henry Lefebvre (1991) place making is a concept of place being influenced by people's activities which he further defines it to be everyday Urbanism. This could be observed predominantly in residential neighborhoods where an individual aspiration towards fulfillment of the needs and psychological attachment to place generates a strong sense of place. The above demonstration is an examination of the similar phenomenon in a neighborhood.

## IV. TANGIBLE INFLUENCE ON PLACES TO CHANGE

**Community building character:** Fig. 10. Demonstrates the change in street pattern and thus has lost its significance as community interaction place. This lacked cultural continuity relation to physical structure of place. The order in particularity made a neighborhood inevitably identifiable. But the changing analogy is making it like any other neighborhood, a built mass with deliberately pushed in landscape, alien people and random user group. The sense of community building that evoked due to social, cultural and functional needs over the years is incomprehensible in the current scenario. Thus the community is in the processes of transition which has lead to loss of nativeness / habitability and has given rise to unsuccessful adaptable / progressive places. As these places are where a physical setting is dependent on user adaptability with no sense of attachment from human factor.
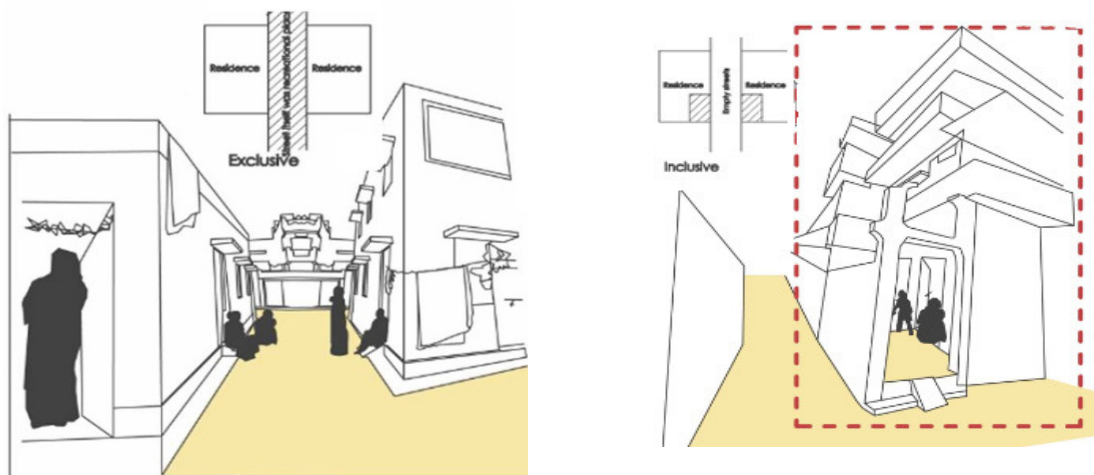


**Fig. 10.** Changing in physical setting - Typology of built form (Source: Author).

**Demographic influence :** Physical settings thus evolved are an outcome of larger cycle. A minor shift in physical setting results in greater impacts. Six domains of urbanity namely Urban Public, Urban semipublic, group public, group private, family private and individual private (Chermayeff *et al.,*1963) are effective tools towards understanding attachment of place as per its sequential hierarchy and laying in a neighborhood. The connection with in these domains and the degree of its influences on the social and functional factors defines the change involved. Thus analysis of hierarchy of physical, functional and visual order gives a broader understanding towards making of place and its demographics.

## V. CONCLUSION TO DEMONSTRATED PHENOMENON

This paper demonstrates how in old core of the city in the Indian context is undergoing transformation largely relating to two aspects of subjectivity and objectivity. Reexamining the concept of attachment to urban places is the intent through practical demonstration of a case. Thus any place which is originated and proved to be habitable place when transformed in terms of analogy to adaptable place needs to be understood/approached and represented as an outcome of human experiences (Every day urbanism of a particular place). The analysis of everyday urbanism is thus study of tangible components (Physical setting) which includes Community, character, spatial pattern, context, linkages, territorial expanse and intangible phenomenon's which includes continuity, relativity, processing, ambiguity and vitality, which generates a value system for a particular place. This value system might ascertain the following aspects: a) Understanding of place with its sense of making which leads to identify place characteristic markers. b) Degree of place attachment that could define the user group. c) The experience of the place to be designed, through everyday routine (Certeau, 1984) of people that generates the physical setting/pattern/environment.

The change in city fabric is evident with advent of technology and increasing land prices, only point to be reconsidered while in case of residential neighborhood design is to consider the preexisting value system as prime indicator throughout the processes. However the value system has always been in threat due to regeneration and modernization, which leads to placelessness and social detachment. Thus it's important to understand the psychological influence of place on the inhabitants to understand the imbued values tracing through the history till today.

A basic guideline towards maintenance of under layered meaning of social and cultural values towards its construction should be formulated as a mandate. Assuring the changing analogy in coherence to preexisting habitual place and in adherence with post designed adaptable place.

## REFERENCES

[1]. Altman, I. and Low, S. (1992). Place attachment. New York: Plenum Press.

[2]. Certeau, M. de. (1984). The Practice of Everyday Life. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

[3]. Chermayeff S. and Alexander C. (1963). Community and privacy. Doubleday and company, Inc. Garden city New York.

[4]. Google earth (2016), available at https://www.google.co.in/maps/@21.1459314, 79.1066979,17.46z (Accessed on 10th December 2016).

[5]. Gratz R.B., (1994). The living city, John wiley & sons, Inc, Canada.(Original work published 1989)

[6]. Hidalgo, M.C.& Hernandez, B. (2001). "Place Attachment: Conceptual and Empirical Questions." *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, **21**, 273-281. Academic Press.

[7]. Hosagrahar J. (2005). Indegenious Modernities: Negotiatingarchitecture and Urbanism, Routledge, Newyork.

[8]. Lefebvre, H. (1991).The Production of Space. (D. Nicholson-Smith, Trans.). Malden, MA: Blackwell. (Original work published 1974)

[9]. Lynch, K. (1998). Good city form. Mass: MIT Press.

[10].Relph, E. (1976). Place and Placelessness. Pion: London.

[11].Rose, G. (1995). Place and identity: A Sense of Place. In Massey, D. and Jess, P. (eds) A place in the world: Places, cultures and globalization. 87–132. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[12].Smaldone, D., Harris, C., & Sanyal, N. (2005). An exploration of place as a process: The case of Jackson Hole, WY. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, **25**, 397-414.

[13].Stedman, C.R. (2003). "Is It Really Just a Social Construction? The contribution of the physical environment to sense of place" *Society and Natural Resources,* **16**, 671-685.

[14].Tonkiss F. (2005). Space, the city and social theory, Polity Press, UK.

[15].Ujang N. , Zakariya K. (2015). The notion of place, place meaning and identity in urban regeneration. .Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 170, 709-717.

[16].Weber M., Dyckman, Foley D., Guttenberg A., Wheaton W., Wurster W. (1964). Explorations into Urban Structure., University of Pennsylvania press, USA.

[17].William S.W. Lim., (1980). An alternative urban strategy. Euresia press, Singapore 0179.