

Buildings

Satish Joshi¹, Sachin Yadav² and Rupesh Surwade³

^{1,2,3}Kavikuluguru Institute of Technology & Science Ramtek, Nagpur

E-mail: ¹satishjoshi_2007@rediffmail.com, ²sachin.ydv88@gmail.com, ³arupesh11@gmail.com

Abstract—Buildings like human beings have a face, an identity, a character, dimensions, liveliness, togetherness, and expressions. Their colour, texture, the openings, the projections convey their responses to the surroundings. They attract or may even compel people to stay away. They 'sit' majestically, like the "TAJ MAHAL" or may stand 'tall' like the "EIFFEL TOWER". They may be simple and straight or may be full of ornamentation, might be expressive or might be concealing its true identity, creating a camouflage, and deceive the onlooker.

Their forms, at times express all motion phenomena; like swell, press, push out etc. When lighted up by shimmering, glittering luminaries, their colour gets a special richness; a clear and pure external drama; a skillful contrast between concave and convex forms. The long spans of 'structural glazing'; gives the buildings an illusion of absolutely weightless elements. Though the buildings are designed for specific individuals and families, or for specific purposes; yet they reveal the interpretation of the relationship between the individual and the collective. Buildings leave an indelible impression on the minds of an individual, when their height, scale and size, shapes, textures and light convey a sense of monumentality or intimacy; then the built structure acts as a medium to influence the person to see, to feel, to smell, to touch and to admire.

Each building has its own identity; it has its own spirit; which it conveys to others. Its external features become a means of communicating feelings and moods. It creates an environment of its own, and man becomes less lonely, when he becomes a part and parcel of this environment.

Keywords: Identity, Expression, Connectivity, Inside-outside

1. INTRODUCTION

From the caves, the early abode of mankind, which acted as a place for shelter, and was followed by the first hut with bamboos and leaves; the history of development of buildings reveals that man has been moulding his environment thought the ages, the buildings were planned for different activities. Each period had implanted its own stamp in the history with a 'typical construction' activity. Egyptians constructed huge Pyramids. The Greeks developed a style of proportions, known as the 'Orders of Architecture'. Romans developed Arches, Vaults and Domes. Gothic period saw the advent of 'Pointed Arch' the arch ribs were supported by stone pillars. These structures led to the idea of framed structures.

The end of the Second World War, due to tremendous economic pressure, and after the advent of Industrial

Revolution, buildings were required for functions, which were not there. Many a activities were needed to be 'carried out' from the same building. New building forms were developed. Airports, Railway Stations, Malls, and the skyscrapers, changed the skylines over the globe. Carrying out of the multifarious activities from the same building changed the character of the buildings, which then became faceless. But, then they still had to perform their 'basic function' of providing proper shelter from the environment; while doing so, they governed the activities of mankind.

2. IDENTITY

While addressing the English Architectural Association in 1924, Sir Winston Churchill has very aptly said "We make our buildings and afterwards they make us. They regulate the course of our lives". But, then planners did try to 'place' the buildings on the site in such a way that the placement makes the people to deliberately move diagonally, or upward, or sideways on the smooth roads, or on the paved ways, so that not only the mind but also the body encounters the beauty of the buildings. The intellectual collaboration of the built and the un-built by the architect-planner stretches the imagination and emotions of the onlooker to the infinity. At times the lyrical sensuousness, the playful engagement and use of sun and shadow, hand crafted finish, colour and texture, lights; intensify the experiential over the conceptual. Free standing columns and the long strip of glass ribbon windows; give the building a floating effect, while the ribbed vaults of concrete, in the shape of the petals, help the building rise towards the almighty.



Villa Savoye



Lotus Temple



Turning Torso by Calatrava

3. EXPRESSION

The ‘minimalism’ in ‘Falling Waters’; by Frank Lloyd Wright, with its strong horizontal concrete surfaces, contrasting the ‘verticality’, of the rising trees, the use of dead building materials against the living-breathing nature, suddenly makes a surprising appearance along the dense vegetation. The run of the water, contrasts the stillness of the built form. The rise of the trees, the flow of the water and the concrete canopies projecting in both axis, really gives the built structure a three dimensional effect, while the ‘House at Tunganli’ by Nari Gandhi in the picturesque ‘Lonavala’, sits robustly on the site. The building grows up from the earth, towards light. In this house, one sees the analogy of a tree. The arches rise as the main trunk, like the branches of a tree the steel members of the roof, branch out in all directions, supporting a translucent steel mesh roof with steel members, resembling light filtering in through the leaves of a tree.



House at Tunganli by Nari Gandhi



Falling Waters by F.L.Wright House at Tunganli by Nari Gandhi

4. CONNECTIVITY

‘Turning Torso’ by Antonio Calatrava, raises high above the ground defying all the ‘laws of the gravity’, using the latest technology and materials, it surprises the onlooker, with awe. ‘Can this be possible’? In contrast Nari Gandhi uses various patterns, textures; statues, artifacts into the surface. With a form, shape and scale that stands jewel like against the magnificent landscape behind and walls themselves become murals through textures and the use of patterns.

5. INSIDE-OUTSIDE

Some buildings bear a typical colonial look, which was very familiar during the ‘British Raj’. The wide entrance, thoughtful parking, chequered drive way, the curbs, the landscaping, artistically crafted, ‘flying roof’ over the corridor. The wide angled and wide spread roof looking; like the wings of a large bird, about to begin its journey up, high in the sky. The gaps in the overlapping of the roof seems to be thoughtfully created, for it allows, just a trickle of soft, subdued light, during the harsh afternoons, whereas during night the scene is virtually reversed.



The entrance & connecting corridor of the ‘Club House’ at Lavasa

The architecture of some buildings; works from inside out space flowing outward, nature flowing inward. A deep understanding of plants, soil, flowers. is expressed in sensuous effects of the forms. This form, stimulating by its fullness of nature and nearness to life, immediately appeals to intuition and feelings.

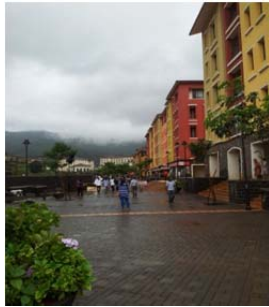


House by Nari Gandhi



house by B.V. Doshi

During rainy season the relation of the building with its outside is totally different.



Builinds & its surroundings during rains at Lavasa



Lavasa during normal times



The relationship; on the normal times take a very different attitude; its canvass is extend, well beyond the range of the normal human range, it encompasses the total surroundings.

The flatness of water, the curving hills, winding roads, tall trees, sloping roofs, flying birds, reflecting luminaries, cold wrought iron posts, cylindrical railings, textured tiles, angular benches, descending steps, the statues, the grass, the lawns, the bushes, the shrubs, the trees, the fixed pavement, zooming vehicles, almost lazy movement of the motor boat, harsh realities of the steel post & beams, at the work in progress, whistling of the winds all is assimilated by the human beings in relation to the built form.

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