

PICNIC DAYS ARE BACK AGAIN

Re-creating Open Spaces for the Worn Out City Cores

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Ar. Vishal Shah, Founder partner- Aangan Architects and Partner- Urban Initiatives, is a multidisciplinary personality related to the field of design and academics; creating a fine balance between Practice and Preaching. A strong advocate of design for masses and an ardent activist in his own right, he strongly believes in 'What is the City But the People'. He has represented Surat at international level in academics as well as architecture practice and is currently coordinating the Masters in Architecture Programme with specialization in Urban Design at the Faculty of Architecture, SCET in the capacity of Professor.



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The transition of Indian Cities from medieval to industrial city resulted in degradation of important environmental resources and urban open spaces in the core areas. The degeneration continues till the contemporary notion of environment is propagated and it becomes a part of the collective consciousness. Re-creation of state of the art public spaces is very crucial as an issue for Indian cities in transition, the creation of public space is seen as the trigger for much needed urban renewal of Indian cities in decay.



People and the Place | GOPI TALAO, SURAT

The case of Gopi Talao Rejuvenation in the old city core of Surat in India intends to examine the crucial role of design of Urban Open spaces in uplifting the socio-cultural life of the people. It examines the intangible and tangible aspects of creation of 'affordable' urban open spaces for rendering equity in a situation of urban disparity. Being affordable reflects an essential shift away from design-led capital investments and towards affordable programming and management solutions leading to a place making exercise rather than a project making exercise.



The research paper is an attempt to examine the strength of design of urban open spaces in creating an inclusive place for people to meet each other, to assemble and celebrate as a city as well as to connect to the past by being in a significant place without losing the relevance of contemporary times. The research also evaluates how people respond to such places and how they revive their social ties and develop a sense of belonging to the place, this leads to the nostalgia of Picnic days where in family and friends celebrated the spirit of the place.

It is an attempt of salvaging the history of the place in creation of relevant urban spaces that serves a larger purpose than just creation of 'projects'.

