

Consanguinity between Outdoor Spaces and Child Augmentation

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ABSTRACT

Urban design basically aims at designing of areas that target welfare of residents by creating convenient, equitable, healthful, efficient and attractive environments and good environment.

Urban designers like JANE JACOB and KEVIN LYNCH always advocated the active participation of the user of a particular area which included all age groups and also development of the community spaces which act as a spine for the proper functioning and development of a particular society.

By a survey it has been understood that 60% of the urban dwellers population is aged under 18 and out of this age groups from age 0-13 are considered as children.

KEYWORDS: Urban environment, child development, policy making, outdoor spaces

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I. INTRODUCTION

Initially the urban designers had a cold shoulder towards this class of the society while designing a neighborhood but now as the children are considered as development indicator of a society they are considered a valuable stake holder in an urban society and due weightage is now given to this segment for designing a urban space. Having said so Child- friendly urban planning is an emerging field. It advocates a coherent and systematic approach to planning and designing cities that improves children's development, health and access to opportunities, moving well beyond simply providing playgrounds.

Due to outburst of high rise buildings and urbanization the parks and community areas that were once were important lost their existence which had a very adverse affect on children development like dull, obese and depressed child.

With the animus to design a child friendly city or urban space it was really prerequisite to understand how open spaces and child development is intermutual and areas that came into picture other than the parks and playgrounds are the

- A) Community Garden usable both by the school and the residents
- B) Student Learning garden a outdoor space that is integrated with students learning curriculum.
- C) Outdoor Classroom it should be designed primarily for the use of the school, though it may be made available for after-school programs and extracurricular activities beyond the traditional school day.
- D) Protected pedestrian crossing a marked walkway for pedestrians to cross Thoroughfares. This is especially important because before and after school traffic can pose a threat to children's safety, and should be carefully controlled where ever child friendly environment is encouraged.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Due to rapid industrialization and the scope of opportunities in the urban areas there is a lot of urban sprawl because of which the urban areas are losing their independent open spaces and this makes child friendly urban planning a emanating field. Cities Alive by Tim Gill advocates a coherent and systematic approach to planning and designing cities that improves children's development, health and access to opportunities, that are not a mere open playgrounds but actually provides cardinal environment for shaping the overall development of the society and in turn the country and this holds true for a country like India where 39% of the population is children. Several researches that give importance to Children's Views on Child-friendly Environments suggest that it the criteria of children selection for a child friendly space that it should be safe and secure where they are allowed to enjoy without adult interference and also the place should have basic services of drinking water and washrooms, a sense of belongingness and these statistics can be evidently achieved by children interviews on the same and mostly all the researchers have undertaken these interviews which also included the interviews of neighborhood school teachers. Even the comparison of two neighborhoods can give a clarion on the child friendliness of an area like the comparison done between Helsinki, the neighbourhood of Pihlajamäki was chosen for the study of environmental child-friendliness to be compared with the neighbourhood of Monte

Mario in Rome in a research done by Mari Nordstrom in Children's Views on Child-friendly Environments in Different Geographical, Cultural and Social Neighbourhoods.

The antagonistic outdoor spaces in schools and neighborhoods leads to child obesity and Research indicates that playing outdoors, particularly in natural play spaces, boosts children's physical activity, potentially decreasing childhood obesity. So a direct link between natural elements in play spaces and physical activity has also been investigated in many researches like *Beyond Physical Activity: The Importance of Play and Nature-Based Play Spaces for Children's Health and Development*. A study of sedentary behaviors and moderate-to-vigorous physical activity levels in preschoolers before and after a playground was redesigned with more natural material found that a significantly greater proportion of children engaged in moderate-to vigorous physical activity after the redesign compared to pre-design use. It has been advocated by a majority of pediatricians that an unstructured play area for the children help them to indulge into more moderate to severe physical activities.

III. DISCUSSION

Neighborhoods that support children and young people incorporate "places to go," "things to do," and features that provide contact with nature. The walkability, perceived safety, and aesthetic appeal, clean and safe playgrounds, low crime rate, family oriented community events of neighborhoods are also important. Places for active and imaginative play are vital, and, as children get older, so too areas for informal socializing with friends. Consulting with children and young people about what they like and want to be able to do within their neighborhood assists with enhancing sense of community and meeting the needs of the younger population.

Children outdoor play is the most important criteria for the overall development of a child as the closeness with nature not only results in physical and mental growth but also enhances the immune system.

Through outdoor exploration nature allows for unstructured play, generating a sense of freedom, independence and inner strength which children can draw upon when experiencing future incidents of stress. Furthermore children's relationship with nature is a fundamental part of their development, allowing opportunities for self-discovery and natural environmental experience.

Children learn by playing in different environments, including neighborhood, schools, daycares, and playgrounds. To maximize the effectiveness of children's learning, it is important to improve these environments.

Colors affect the development of child's perception towards their environment. They get attracted to bright colors and try to explore new color schemes. There should be systematic study to draw a relation between the color and children play behavior and how this correlation can be utilized by designers to promote learning. Specifically, it focuses on using colour as a design element in children's play environments to encourage children (aged 4 to 7) to learn through play. All these factors will directly dominate the design of play environment.

Winston Churchill once said that "people build buildings then buildings build people" (quoted by Grangaard, 1993) and so Environment plays a critical role in educating, nurturing and improving children's current and future development.

Due to the advancement start of education in early years the children tend to spend lot of time in the school uptill the age of say 15 years and Children are natural learners, but this capacity to learn can be undermined and sometimes destroyed in an unfavourable environment. They spend about six to seven hours a day in school for about fifteen early years of their childhood. The environment of the school plays a significant role in the lives of the students. Now a days with the evolution of sustainable environment and so the green outdoor spaces will do a bit towards the environment and also forms a strong base for the development of the children.

A "Green School" is identified with those elements and practices that inculcate environmental sensitivity and promote environmental sustainability through various environment-friendly means that encourage judicious use of resources. It also caters to the physical, mental and emotional needs of a child by ensuring a school environment that is physically safe, emotionally secure and psychologically enabling.

And now a days architects and landscape designers are working together towards the same goal to provide children with overall development which not only has academic enhancement but also encourages overall mental development and psycho-social health.

The education system in India included efforts ranging from Mahatma Gandhi's Basic Education and recommendations by the Education Commission (1964-66) and the National Policy on Education, 1986 (including Programme of Action, POA-1992) emphasising on the need of addressing and including environmental concerns at all levels of schooling. The National Policy states 'There is a paramount need to create a consciousness of the environment. It must permeate all ages and sections of society, beginning with the child.

The playgrounds and school open play areas should be clean, healthy, protective and green so as the children grow amidst nature.

In the same manner the community parks should also cater to all stakeholders out of which the children are a good quantum and these areas along with being clean and green should be very safe and they play a pivotal role in sustaining communities-

- Serves as an impetus to revitalize or rejuvenate the neighborhood or community in which it is located
- Plays an integral role in the life of a neighborhood and the lives of the people who reside there
- Serves as a touchstone for sense of community for those who live, work, and play there

A park and free community area can act as a catalyst to promote non vehicular movement, evolution of community feeling and a sense of neighborhood which is actually diminishing due to urbanization.

The play streets concept in New York and the woonerf concept in Netherlands actually is done to encourage kids and youngsters along with the older class to come and enjoy that community feeling and by keeping the vehicles out in turn do their bit in making their locality slightly more sustainable.

IV. LIMITATIONS

The research does not include the one on one interviews with children and all the facts stated are based on the basis of the literature study and the current prevailing scenarios evident in the Indian neighborhood and schools.

V. CONCLUSION

The results show that three parameters are required for healthy children's responses: 'safety and security', 'urban and environmental qualities' and 'basic services. The neighborhood design of an urban area should incorporate safety and security as their prime importance and also incorporate playfulness at the same time. The children in this safe surrounding will be able to communicate freely as well as knowing their wards are safe the parents also allow them to play free which results in the both mental and the physical growth. The school playground is an important facility for children to play every day on their own initiative. it puts enormous positive impacts on children's development and learning it has become an exemplary initiative for all concerned, and it fulfills the objectives aimed by the initiators. Unfortunately, most cities have not prioritised children in their planning and design. We should move beyond designing our cities for the 30-year old athletic person and think about the needs of our most vulnerable users: children, older adults and the poor. We can and must provide safe, playful and stimulating everyday experiences for the child in the city."

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