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Urban Renewal of Walled City: A Case of Amravati

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Abstract: ***Walled cities are made all across India with similar concept but with different techniques depending on climatic condition and location. Some cities stand on the banks of or near a river or occupy some kindred site. Heights of city walls are more on plain lands. These city walls are generally decorated in elevation series of holes of pointed arced parapet, sloping walls etc. The reason for construction of walled cities includes; protection of public from attacks, for storage purpose, to accommodate king and protector of kingdom and to protect and store the wealth won from other countries. These walled cities are important it represent history. Today walled cities are facing lots of problems. They are in the state of decline. Today walled cities are deteriorating environmentally as well as economically. The routine traffic Jams make movement to and within Walled city difficult while collapsing civic amenities have contributed to out-migration of resident population. Earlier walled cities were heart of the city but now they are only inner core of the city. Now walled cities are surviving only because of its traditional markets. And this is only reason people visit the walled city. If these markets will shift outside the walled city, then it will become void. Similar problem is facing by Amravati walled city. Its 150-year-old sarafa market is Shifting outside the walled city. Because of lack of space for expansion, no parking facilities, width of the roads are very small, people are not willing to come inside the walled city.***

The aim of this thesis is to revive walled city of Amravati by reviving its traditional Markets. These markets are only the identity of Walled city. In this project I have done case studies of walled cities in India and analyze the issues facing by the walled cities. The urban renewal of walled city cannot be considered in isolation of other areas. The renewal of walled city should form an integral part of the overall plan of city

Keywords: Image, identity, historicity, urban experience, development trends, revival, urban renewal.

I. INTRODUCTION

In this modern era in the name of modernization and development different types of transformation takes place that destroys the original fabric of the city which is associated with historical significance of the area. Historical significance also contributes in identity or imageability of a space. Thus, there is a need for protection, preservation and development of such areas by retaining its historicity.

A. Historicity

Historicity refers to historical actuality of a person, event or being a part of history. Historical conservation refers to Historicity of the place. It is the link between the past and the future. A sense of the past is equally important as the sense of the future to build the environment (Chao Ching Fu, 1995).

In case of Amravati, like many other such cities in the country historicity comes from the different layers of cultures which has their own unique identity, image, character and significant elements attached to it which gets reflected in the urban form through traditions, architecture in the form of fort walls, gates and Socio-economical background in the form of market areas, neighbourhoods, social and community spaces.

B. Image of the City

Image of the city comes from long associations, memories and experiences of the past for which stationary elements, moving elements, physical setting play an important role in shaping of it. Image comes from its various characteristics, elements and urban form which takes place due to different people, their cultures, traditions, use of place i.e., variations in historical and geographical background (Lynch, The Image of the city, 1959). Image depends on parameters like history, people, urban form, geography, culture and traditions which are guided by factors like social, physical and economical. Image of the city is formed by such factors which is characterised in physical terms by various elements like paths, edge, districts, nodes and landmarks (Lynch, The Image of the City, 1959). This helps in building up the identity of an area. Imageability comes from social meaning of an area, its function, history, or

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even through its name. Like in case of Amravati, the name “Amravati” is believed to be named after the ancient Amba Devi temple as it is used to be called as “Ambanagari” or it is also believed so because of presence of large number of Audumbar trees the ancient name of Amravati was “Audumbaravati”, in prakrut, “Umbravati” thus finally accepted as Amravati. Thus, image of Amravati city is due to its name, ancient temple of Amba Devi and markets earlier famous as a major Bazaar Peth.

C. The case of Amravati



Figure 1Location of Amravati City and selected site.

Amravati city is in the state of Maharashtra. Amravati has historical landmarks like temples of Amba Devi, Ekvira Devi, Shri Krishna and Usmania Masjid. It is growing as an industrial center. Infrastructure development is also leading its way. It has significant industrial potential with textile parks coming up in Nandgaon peth MIDC at its periphery. It is an educational hub with 20 prominent colleges, it has high tourism potential due to Amba Devi temple, Osmania Masjid and Chikhaldara wildlife sanctuary. In citizen polling of Smart City Mission, lot of interests was for retrofitting led development for old city but emergent opinion supported towards economic upliftment thus greenfield was decided choice for area-based development creating economic growth centers by decongesting the core. But due to lack of cooperation between authorities and citizens the proposal got cancelled. This resulted because of negligence towards the old city, its heritage, living conditions and aspirations of the citizen to improve the walled city which contributes to the historical, socio-cultural and economical background of the city.

D. Historical Significance

Historical significance of the area and site selected comes from its various associations. Firstly, in case of Amba Devi, there is a legend that Lord Krishna ran away with Rukhamini from her wedding ceremony, he used a tunnel laid from Ambadevi temple to Koundinyapur. This tunnel is still in existence but it is now caved in. Thus, this proves the existence of this area from the epic "Mahabharata. Also, Janardhan Swami's contribution towards Ekvira devi temple. Secondly, the influence of different dynasties and their rule which is reflected from urban form in terms of tangible and intangible aspects. e.g., Amravati was a part of Berar province, Aurangzeb's rule is reflected from formation of a Masjid and Aurangpura in old Amravati which is today's Sabanpura, Bhosle's contribution in formation of fortified boundaries, wadas, kasbas, peth areas and administration by Nizams of Hyderabad for a specific period reflected from havelis which still exists etc.

Amba Devi temple, Nizam's Haveli, Fortwall and Amravati under Berar province.



Thirdly, its associations with freedom fighters like Narasinha Mudholkar, Dadasaheb Khaparde, Moropanth Vishwanath Joshi came from the city and freedom fighter Bhagat Singh hide for three days in Amravati during his underground stint. He is known to have frequently visited Hanuman Aakhada (gym) of HVPM i.e., Hanuman Vyayam Prasarak Mandal in that time, which is just adjacent to the Ekvira devi temple. In 19th century, many administrative buildings of the city and formation of camp area was carried out during the British rule. This shows the historical significance of the area.

E. Physical Aspects

Inner city and the adjacent area to the fort wall with the temple precinct forms the study area boundary of the site. The basic criteria for choosing the site were its strategic location as it is geographically located at the centre of the city and functionally which is called as the heart of the city as it is in close proximity to market areas, commercial complexes, automobile workshops and administrative buildings like Amravati municipal corporation, tehsil office, city library, post office, etc. It is also in a close proximity to the Amravati railway station which is within 1.5 km distance. Amba devi temple is adjacent to an internationally renowned sports institution i.e., HVPM (Hanuman Vyayam Prasarak Mandal). Later markets expanded in the areas adjacent to inner city in its periphery. Thus, this shows the transition where the new city has evolved which can be seen from its morphology and shows a change in the urban form outside the fort walls of inner city.

Administrative Buildings (AMC, BSNL office, City Library and Market area.



Inner city was planned defensive in nature which was protected by a fort wall that is 4km long, 1.8m wide and 20 to 26 ft high. Fort wall has 5 big gates namely Amba gate, Jawahar gate, Nagpuri gate, Kholapuri gate and Mahajanpuri gate. It also had 4 windows namely Mata khidki, Khunari khidki, Patel khidki and Chhatrapuri khidki which do not exist now. Urban form has evolved in strategical way with narrow streets, low and dense fabric which is pedestrian friendly and quite uniform in nature.

Fort wall gates: Amba Gate, Jawahar Gate, Nagpuri Gate, Kholapuri Gate and Mahajanpuri Gate.



F. Socio-cultural Aspects

Old Amravati has been evolved tactfully with importance given to the social life and cultures of the communities living in the city with community spaces and open spaces present in almost all cluster of houses. These spaces are either around an open ground, well, temple, maths, mosque, shops, community halls, or schools where there is a possibility of maximum interactions with the people. These have easy accessibility and promotes socialising. Community spaces around temples, maths and mosques are used for the celebration of festivals and meetings

Community Spaces (near shops, temple, Community halls and Kumbharwada etc



Open spaces in front of residences in Kumbharwada are being used for the creation of idols and pots. The typologies evolved encourages the cohesive living of the communities with work and live pattern. Culture is formed from various traditions and customs the people follow which is reflected from the spatial form in terms of different community areas which is reflected through physical and social distribution of areas belonging to respective communities.

II. STRATEGIES (FOR OVERALL SITE)

1) Enhancing the Mobility pattern.
2) Cultural and Economic revival of Historic Neighbourhoods.
3) Reimagining the built form along the Commercial areas.
4) Adaptive reuse of abandoned structures: to control its value and potential.
5) Conservation and Revitalization of Historic assets.
6) Formulating Development guidelines and Policies for overall site.
7) Retaining and Enhancing the visual setting that contributes to identity and urban experience of the place.
8) Improving the Visitor management and tourism potential.

III. CONCLUSIONS

A. Loss of Historicity

Transformations. modifications being done to the historic structures, places encroached by hawkers and vendors, new developments not in harmony with existing fabric, old structures being completely modified for better aesthetics and structural stability, places being used for parking purposes around historic precincts and structures affecting the movement pattern and accessibility, lack of awareness between people regarding historicity of the city leading to its loss.

B. Development Trends

Haphazard urban development in and around historic areas affecting the visual experience, views and vistas of historical precincts and structures, modifications being done to the historic fabric in its planning as well as outer fabric, shifting of people and markets outside the old market area due to inadequate infrastructure problems and space for expansion, contemporary additions or extensions being done to old structures, loss of significance of the historical precincts: economically, culturally and socially.

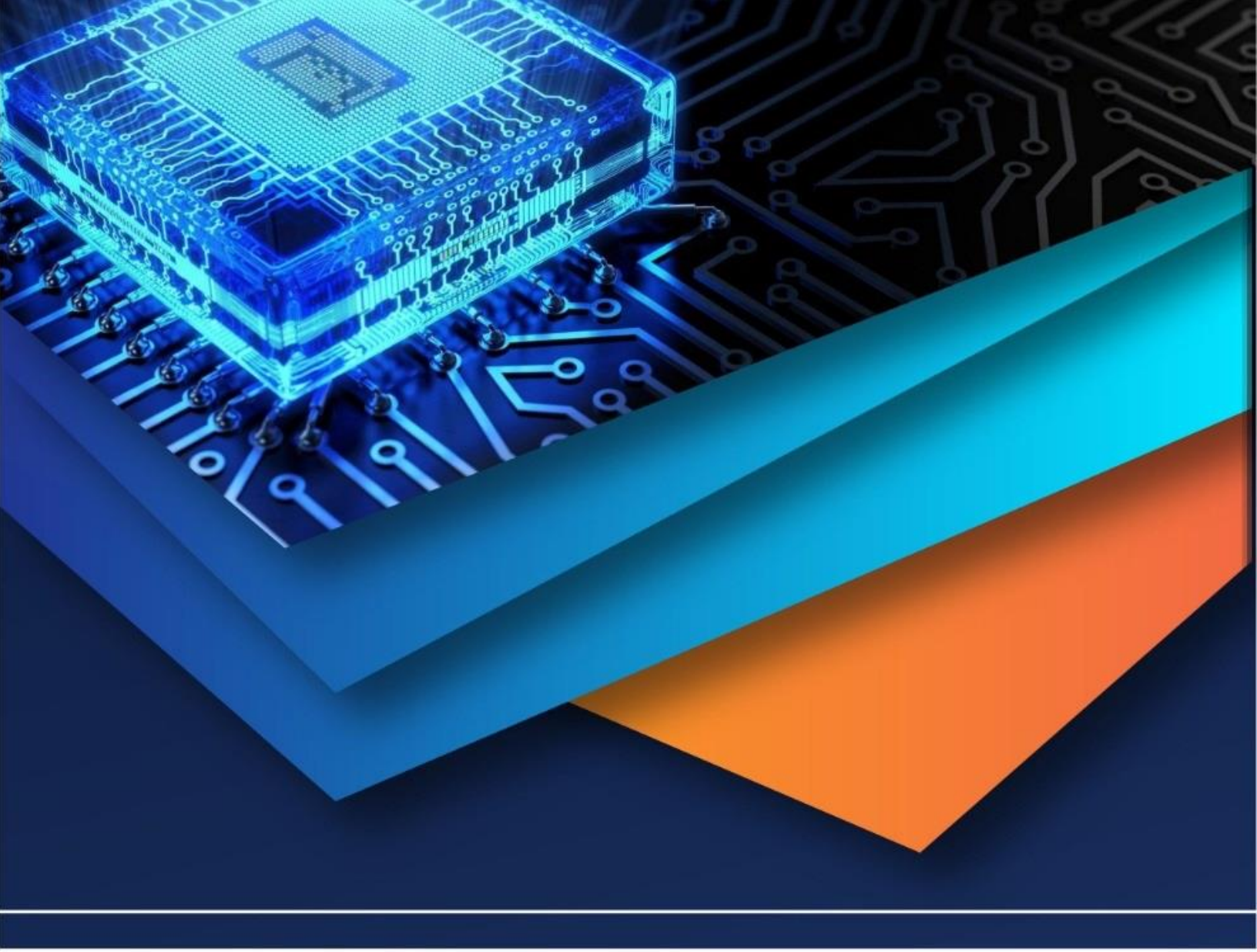
C. Area Specific Issues (for walled city: Old Amravati)

Historic structures are in bad condition due to lack of maintenance and awareness, lack of harmony in architectural characteristics of the structures, transformations/ modifications to historic structures are being done to suit the present needs for expansions and betterment of spaces according to contemporary use, bazaars left vacant after specific hours, nodes lacks character in terms of good conditions of the surrounding buildings, their usage, proper signages showing directions and landmarks, vehicular and pedestrian conflicts, absence of designated parking areas, encroachment on roads due to spill over activities of the shops, parking, hawkers and mobile vendors on street creates congestion and becomes barriers in free flow of traffic, loading- unloading creates congestion in peak hours on narrow streets.

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