

BENJOY C JOY | Dr. Sheeja K P

Participatory Regionalism leading to Sustainable City Design- a case of Urban Water Metro, Kochi

Sustainable development through participatory regionalism a case of emerging integrated water transport network of Kochi. Regions are tied to each other by road, rail and water transportation networks. Every region has an identity by collective consciousness. When regions are made accessible they become hot spots of conservation. Kochi is an estuarine city. The arrival of the Kochi water metro service brings hopes to the islanders of the Kochi city region. Kadamakudy panchayat and Cheranellur panchayat are two such panchayats having a set of ten islands. This set of ten islands share a common history, religion, festivals and traditions. The islands Valiya Kadamakudy, Cheria Kadamakudy, Kothad, Moolampilly, Chariyam thuruthu, Pizhala, Murickal, Pulikkappuram and Chennur form the Kadamakudy panchayat. The islands South Chittoor and Koren kottai along with Cheranellur constitute the Cheranellur panchayat. These islands were initially occupied by fishermen, farmers and potters mainly from the Latin Christian and Luso Indians community. Chittoor palace constructed by the erstwhile king of Cochin royal family was the summer palace. The king travelled from the hill palace a.k.a the winter palace to the summer palace in boat. This shows how water transportation was a crucial component in those days. Then schools and hospitals were built on these islands thereby adding more housing stock to this place. Due to the Coastal Regulation Zone restrictions and Kerala land utilization order preventing reclamation of wetlands no new developments are happening on these islands. Kettukalakkal festival is the harvest festival of Kadamakudy panchayat. They celebrate it by catching fresh fish from the aqua culture, kite flying, angling competitions and food fiesta. The Chavattu Nadakom a style of stage play is a delicacy item of the Kochi Muziris Biennale and is part of the Christian tradition of this region. Visually similar districts or wards are identifiable in five out of the ten islands. These visually similar district or ward contain two ferry-oriented development axis. One starting from a Christian church and extending all the way to ferry point. The second one starting at a temple and extending all the way to ferry point. Valiya kadamakudy, Pizhala, Kothad, South Chittoor and Moolampilly are the five visually similar district or visually similar ward containing islands. I selected ward number ten or Chittoor temple ward out of these five locations as the art district for design intervention. The South Chittoor bus station cum ferry station is the transit hub of this region. Bus service is available through the container terminal road but Valiya Kadamakudy, Chariyam thuruthu, Murickal, Pulikkappuram and Chennur remain isolated due to lack of bridges. Hence People of these islands travel by boat to reach South Chittoor. South Chittoor is the closest location from the Ernakulam railway station from the Kochi city center. The design intervention included a football ground behind the existing Chittoor ferry cum bus station, a plaza, a pop up market, viewing gallery, cinema screen with curated pandhal decorations, museum and heritage hotel following Coastal Regulation Zone rules, all the wetlands were converted into boating lake and pond for aqua culture. The urban design had a series of visions such as emergence of regionalism in Chittoor temple ward, revitalization of older neighbourhood in South Chittoor island and maturation of the suburbs of Kadamakudy panchayat & Cheranellur panchayat. The emerging Kochi water metro service reduces travel time considerably. Kochi city even after having all the road infrastructure is struggling with traffic blocks. The Kochi water metro service can be extended till Muziris heritage area. Ferries are the economic and most sustainable mode of transportation for the people of Kochi. Water transportation will bring more connectivity than road transportation in Kochi city in the coming decade. Therefore, ferry oriented developments are the key to the conservation of planned obsolete places such as Kadamakudy and Cheranellur panchayats having large areas of perumboke lands as wetlands.