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Democratic Expression In The Design Of Capital Cities - Case Of Panaji

Cities are physical manifestations reflecting aspirations of the social, economic and political framework of the time. Planning of cities have been taking place since the beginning of civilizations. Therefore, a measure of civilised life can be analysed by understanding the spatial organisation within a city.

Organization of spaces subsequently led to hierarchical formations within the public realm, with exhibition of the idea of power. Thus, one of the key aspects in decoding cities is to understand the expression of power within them. This also results in the built form becoming a representative of the political stand of the government. It also acts as a political strategy for identity formation. Urban planning and design thereby become tools for capturing power and culture by transfer of these ideas into the city planning scheme. Over the years, cities have mutated to contain the changing forms and varying expressions of power. These cities can be termed as capital cities. Capital cities often exhibit cultural dynamicity resulting in them becoming centres of authority. This thesis focuses on understanding democratic expression and its interlinking with power, politics and identity in the design of capital cities.

"The capital supposedly represents the nation, yet the nation is not represented by the social and ethnic composition of the capital: ethnic minorities, single women, the elderly, the poor, single parents and the disadvantaged. The monuments and images of the capital are consumed by the tourist gaze." (King 1993, 266)

The role of capital city planning is therefore not simply to impress and intimidate through monumental buildings, but rather to build an accessible capital that serves as an effective forum for democratic political debate. Many capital cities in the current times are unable to contain the growing requirements in terms of infrastructure and services. This has led to the emergence of both planned and unplanned extensions to the city; often called by the term of satellite towns.