

Transformation of Traditional Marketplaces in an Urban Context- Case of Chalai Market, Thiruvananthapuram.

Trade has been fundamental in the footprint of human civilization since ancient time. In most of the historic cities, city development was along trading routes, where marketplaces are the major entrance to a city and hence a major element of the urban fabric. Marketplaces are where the commercial activities flourish, people, having a sense of belonging to the place, where they easily fit in. Acknowledging the built environment in and around the market in a way creating a sense of place is an important factor in the success of public spaces. Local markets are developed in an organic manner which adds on to the people experience and perception of urban space.

With the city development, the commercial needs within the city increase, hence marketplaces flourish, irrespective of the functional segregation within. The work-live culture in the marketplaces diminishes as the commercial expansion washes away the residential patches within it. Real estate flourishes as the newer infills are without considering the carrying capacity of the place. Chalai market is a prominent business center serving the regional level of Thiruvananthapuram city. The transformation trend of marketplaces in city cores are understood from case study on Fatimid Cairo Marketplace. The parameters that led to transformation of marketplaces in a global context is considered for the analysis of the Chalai market. The structure of the marketplace over the years is analyzed in terms of transformation in location, transformation in the land- use, change in commodity, and transformation in movement and activity. The aim of the research is to emphasize the need to understand the transformation trend, in creating a suitable development pattern for the city. The unregulated transformation within the city core has led to tremendous transformation in the user group and user pattern and eventually to the commercial trend. With the change in lifestyle and need for new amenities have led to addition of new infills leading to the degradation of the native commerce. Hence addressing the transformation of marketplaces are crucial to maintaining the locational significance and cultural importance and heritage of the place.

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