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Evaluating the urban image created by colonial vestiges: Case of Chennai

A city constitutes of many fragments that are essential in the shaping of the whole. How these fragments are put together and their interwoven relationship is what is particular about the design of the city. India has come a long way in the process of becoming urban India since the colonial era. The contemporary Indian city is a convulsive organism, constantly reviving and adjusting itself to its ever - evolving demographics. Traditional Indian colonial settlements that are clearly structured based on their own internal logic are now rambling urban cities surging by the chaotic growth. It has been long accepted that the fundamental spatial structure plays an important role when navigating in urban environments. This research investigates the indigenous and colonial influences on the concept of 'Imageability', an essential quality of urban environments as identified by Kevin Lynch. The characteristics of an urban space is evaluated by the identified context specific parameters of measuring imageability. The whole approach is applied to the context of an urban space in the city of Chennai in India, Kamaraja Salai (Marina beach road). The study essentially creates a narrative of the degree of measure of parameters that correlate to different perceptions of the urban space in the post-colonial context. Findings show that flexibility, multipurpose, functionality, and location all play a role in the perception of an urban space, and concludes that the magnitude of the imageability of the colonial vestiges, today, have either been unseen or appropriated through the strong statement of social conducts.

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