

Urban Public Square
Examining Principles by 'Project for Public Spaces' in the Indian Context: Case of
Manek Chowk

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Submitted By

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Thesis Title : Urban Public Square- Examining Principles by 'Project for Public Spaces' in the Indian Context: Case of Manek Chowk

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Declaration

I, **Richi Shah, 15bar69**, give an undertaking that this research thesis entitled “**Urban Public Square- Examining Principles by 'Project for Public Spaces' in the Indian Context: Case of Manek Chowk**” submitted by me, towards partial fulfilment for the Degree of Bachelor of Architecture at Institute of Architecture and Planning, Nirma University, Ahmedabad, contains no material that has been submitted or awarded for any degree or diploma in any university/school/institution to the best of my knowledge.

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This research thesis includes findings based on literature review, study of existing scientific papers, other research works, expert interviews, documentation, surveys, discussions and my own interpretations.

Date: 20th July, 2020



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Abstract

Public Spaces exist as a reflection of those who occupy it and the city or town as a whole. It is a place where people express themselves collectively, spend time in the presence of other people, gather for socializing or raising voices or celebrating. It has been said that public spaces can be tagged as the living room of the city. Public squares particularly, hold their own importance as a public space. Not necessarily shaped as squares, their ability to pull people towards them, to encourage a range of activities and users, to provide a space for cultural, social and democratic exchange are only a few things that define them.

Having almost lost their meaning and importance for a few years, public squares around the world are now being re-activated again. In this case where they are particular to a specific place and their success almost solely depends on the expression and beliefs of those who occupy it, is it really acceptable to use principles which are 'relevant globally'?

This research focuses on recognizing the importance and 'meaning' of public squares based on findings derived through study of people in public spaces. Later examining the relevance of 'globally suitable' principles, derived from similar methods, in the Indian context of public squares.

Contents

Acknowledgements	6
Abstract.....	7
Contents.....	8
Keywords.....	9
Introduction	9
Research Questions	10
Aim	10
Objectives	10
Hypothesis	10
Research Method and Methodology.....	11
Scope and Limitation.....	11
Background.....	12
Changeover of Public Squares.....	13
Project for Public Spaces.....	14
10 Principles for Successful Squares.....	15
Case Study.....	15
1. Access.....	16
2. Image and Identity.....	20
3. Flexible Design.....	23
4. The Inner Square and The Outer Square	32
5. Reaching Out Like an Octopus.....	35
6. Attractions and Destinations.....	38
7. Amenities.....	40
8. Seasonal Strategy.....	42
9. The Central Role of Management	44
10. Diverse Funding Sources.....	45
Conclusion.....	46
Table of Figures.....	47
References	48
Bibliography	49

Keywords

Public Squares, People, Activity, Manek Chowk, Project for Public Spaces

Introduction

All through history, architecture has been a representation of society, it reflects the values and beliefs of civilizations. By studying individual buildings to the fabric of a settlement, a lot can be learned about those who inhabited them. For a fact, architecture is not merely a built environment but a reflection of how we see the world and ourselves. As architecture is originally shaped by particular locations, climate, available materials, values of the society and such, it evolves but still expresses the importance of honouring cultural strength.

When asked the fundamental purpose of architecture, Richard Rogers had answered “It serves society and improves quality of life. It’s a physical manifestation of the society’s wish to be civilized! ...public domain being the obvious place which encapsulates this as buildings, alongside being art and science, are part of the public domain. ...” (Rogers, 2012)

When going through history, it may seem that architecture naturally evolves but it is manifested. Like any design, it begins with a question, rationalizes the context, understands the ethics and ends with a ‘solution’. When design is so particular and one can almost say personalized to context, background, culture, people, etcetera, can the parameters for designing spaces for the public similar globally?

In an essay about how history and culture impact the construction and experience of public squares, a journalist and novelist, George Packer writes “you often find two types of public square: one that is older, organic, chaotic and populated; and one that is recent, planned, orderly and deserted.” The first, he says “accretes over time to accommodate the habits and needs, mainly commercial ones of ordinary city dwellers”. The latter, he continues “leaves nothing to chance.” (Marron, 2016). One must understand that the ‘older, organic, chaotic and populated’ squares are also ‘planned and orderly’. The question is; are newer public squares using overly generalized principles?

Principles that make a public space active, which are proved to be successful in many different settings around the world, are they observed to be true in the Indian context as well?

Research Questions

Broad focus:

Are parameters of active public squares similar or different when incorporated in varying setting? If they are not similar, in which way are they different?

Focus 1:

-What are the principles that make a public square successful?

Focus 2:

-Are active public squares in an Indian context, designed keeping in mind said principles?

-If not, which parameters make a public square active in an Indian context?

-How are people in an Indian context using active public squares?

Aim

The aim of this research is to study Project for Public Spaces' principles that make a successful public square and analyse whether a public square in an Indian context follow said principles. If not, study which parameters make an active public square in Indian context.

Objectives

1. Recognize the Principles for successful squares given by "Project for Public Spaces"

2. Identify an active public square in the Indian context:

- in a traditional old city setting

3. Examine:

- recognized principles in the identified public square

- if not applicable, recognize what makes the square active

4. Collect data:

- observe activity of people through documented material

- examine whether design criteria are successful in terms of use

5. Conclude:

- whether recognized principles are observed in the identified public square

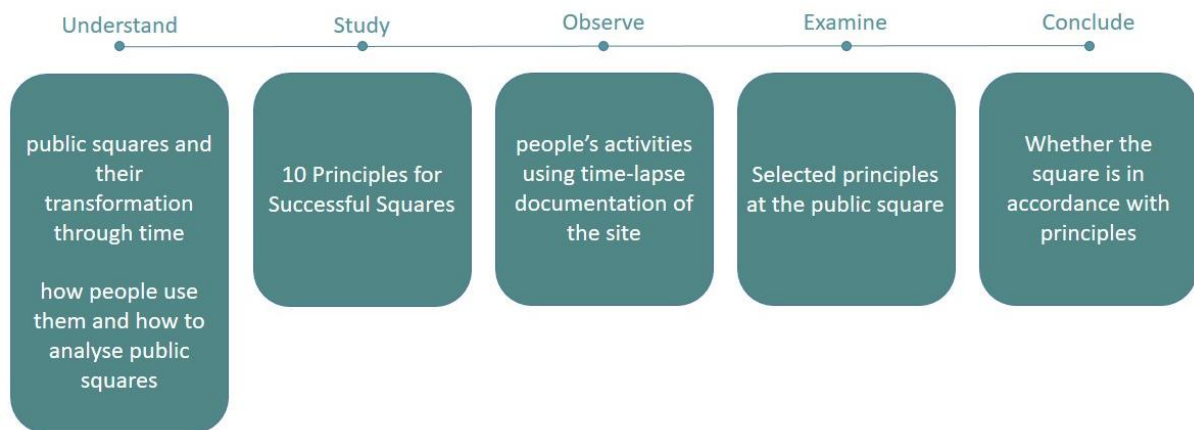
- how people use public squares in selected context

Hypothesis

Selected square of Indian context is a successful square.

Research Method and Methodology

The first part of the research focusing on understanding public squares, their transformation through history and how people use them. Then, focusing on how to study people in public squares and how to analyse public squares. Using time-lapse documentation of the site, observing people's activity on site and examining the selected principles. Later portraying the observations and analysis through diagrams and concluding whether the square is in accordance with the principles.



Scope and Limitation

As the analysis and observations majorly rely on time-lapse documentation of the site, the day, month, year, season are all limited to that particular documentation. Sound, smell, touch of anything on site are not considered. The exact time of day cannot be noted, approximate inferences can be made based on sunlight, cardinal directions and other mediums like type of activity happening on site. Data which might be unavailable in the time-lapse documentation may be found from different sources collected at a different time period which may or may not be relevant currently. No conversation, interview or user survey can be conducted as the users are being observed through a secondary source.

This research can be used further if the design of square in question is to be changed, improved, rethought or just being examined in the future. It is an addition to gathering of information of squares being documented or examined using principles in question.

Background

The Merriam-Webster definition of 'public square' as a noun is "an open public area in a city or town where people gather". In general, other commonly used names for 'public square' are town square, city square, civic center, urban square, market square, piazza, plaza, town greens and many others. (Merriam-Webster, n.d.)

An architect- David Adjaye, while writing about Djemaa El-Fnaa, Marakech, claims that "the square's identity emerges not from the architecture that surrounds it but from the individuals who occupy it...It is not the space itself that is meaningful, it is the way space facilitates diversity, interaction and new negotiations that make it meaningful". (Marron, 2016)

More importantly, public squares aren't necessarily square. Cliff Moughtin has defined public squares and plazas as important elements of city design with different shapes and sizes. He says "It is the way of designing a good setting for public and commercial buildings in cities. A square or plaza is both an area framed by buildings and an area designed to exhibit its buildings to the greatest advantage." (Moughtin, 2003)

In the *Time Saver: Standards for Urban Design*, it is written that "...the physical and psychological function of the square does not depend on size or scale. However, squares create a gathering place for people and provide mutual contact." (Donald, Alan , & Robert , 2003)

To particularly put stress on the point of people meeting in public spaces, another notable thing said by Richard Rogers in an interview is "...Cities are also a great meeting place for people- something which has been at the heart of the concept of 'the city' since its emergence in Mesopotamia. Cities met to exchange grain, meat, to think and to exchange ideas. In this sense, the core concept of the city has remained relatively unchanged for 6,000 years and so regeneration merely ensures more parts of the city meet these purposes." (Rogers, 2012)

As, Juhani Pallasmaa has written "Instead of participating in the process of further speeding up the experience of the world, architecture has to slow down experience, halt time and defend the natural slowness and diversity of experience." (Pallasmaa, 2012). The planning of cities and architecture as a whole, depend upon creating this experience. Active public squares and presence of other people can make a mundane walk a far more healthy social experience by urging people to linger.

William Whyte has laid much emphasis on, "What attracts people most, it would appear, is other people." Moreover, he says "It is not just the number of people using them, but the larger number who passes by and enjoy them vicariously, or even the larger number who feel better about the city center for knowledge of them. For a city, such places are priceless, whatever the cost. They are built of a set of basics and they are right in front of our noses. If we will look." (Whyte, 2001)

As a sum of meanings associated to public square, it is the negative space in between buildings which reflects upon the history and culture of a city. A place for social, economic, democratic exchanges and growth of people.

Changeover of Public Squares

An architectural critic and writer, Jonathan Glancey, writes in an article “There may have been earlier public squares, yet the ancient Greeks with their *agora* or central meeting place at the heart of their cities, made this form of urban space not just famous but compelling too. Every public square since, not just in the western world, but around the globe, has had something of the *agora* about it.” Later in the article he explains that many of the world’s major cities are investing in their historic squares in recent years, adding that “...the very idea of the piazza, plaza or square has become almost fashionable.” Moreover, many run-down squares are being revived and it might have to do with the realization that they are necessary for healthy social experiences as truly being places for people to meet. (Glancey, 2014)

The earliest form of the agora was facing the bay. A town square at the time was meant to act as a market place and civic centre, by building it facing the bay, the city can make the most of its waterfronts commercial potential.

Early Anatolian towns would have two plazas at the front of palaces, one would be gated and another outside, used as a market setting. Similarly, in an imperial context like China where formal open spaces were absent, an urban forecourt was there within the palace compound.

Even in earlier forms of settlement, a cluster of units would group around a central open space, a place for the community to assemble, meet, discuss common affairs, resolve disputes and celebrate festivals.

In the Indian context, the spaces in and around temples and mosques were the focus for communal activity. The courtyard of the main mosque standing as one of the largest and important spaces for gathering. Bazaars, chowks, ghats, would serve as the ‘public square’ for the city. Generally, in the Indian context, the ‘core urban space’ as more decentralized, having more of a hierarchy of open spaces. The concept of urban spaces for leisure is said to have been something added to our lifestyle as a British influence.

Traditional city centers such as spaces in and around temples, mosques, forts or palaces have been largely replaced by business districts. Instead of amalgamating the various functions, activities and social interactions throughout the city in public spaces, it seems they have transitioned into more singular functions, internalizing the public realm, restricting accessibility. If we take markets and shopping as an example activity, squares transitioned into arcades which lead to gallerias, now becoming departmental stores and malls.

Throughout history, the location of public squares in the city, the way people use them, the activities happening there and why they were made may have changed to some extent but the core function or purpose of the square itself has remained to be the gathering of people.

Project for Public Spaces

Project for Public Spaces (PPS) was founded to expand the work of William H. Whyte. Founded in 1975 with only a three year mission to exhibit the significance of public space, it continues with a global outreach and as a movement supporting a community driven improvement of public spaces. It is now the leading center in reference to information, resources and practices for placemaking.

As a statement of their mission, PPS states; "Project for Public Spaces (PPS) is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping people create and sustain public spaces that build strong communities. We are the central hub of the global placemaking movement, connecting people to ideas, resources, expertise and partners who see place as the key to addressing our greatest challenges." (Myrick, 1975-2019)

Their approach helps rejuvenate public spaces, transforming them into important places while highlighting local assets and catering to common needs. They have applied the knowledge and wisdom of urban pioneers like Jane Jacobs, William Whyte, Jan Gehl and others, into progressively developing a comprehensive placemaking approach. Their entire process, which they also consider as a philosophy, revolves around community involvement; benefiting from the local community's potential. They observe, listen and ask questions to the people who use a space with the aim to understand their needs and aspirations for that particular space and for the community as a whole. The vision created through this information can rapidly evolve into an implementation strategy.

The planning processes of the 20th century, they believe, are too institutionalized, rarely giving the community stakeholders a voice about the places they inhabit. PPS encourages and stands exemplary to an approach where the planners, designers and engineers are shown to move beyond their own professions, disciplines, agendas.

PPS has a strong value system, they feel the responsibility of continuing to practice, protect and advocate for the community driven, bottom up approach. They believe in making way for experimentation, respecting the fact that team leaders at any and all levels need not have all the answers. They respect the word placemaking and understand that using it to name a process which is not centered around public participation reduces its potential value. Public spaces, they mention, cannot be measured by only physical attributes, they are important resources and must be attuned to people. They haven't trademarked their approach or methods and are dedicated to sharing their resources and experiences, growing the network of placemakers and allies.

In 2010, as part of one of their blogs, PPS had written about how the outlook of economic gain for cities has become broader. Earlier what focused on high-cost facilities like sports arenas and performing arts centers for reviving downtown areas, was now moving towards lower-cost, high-impact strategies by bringing into play public squares and urban parks, creating more livable downtowns. But way before that in 2005, with the understanding that public squares are the heart of a community and offer an inclusive place of gathering and based on the analysis and observations from hundreds of squares, '10 Principles for Successful Squares' was put out by them.

10 Principles for Successful Squares

1. Access
2. Image and Identity
3. Flexible Design
4. The Inner Square and Outer Square
5. Reaching Out Like An Octopus
6. Attractions and Destinations
7. Amenities
8. Seasonal Strategies
9. Central Role of Management
10. Diverse Funding Sources

Case Study

For this research, Manek Chowk is the selected square to examine the 10 Principles for Successful Public Squares, with the inference that it is a successful square of Ahmedabad city.

The Manek Chowk precinct is an integral part of the traditional, formerly walled city of Ahmedabad, situated east of the Sabarmati River. The old city of Ahmedabad was developed by King Ahmed Shah in the 15th century. It acted as a market place then and continues to be so even today. From centuries old monuments to historic buildings to markets for shopping and eating, the area can activate all your senses. It remains active throughout the day, Manek Chowk- main square even through the night. It is a favorite for not only locals but for tourists as well. Most importantly, it is the 'heart' of old city Ahmedabad.

1. Access

The most essential element of the square is people. The square must be easily accessible to a pedestrian. Slow traffic and narrow streets in areas surrounding the square are a must. Crosswalks should be clearly marked and the lights should be timed not for vehicles but pedestrians. When the square is surrounded by fast moving vehicular activity, it is difficult for people to access. Transit stops at walkable distance from the square and lit up sidewalks are also important.

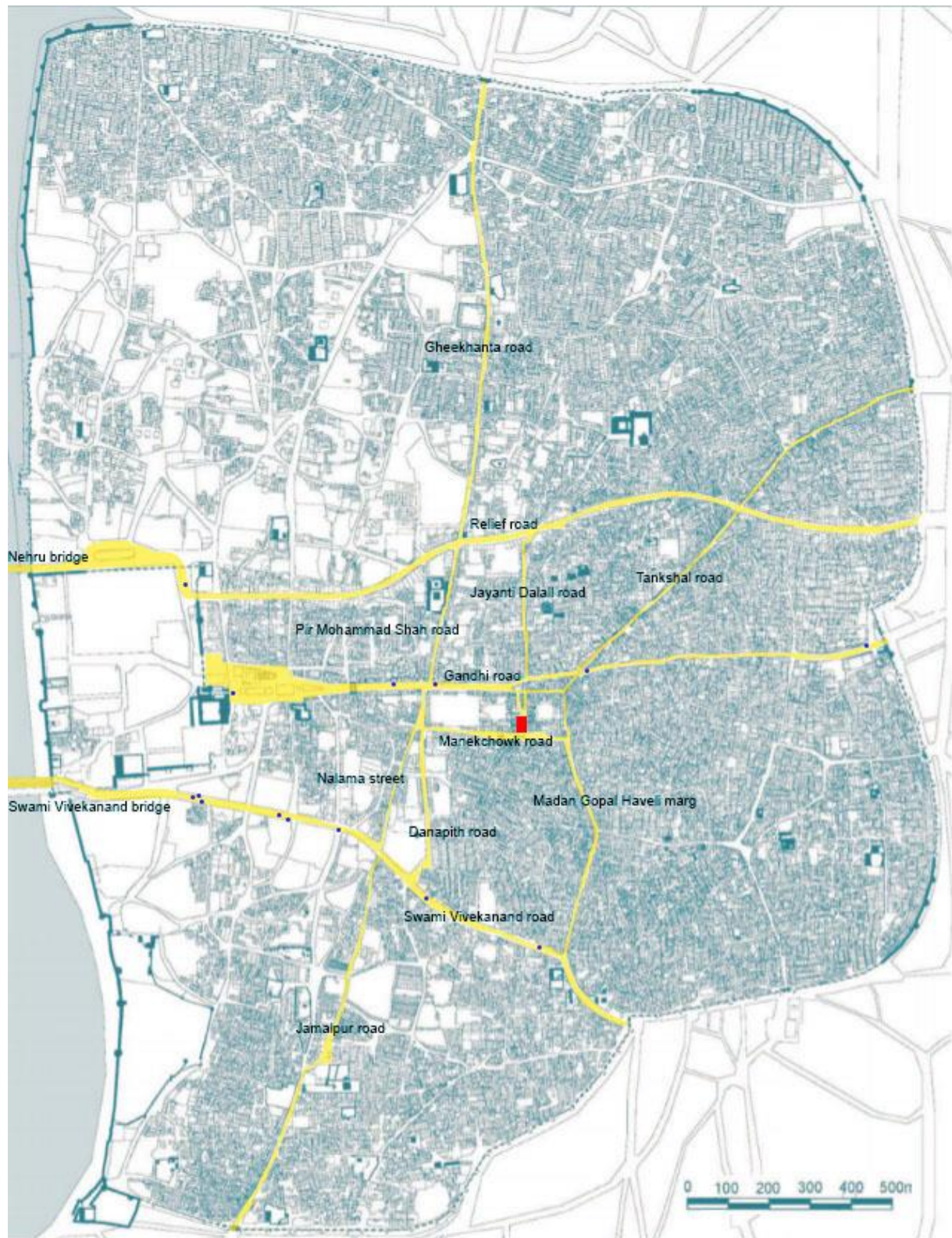


Figure 1: Access at walled city-scale

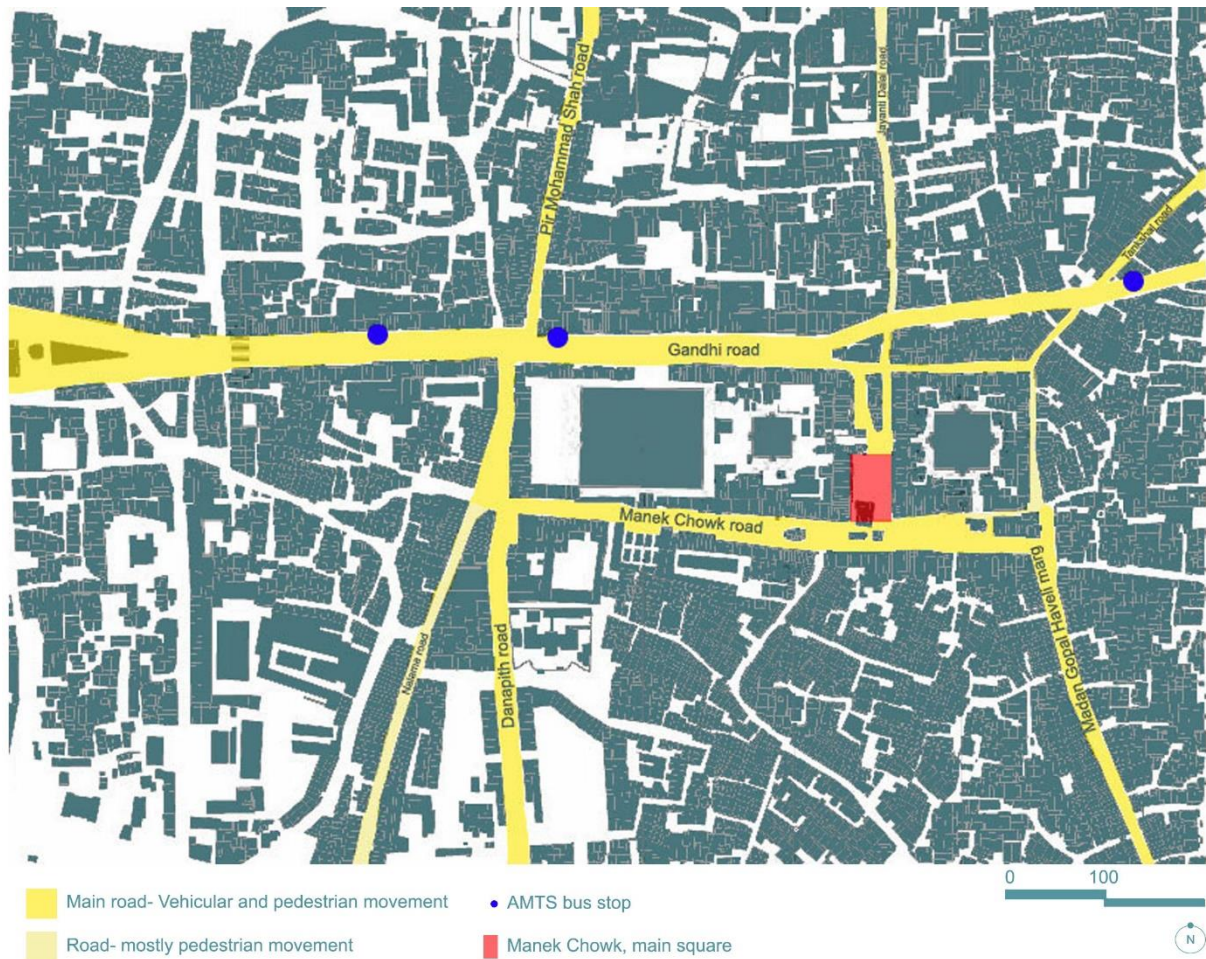


Figure 2: Access, adjacent roads

Observations

During the 15th century, when the city was officially built by King Ahmed Shah, he developed an axis for the walled city. The spine of that axis being what is now known as Gandhi road, which falls immediately north of Manek Chowk, main square. Gandhi road originates from the Bhadra Plaza and goes towards the Ahmedabad Junction, main railwaystation of Ahmedabad. Manek Chowk road is adjacent to Manek Chowk, main square in the South. Swami Vivekanand road is the first main axis road south from Manek Chowk, main square. By way of Manek Chowk road and Danapith road, Swami Vivekanand road is only 650 m from the square.

Moreover, there are five AMTS bus stops on Gandhi road alone, all under 1.1 km distance from Manek Chowk, main square. In addition to AMTS bus stops, Swami Vivekanand road also has four BRTS bus stops.

All roads surrounding Manek Chowk, main square are used by pedestrians as well as all sorts of vehicles. Danapith and Gandhi road have heavy but slow traffic. There should be 6 crosswalk markings where the square meets the adjacent roads, but there are none.

Findings

In accordance with the access principle, Manek chowk is not only surrounded by major roads but also major roads which have excessive pedestrian traffic. According

to a WRI report, approximately 30,000 pedestrians pass through manek chowk on a daily basis. Although it is no issue for people to reach the square, the utterly unorganized mix of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, creates much chaos. Not only so, it would be extremely difficult for a differently abled individual to reach the site. As regular users have become 'used' to it, it may not be noticeable to them but the crossing situation and the unorganized flow of traffic would prove to be unqualified for 'accessibility'.

2. Image and Identity

Historically, squares have aided the shaping of identities of cities. The square itself also has an image and identity of its own. Squares can be known for a fountain, statue, artwork or sculpture on site. Moreover, their identity can also be associated with the historic, civic, religious or heritage buildings around them. Piazza di Trevi is a notable example of a square whose identity is associated with a fountain. Saint Peter's Plaza is known for the cathedral is an example of a square whose identity is associated with the surrounding building.

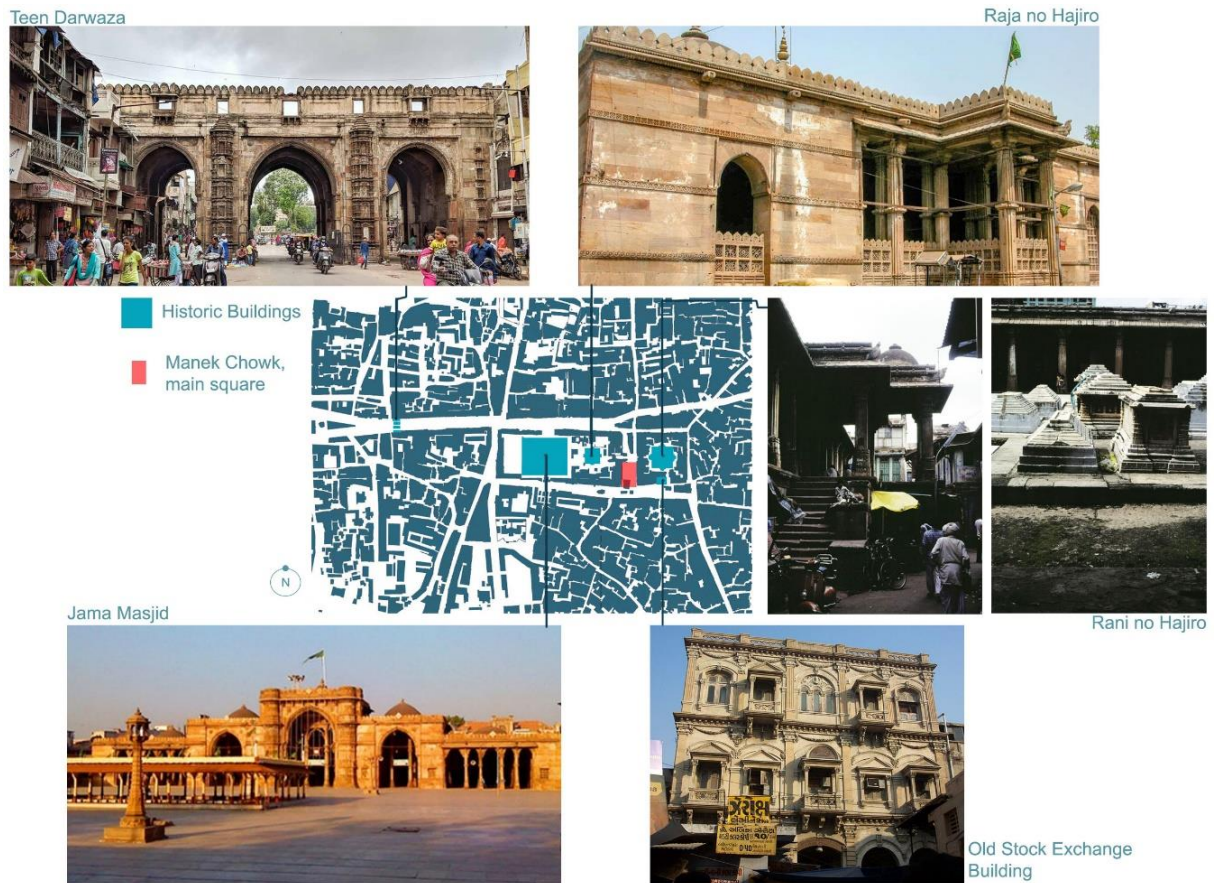


Figure 3: Notable buildings around Manek Chowk

At Manek Chowk, main square:



Market streets around Manek Chowk, main square:



Figure 4: Notable activities in and around Manek Chowk, main square

Observations

Manek Chowk, main square is known as an individual entity as well as for the area surrounding it. It was developed as a part of the urban core of Ahmedabad during the 15th century. It is an element of the main axis, in line with The Bhadra fort and plaza, Teen Darwaza, Jama Masjid, King's Tomb and Queen's Tomb. As earlier mentioned, all in line with the axial 'Raj marg' now known as Gandhi road. The streets surrounding the chowk are filled with majorly old, traditional construction.

Surrounding the chowk are various markets. Selling household items, hardware, clothes, fruits, vegetables, grains, spices, accessories and many more things. These street markets remain open all year round.

Within the square, there is no physical element creating identity or image for the square but it is known mainly for the activity and dynamic use throughout the day. Although, mainly parking during afternoon hours, the notable transformation starts in the evening, continued into the night. The night street food market, offering multiple cuisines is a major known aspect of Manek Chowk. The fluidity with which the chowk is transformed into a night market, by the vendors themselves is a major part of the identity of the square alongwith the wide range of activities which take place in and around the square.

Findings

There may be no physical feature in the square as the identity or image of the square but the history, surroundings and importance of the square itself hold a strong enough identity and image for the square. Additionally there is the variety of activities and night street food market which also stands as the square's identity.

3. Flexible Design

Responding to the change in use of the square during the day, week and year by blending the design with the activities already occurring there or providing for a variety of activities to take place. It is important to have portable equipment such as a retractable stage instead of a permanent one for live music. Having movable chairs, tables, umbrellas, and games attracts diversity in use. Providing an on-site storage for the same must be considered.

Activity in the main square, early morning:



Figure 5

User and activity in early morning:

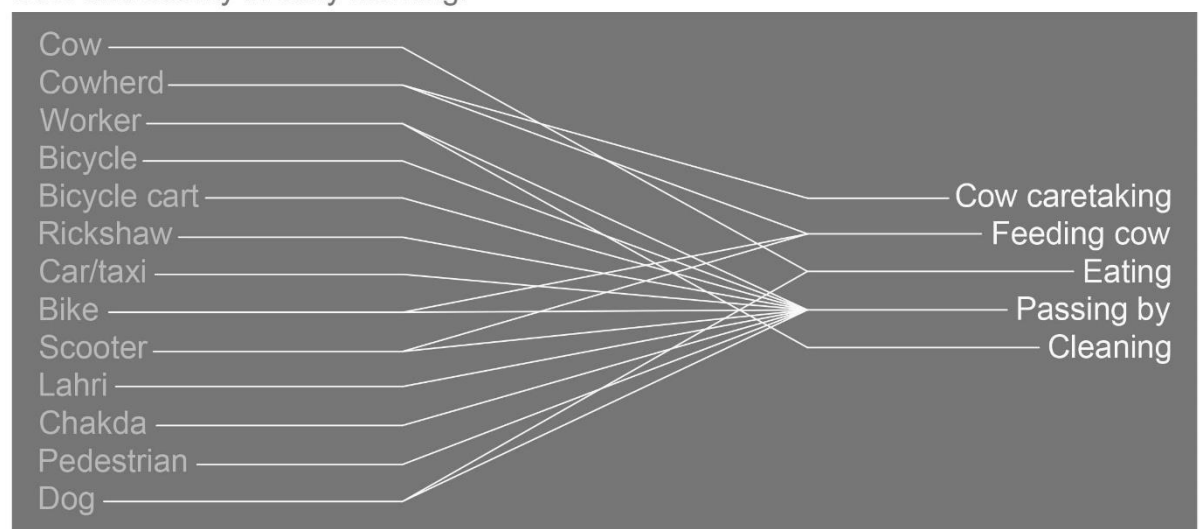


Figure 6

Activity in the main square, late morning and afternoon:



Figure 7

User and activity in the late morning and afternoon:

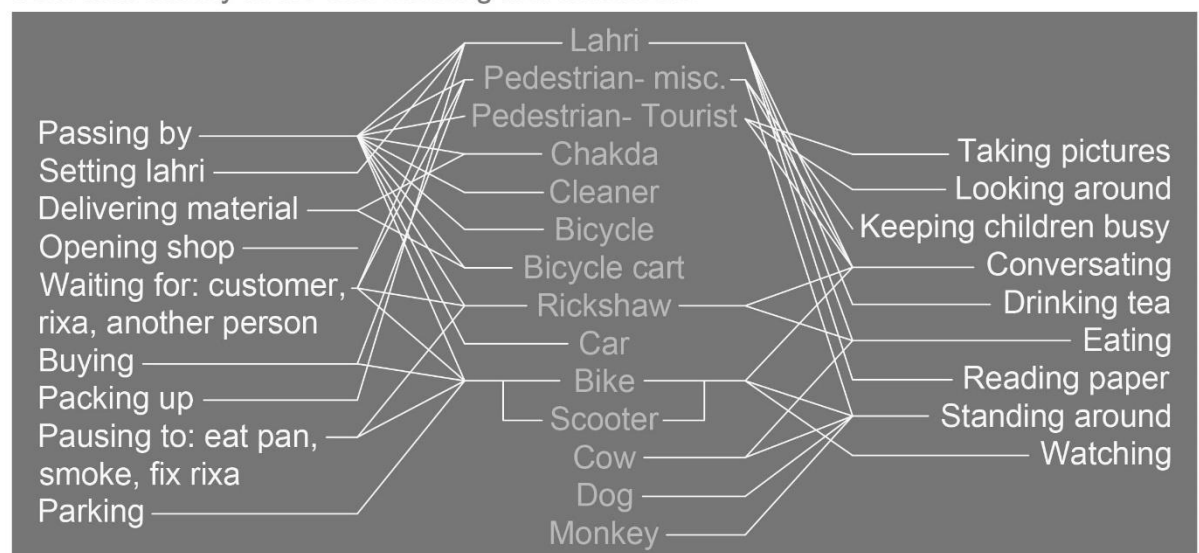


Figure 8

Activity in the main square at night:



Figure 9

User and activity at night:

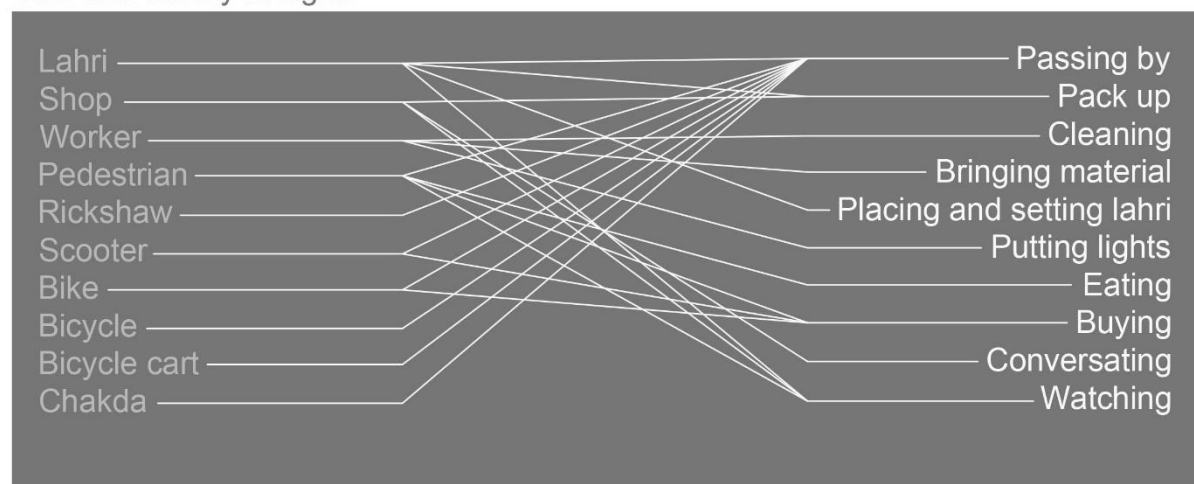


Figure 10



Figure 11: Activities in the early morning



Figure 12: Activities in the late morning and afternoon



Figure 13: Activities in the evening



Figure 14: Activities at night

Observations

Manek Chowk is well-known for its dynamic uses throughout the day. The main square is home to a range of activities depending on time of day. The square welcomes various type of users as well. The only permanent elements of the square are the buildings on the edge, sidewalks and street lights. All activities, users, furniture, setup is temporary on a daily basis.

In the early morning, south of the square, cows are being fed by cowherds and people passing by. Said area is cleaned by workers when it is time for the cows to leave. The passing by of people is a major activity that happens during this time; people walking, on bicycles, in chakda, scooters, bikes cars, taxis, rickshaws. Starting off the day and going about their business, occasionally stopping to feed the cows. Less number of people engaging in social and recreational activities. Tourists pass through the main square, taking pictures of the few vendors set up during this time.

Later in the morning, vendors set up in the square, selling mostly food items; grains, spices. Passing by is still a major activity taking place in the square, presumably people getting to work or finishing daily morning errands. Social and recreational activities now become a part of the picture. People are stopping to converse with each other, vendors are having a snack and reading the newspaper. Many choose a spot to wait for someone or a rickshaw. Rickshaw drivers eat pan and smoke as they wait for customers.

Gradually, as vendors start to pack up, people start to occupy the edges of the square with parking and shops start to open up. By afternoon, almost the entire square is filled with parking except a few vendors in the center; utensils, household items. Rickshaw drivers and passing people still manage to find a place to stop for sometime in the square.

In the evening, the street food vendors manoeuvre their way through the heavy traffic, finding a spot to keep their cart somewhere while they move the parked vehicles to make way for the cart to settle into their spot. The vendors from the afternoon start to pack up their carts as the center part of the square gets cleaned and workers from the street food market collectively set up tables, chairs and lights for the night.

By night time, all the street food vendors are ready with their hoardings up and carts cleaned and running as the customers already start pouring in. Earlier the market used to operate through the night but recently it is open until maximum 1 am. By 2 am, the square square is left absolutely empty, with remains of some waste leftover from the market.

Findings

It has been made very clear, the fact that Manek chowk, main square is exceptionally flexible in terms of space, activity, furniture, users and vending. But it also remains that in the afternoon, it is welcoming majorly to those passing by or particularly visiting the jewellery shops and blocks all other activities with the parking situation for a stretch of time.

4. The Inner Square and The Outer Square

Over a 100 years ago, Fredrick Olmsted gave the idea of 'inner park' and 'outer park' which is equally relevant today. According to this, the success of the inner square depends on a welcoming and active outer square. As an example, what if a square was surrounded by tall blank walls? It would be the most inconvenient situation as an 'outer square' for the public square. On the contrary, buildings that open into the square, activities spreading into the square are an example of a promising outer square. The outer square attracts activity to the inner square.

Activity demarcation:



A. Early Morning

Active and non-active areas:



B. Late morning and afternoon



C. Late night

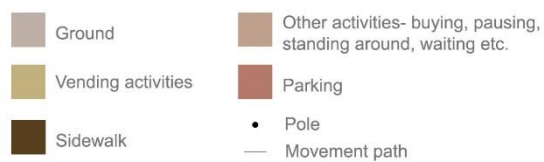


Figure 15

Observations

At Manek Chowk, main square, there is no physical demarcation of inner square or outer square. Even sidewalks are only present at the buildings in the east and south. A path for vehicle movement cuts through the square in the north south direction. This activity somewhat divides the square, which is further divided into three parts by a secondary path of movement.

In the early morning, activity in the square is scattered in these three parts while the shops remain closed so the 'outer square', including the sidewalks are inactive. During late morning hours and afternoon, when the shops are open, activity does somewhat continue onto the sidewalks and transitional space but is blocked from spreading into the 'inner square' by parking. A major area of the square is overtaken by the parking of vehicles, not welcoming to much activity except a few vendors. The square is most active at night when it transforms into a street food market. Activity spreads all the way to the edges, including sidewalks. While the square buzzes with activity, the shops are closed, except of a few on the east edge.

Findings

Even with no physical demarcation, the square is segmented by the path of movement cutting through it. People tend to use the edges of this path of movement the most, until night time when the square finally almost becomes one space. The concept of inner square, outer square talks about an active 'outer square' pulling activity into the 'inner square'. In the case of manek chowk, it is observed that the 'inner square' and 'outer square' are alternately active instead of one being dependant on other.

5. Reaching Out Like an Octopus

The effect of a good square, like an octopus's tentacles, reach out to atleast a block away. The way that streets and sidewalks adjacent to the square lead into it are just as important as the edge of the square. Pedestrian traffic increases and movement flows towards the square, vehicles slow down and the ground floor activity of surrounding buildings attracts pedestrians. Piazza Maggiore in Italy reaches into the surrounding neighbourhood.

A. Activity around the block during the day:



Diagram from: Report by WRI and EMBARQ, India

B. Activity around the block at late night:



Figure 16: Activity around the block

Activity around the block during the day:



A. Looking East on Manek Chowk road



B. Looking North on Danapith road



C. Looking West on Gandhi road



D. Looking East on Gandhi road

Figure 17

Observations

As the name itself suggests; 'Manek' meaning jewel and 'chowk' meaning square, Manek chowk, main square is occupied by jewellery shops. The entire Manek chowk area is known for its markets.

During the daytime, the teen darwaza market is filled with people; shopping from shops and vendors selling household items, clothes, the internal streets have hardware shops. Even Danapith road has commercial shops and lots of street vendors where clothes and accessories are sold. Manek Chowk road is also filled with street vendors and all the shops are open, selling spices, fruits, vegetables.

There is definitely an increase in pedestrian traffic and a slowing down of vehicular traffic. As most of the activity around the block is commercial and market related, the flow of movement is not necessarily towards the square. It may also be because each part is occupied by a particular type of shop, people move towards whatever they need. Moreover the square is not active with diverse activities during the day.

At night, late around 11-2 am, when the square is most lively and happening, the surrounding streets are completely empty and inactive. The only outreach from the square is for parking vehicles. Vehicles are parked nearby the square at Manek chowk road and Gandhi road. As the square during this time is filled with people, vendors, tables and chairs there is no place for parking.

Findings

As for reaching out, the active nature of the square is surely observed for atleast a block around it but it is difficult to assert that as an effect of the square, atleast during the day. At night, it is certain that presence of people and activity occurring within a block are an effect of the square and movement is directed towards it.

6. Attractions and Destinations

To appeal to a wider range of people, a successful square should have smaller 'places' within it. Not necessarily big attractions, but a number of small attractions like vending carts or playground which can pull people in throughout the day. PPS follows an idea called 'The Power of Ten', offering a full program where they create ten 'good places' with ten things to do.

Observations

Currently, Manek chowk does not have any fountain, sculptures or such. In 1940-70, when the square was an important social space, it had a fountain in the center. Otherwise, the market and square itself are attractions or destinations.

Different vendors at different times of the day are the attractions or destinations for the square. In the early morning when there are only a few vendors and not much is happening in the square, tourists passing by take pictures of the vendors and their carts.

Later in the morning when more vendors start to set up their shops and people are passing through the square, commuting to work, many people stop to look around at what is happening in the square. As perfectly said by William whyte, the presence of people does attract more people. Moreover, people wait for other people, look for rickshaws, rickshaws wait for customers, people stop to talk to other people pull over to fix a problem with their vehicle. All such activities occur because of the square itself and the presence of other people.

At night the attraction is the food market itself and the different cuisines offered, from snacks to meals to dessert, all at one stop.

Findings

Not present in 10s but the ones; people, the square itself, vendors, night market, currently attract much public to the square and do cater to different types of users.

7. Amenities

Seating, trashcans, lighting, public art are a few amenities, when provided can make the users more comfortable. Lighting can be used to highlight other important activities and features like pathways. Either temporary or permanent, good amenities provide a friendly setting for gathering and interaction.

Observations

Within the square, as mentioned earlier, sidewalks are only provided around the east and south buildings. Particularly for this square, as parking is the main 'activity' happening in the afternoon, there is no marking for proper parking on the road. Other than that, there is no seating arrangement for people passing by or otherwise. People end up sitting on random vehicles parked in the square.

At night, for the food market, the seating and tables are set up by the vendors. Water is brought in and the waste is individually collected. Although there are larger waste collection areas on both Gandhi road and Manek Chowk road. Moreover, even the light is borrowed from the line and hung up at the time of setting up the lahris.

Findings

Like mentioned earlier, amenities during the day seem to be minimal and at night all amenities are observed but set up by the vendors themselves.

8. Seasonal Strategy

To adapt with the changing seasons, the square will need more than a single design or management strategy. For example, the plaza at the Rockefeller Center is an ice-skating rink which is used otherwise in the summer. Vending areas are covered with tarpaulin for the winter and such.

Observations

As the research and observations are limited and rely on only a time-lapse video which was posted in January of 2017, it seems there is not much taken care of space and comfort wise for winter.

Based on an article *Foodies, Manek Chowk is closed for five days* by Ahmedabad Mirror, from January 2020, water-logging is an issue at Manek Chowk. As stated by them, this is the first time Manek Chowk would be closed for 5 consecutive days; for road resurfacing, after the 2002 riots.

Other than this, based on a different documentation of the square, nearing monsoon in early July, the vendors continue to set up using tarpaulins and umbrellas.



Figure 18: Seasonal adaptation at Manek Chowk, main square



Figure 19: Seasonal adaptation around Manek Chowk

Findings

Changes required in accordance with seasons are adapted but within the same routine activity, different activities are not observed due to the change in season.

9. The Central Role of Management

Keeping the square safe and lively is an understood responsibility of the management. The management must understand the existing and potential users, they must be so familiar with the pattern of people's activity in the space that the waste receptacles are emptied at the most efficient time and vending carts are there when the users most want them. An order of activities but controlled by user activity.

Observations

The square does not seem to have a management of its own. The AMC takes care of the cleaning and waste management for the square. The vendors are licensed and follow hygiene standards also looked over by the AMC.

Throughout the day, vendors of a variety of products/items set up and pack up from their understood spots in the square. During the transition from parking to food market, the vendors take up the responsibility to move vehicles out of the way to bring their carts in place, put up the lights and set up the tables and chairs, which are stored on site.

10. Diverse Funding Sources

Most squares in the United States have established partnerships to go a step further than average city spaces or public works department. The partnerships help with exploring what the city can contribute in funding from diverse sources like markets, commercial use on site, film shoots, fundraisers and many such things.

Observations

The square is mainly taken care of by the AMC. Moreover, other organizations of heritage conservation and recognition also play an important role around the area. It has not established private partnerships for funding purposes.

Conclusion

Overall, Manek Chowk, main square is active and filled with people throughout the day and until late night. When skimming, it may seem as though it is a successful square but when analysed using the principles derived by PPS, the outcome slightly differs.

Broadly addressing, the principles for a successful square can be similar in varying contexts, as when the principles are examined in Manek Chowk, most of them seem to be unaddressed due to which it can be said that a square can be active but not necessarily successful.

In the case of Manek Chowk, the square has a lot of potential when examined under the principles but that potential is not being fully utilized and materialized into a 'successful public square'. The case is such that the square is equipped with all the necessary tools to be a socially successful public square but they haven't been integrated and blended with each other to observe full capacity of the tools when put into use.

Addressing the hypothesis, Manek Chowk being a successful square is not incorrect but using these principles, the qualities of the chowk can certainly be enhanced. For example, the chowk entertains a wide range of users and types of vehicles due to which it becomes chaotic during a certain time. One of the main function of a square, attracting people and encouraging a variety of activities and users, is observed but it seems slightly unorganized. Maybe adding a few points particularly relevant to this setting would help with such situations.

Table of Figures

FIGURE 1: ACCESS AT WALLED CITY-SCALE.....	17
FIGURE 2: ACCESS, ADJACENT ROADS	18
FIGURE 3: NOTABLE BUILDINGS AROUND MANEK CHOWK	21
FIGURE 4: NOTABLE ACTIVITIES IN AND AROUND MANEK CHOWK, MAIN SQUARE	21
FIGURE 5	24
FIGURE 6	24
FIGURE 7	25
FIGURE 8	25
FIGURE 9	26
FIGURE 10	26
FIGURE 11: ACTIVITIES IN THE EARLY MORNING	27
FIGURE 12: ACTIVITIES IN THE LATE MORNING AND AFTERNOON	28
FIGURE 13: ACTIVITIES IN THE EVENING	29
FIGURE 14: ACTIVITIES AT NIGHT	30
FIGURE 15	33
FIGURE 16: ACTIVITY AROUND THE BLOCK	36
FIGURE 17	36
FIGURE 18: SEASONAL ADAPTATION AT MANEK CHOWK, MAIN SQUARE	43
FIGURE 19: SEASONAL ADAPTATION AROUND MANEK CHOWK	43

Figure Credit

Figure 1: Base drawing- Agnihotri, R. (2014). Organizing Chaos: Manek Chowk Initiative. *Masters Thesis- Savannah College of Art and Design*, 74.

Figure 3: Base drawing- Agnihotri, R. (2014). Organizing Chaos: Manek Chowk Initiative. *Masters Thesis- Savannah College of Art and Design*, 74.

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Figure 4: At Manek Chowk, main square- Screenshot from- Kannaujiya, A. (Director). (2012). *A Day at Manek Chowk* [Youtube video].

Market streets around Manek Chowk, main square- Photographer: Yesha Jadav (IAPNU batch 2015)

Figure 11-14: Base image screenshot from- Kapasi, K., Shah, N., Likhari, V., Patel, S., Chaudhari, S., & Shah, P. (Directors). (2017). *Timelapse Of Manekchowk* [Youtube video].

Figure 16A: Das, H., K, S., Mungekar, N., & Mathew, M. (2016). *Re-Imagining Manek Chowk Precinct*. Ahmedabad: WRI India, EMBARQ India.

Figure 17: Base images, Photographer: Yesha Jadav (IAPNU batch 2015)

Figure 18: Screenshot from- Kannaujiya, A. (Director). (2012). *A Day at Manek Chowk* [Youtube video].

Figure 19: Photographer: Yesha Jadav (IAPNU batch 2015)

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