PORTUGUESE ARCHITECTURE IN INDIA – THE ARCHITECTURAL SCENARIO OF MANAPAD, AN INDIAN COASTAL VILLAGE

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ABSTRACT

Architecture is originated from culture and it affects and reflects the culture of that society. Culture is originated from human interaction and it is a main element of social and individual's identity. Culture is not a constant. It keeps changing and also accommodates changes. People tend to have changes in their culture, due to the influence from neighboring cultures or from any other parameters. It hence accepts changes so as to satisfy the current need of people. Indo – Portuguese architecture which is a fusion of both Indian and Portuguese architecture is a good example, in which a fusion of both Indian and Portuguese culture could be seen. The Portuguese have left their impression in the attitude, life styles and in their architecture, thus creating a unique identity of its own. Even though they have imbibed some elements of Portuguese culture, they have maintained many existing elements of their own rich culture which is the reason for its survival till today. This paper aims to illustrate the Indo – Portuguese cultural expressions in architecture by analyzing the architectural elements and details at all levels, from settlement to individual built form and till the element level. For the purpose, a case study of Manapad, located in the coastal stretch of Tuticorin, South India, which has a unique sustainable and cultural significance is studied.

KEYWORDS: Culture, Climate, Tradition, Vernacular Architecture

Architecture is a visual representation of a society. It is a reflection of values. The way we build is a reflection of the way we live. The way we live is in turn a reflection of culture. (Norman, 2014). Amos Rapoport says "Culture is a whole way of life". It is a complex of beliefs, traditions, religious or social group and various races (Paul, 1967). It is therefore understood as involving more than the values and needs of people but the entire way of life (Wilham, 1941). Thus by looking at the built form, one will be able to understand the culture of that society. Vernacular architecture is built by the locals and reflects the needs, function, their culture, geographical location, historical context etc. (Engin, 2007). Hence it can be said that architecture is not just a result of physical forces or any single casual factor but is the result of a various socio-cultural factors and therefore, reflects human thoughts right from settlement level planning to the individual elements employed in the built form and is well adapted to the dominant climate of that region (Sharma, 2013). In some places, the cultural and social setup overshadows the climate oriented features. In these cases, the architectural features are designed to reflect their culture and traditions rather than be climate responsive (Singh, 2009). Different architectural solutions, exist across a region experiencing the same climate and at the same time, similar articulation and treatment of elements and spaces is done across totally different and distant geographical location with the aim of attaining same character or nature. (Helena, 1998). This is because when people migrated from one place to another, they also carried their style of house form, because they considered their house form as a symbol of their culture (Amos). In certain cases their architectural styles got adapted while in certain cases they accommodated changes so as to adapt themselves to that place. Thus culture is something that accommodates changes but the changes happen very slowly and are not changed overnight (Stephen, 1994). Culture is a living things and it keeps growing. (Dallas, 1959). Vernacular architecture thus has maximum adaptability, flexibility and is also dynamic This is one reason why vernacular architecture can exist for a longer period than the modern architecture. (Amos, 1998).

INDO PORTUGUESE ARCHITECTURE

Arrival of Portuguese in India

The Portuguese arrived as merchants in 1498 and later colonized many parts of India like Cochin, Daman, Goa, Pulicat, Tuticorin etc., and ruled for a period of about 400 years. Vasco da Gama was the first Portuguese ruler to come to Cochin, India for trade purpose. Later their focus shifted from trading to colonizing the place. Their ultimate aim was not in gaining powers in India but rather in spreading the Catholic missionary. They built many churches, basilicas and seminaries.

Influence and Impact of Portuguese Culture in India

The main aim of the Portuguese was to spread Christianity and for this reason they colonized places and the inmates were forced to follow Christian methods.

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They were strictly abandoned from following any hindu ritual. Initially the Portuguese did not interfere in the religious matters but looked upon certain traditions like sati etc. and tried to abolish them. Later on certain missionaries visited India and they helped the Portuguese to convert the Indians to Christians. As years passed by the viceroys started demolishing many temples etc. and were forced to follow Christianity. Many people left the place because of such reasons while certain people adhered to their rules and stayed back. Many churches were constructed during this period and Christianity started gaining popularity as the converts were satisfied with their needs and were offered with gifts as incentives. Intermarriages between the Portuguese and Indians, were also encouraged. Acculturation thus started to spread among the natives creating a unique and distinct culture. Their language, dressing, food, lifestyle etc. is all completely different from that of the other native Indians and also Portuguese people. This new culture led to the creation of a new style of architecture called as Indo – Portuguese architecture.

Nature of Indo Portuguese Architecture

Indo Portuguese architecture is a result of the amalgamation between the traditional Portuguese architecture and native Indian architecture. Portuguese settlements in India falls under three main categories: the factory, the fort and the city. Based on the type of settlements the settlement pattern also differed. For example, a factory type of settlement is usually situated at the mouth of a river or near the sea shores consisting of numerous warehouses and markets, to boost commerce. The houses are present in the highland and a single main road connects the residential spaces with the commercial spaces. While a fort settlement will have a fort in the center and will be surrounded by numerous houses. Indo-Portuguese architecture adapted well to Indian climate having high wooden ceilings with sloped roofs, large openings, balcoes etc. It is a perfect example of a cross cultural architecture. Indian people are usually introverted in their lifestyle which is in contrary to the Portuguese people. This nature has been well adapted in Indo- Portuguese houses by having lots of openings facing the street but being covered partially using wooden screens. Such nature of adapting and blending both the culture has led to the creation of a very unique and distinct architecture which is sustainable till date

INDO PORTUGUESE ARCHITECTURE IN MANAPAD

Area of Study

Manapad is about 58kms south of Tuticorin, a famous port town in South India. The coastal stretch of Manapad extends to about 3145m, and has a total area of 260 acres. It is a Christian populated area with a total population of about 6000 inhabitants. It is close to Tiruchendur, one of the famous Hindu religious towns in South India and Kayalpatnam or Korkai, a Muslim town and an ancient silk route port.
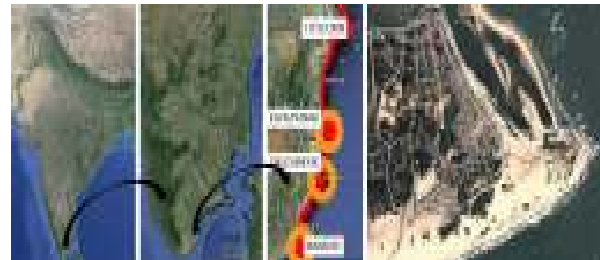

Figure 1: Map showing the location of Manapad

Manapad is a coastal village and hence developed based on their occupation, which is fishing and pearl culture. This then expanded further to foreign trades and foreign cultures came into existence. It has a very unique culture, because of the Portuguese invasion during the 14th century and trade links with Ceylon (present Sri Lanka). The village remained intact until 1540's and later on Indo-Portuguese style of Architecture came into existence. This unique culture is revealed in their architecture. The connection with Ceylon through trade is reflected by the style of architecture, spatial organisation and the material that they employ. Their dwellings reflect occupant's activities in their lives while adapting to the warm and humid climate.

Socio Cultural Nature of Manapad

Manapad has a distinct culture as it has gone through many changes in its religion, occupation etc. It has a cultural mix of India, Portugal and that of Ceylon. They adopted European outlook but did not cut themselves completely from the cultural roots of India. This resulted in a cultural mix which can be seen even through their external appearances like dressing style, food, their language (Tamil accent) etc.

Religious Beliefs and Practices

The village is a Christian dominated city. There are three churches within the village, The HOLY GHOST CHURCH and St. JAMES CHURCH and two

other shrines HOLY CROSS CHURCH and St. XAVIERS CAVE, which are frequently visited by tourists from around the country. The people of Manapad are generally religious and give it their first priority than others. The village has two parishes due to the community differences. This created a division among the populace with respect to the church they were entitled to. There are also Grottos at the intersection of every street, which is built and maintained by the people belonging to that street. Prayers are performed at the dawn of every day and are conducted by women. At night this space is converted into a place of social gathering for chit chats etc. In addition to this, there is also a worship place in every house, irrespective of the differences in the community. Only the scale of the space, whether a separate room is allotted or a space within a room differs. There is also a separate worshiping place within the house. This shows their closeness in their religion. The people also celebrate various church feasts throughout the year. Marriage and other rituals takes place according to the Indo-Portuguese custom.

Social Background, Custom, Lifestyle and Family Structure

Stratification based on both socio-economic classification and community/ caste, can be seen dominantly in the village. The village has a Ceylon-Portuguese cluster, Nadar cluster and Paravas cluster. Each of these clusters have a different culture which is reflected in their architecture too. The different churches built by disparate super ordinates, also dissolved the society furthermore. Different lifestyle and family structure have been adopted by this village, even though there's commonality in religion and the predominant occupation being fishing. For eg. Fishermen community people live in close clusters near the sea. These clusters comprises of the people belonging to the same family. Their common workplaces like auction yards, fishing net stitching sheds etc. are all situated opposite to their dwelling spaces and near to the sea. The spaces in between the clusters and the surrounding open spaces are vibrant and used for multi activities like social gathering spaces, play areas etc. They had a close bonding between the people of their community and the spaces related to their occupation. Whereas the traders who belong to the upper class, lived in the highland, and were compounded individually and were completely secluded from each other. They liked to live in close connection with nature and the surrounding environment, by bringing in semi-open and open spaces, but liked to conceal them from their neighbours. They lived a more sophisticated life

when compared to the other community people. They also liked to show off this nature whenever and wherver possible.

SETTLEMENT, STREETS AND RELATED ASPECTS

Settlement Pattern

Figure 3: Maps showing the growth of the village

The first settlement grew in an organic way along the coastal line, where fishing was the primary occupation. The second settlement grew in clusters, where their occupation supported fishing activities like boat building, basket weaving etc. The third settlement was planned in a proper grid pattern, with the churches on one side and with the backwaters on the other side. This settlement was occupied by the high class people. This area is situated at an elevated land and hence facilitated good views too.

Street Pattern

Figure 4: Map showing the hierarchy of road networks

There are four types of roads. The main streets are the traditional streets which facilitated chariot movement during church festivals and hence were wide. The next category of roads marks the boundary of the place and are now used for vehicular usage. The third category of roads are slightly lesser in width and connects the clusters with the primary or main streets. The final category of roads are lanes, which are very small and facilitates internal movement within the cluster.

Special Features in Street

All the street intersections have a small shrine / grotto, which is built and maintained by the residents of that street itself. This kind of grotto can be seen in all the streets, irrespective of the type of clusters, which is another unique character of Manapad. This character is

said to be influenced from the neighbouring settlement in that area. Areas like Tiruchendur, Kulashekarapatanam etc. usually have Hindu shrines at every street intersection. This character has been adopted, altered as per their religion and is being followed till the present day.
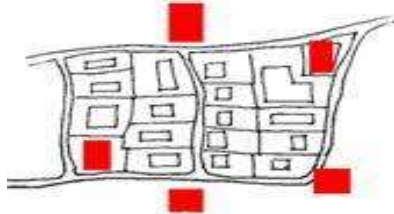

Figure 4: Map showing the location of grotto at every street intersection

House Form

The houses in Manapad are all more than 100 years old. The architectural style of the houses are of Ceylon-Portuguese style. It has an extroverted planning with lots of open and semi-open spaces like Balcoes, verandas, and Balconies etc. which faces the street and sea. Balcoes are nothing but covered porches which are commonly found in the facades of traditional Portuguese houses. The balcoes were the places where men and women could sit together and chat with neighbours or just enjoy the evening breeze. The façade of most houses are symmetrical with tripartite divisions.
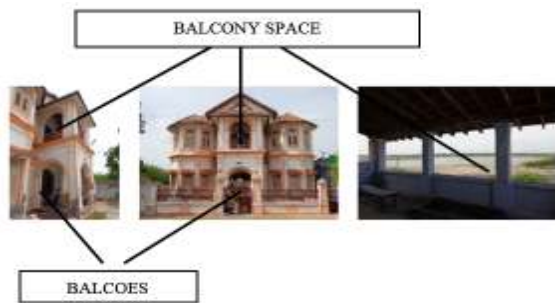

Figure 5: Balcony and Balcoes spaces

Large ornamental arched windows with stucco mouldings were present in the houses. These mouldings and other ornate elements and details belonged to the Portuguese architecture. Railings were the most intricate element in the house. Almost all houses have a false ceiling of wood.
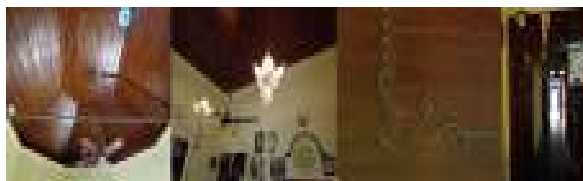

Figure 6: Ornamentations in false ceiling and doors

A very peculiar feature that is found in almost all the houses belonging to the Ceylon cluster, is the presence of a window between the Master bedroom and the guest bedroom, which is a direct reflection of Portuguese culture, but these windows are now covered or left closed which is a reflection of Indian culture. Thus the house as a whole is a result of the fusion of all three cultures.

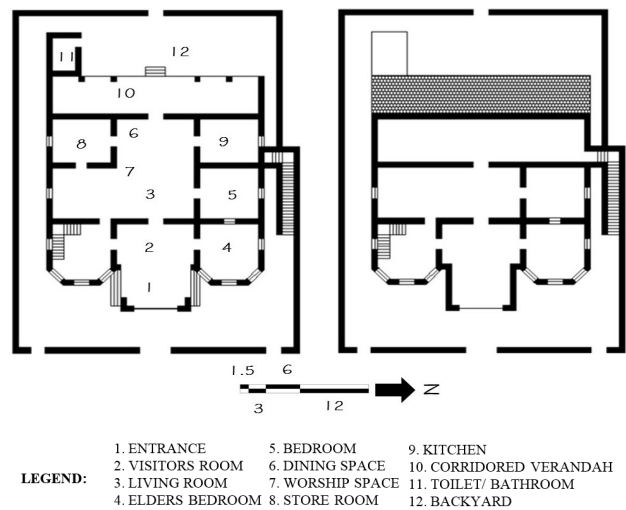**Figure 7: Window between master bedroom and guest bedroom**

LEGEND:
1. ENTRANCE   5. BEDROOM   9. KITCHEN
2. VISITORS ROOM 6. DINING SPACE   10. CORRIDORED VERANDAH
3. LIVING ROOM   7. WORSHIP SPACE   11. TOILET/ BATHROOM
4. ELDERS BEDROOM 8. STORE ROOM   12. BACKYARD

Figure 8A: Ground floor plan   Figure 8B: First floor plan

CONCLUSION

It is evident that the architecture of Manapad, displays the fusion of both Indian and Portuguese culture. The Portuguese have left their impression in the attitude, life styles of native people but were not able to completely erase of the native culture. Thus there existed an acculturation which led to the formation of Indo-Portuguese architecture. The architecture of Manapad, reflects its unique culture right from the settlement level to an individual built form level. Hence we can conclude that the architecture of Manapad, not only helps in

sustaining its culture, but also displays its unique and distinct culture to people and acts as an identity to their culture.

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