
SECTION II

PUBLIC SPACE IN BANGALORE: PRESENT AND FUTURE PROJECTIONS

This section provides a brief introduction of the growth of Bangalore from a fort city to a large metropolis. This section studies public space in Bangalore since the colonial period. It describes the origin of many of Bangalore's public spaces and traces their history to the present times. It also describes the issues and problems facing public space today and draws conclusions regarding ways to address them. Chapter 5 outlines the history of the city from 1537 AD to the present, with emphasis on the development of the city. The intention of this chapter is to understand how Bangalore evolved and the issues that were created by urbanization as it applies to public space. Chapter 6 discusses the different public space types that developed in the Indian city and the colonial city until independence in 1947. Emphasis is laid on the two urban form types that characterised the two cities of Bangalore and the consequent public spaces they generated. Chapter 7 deals with public space after independence. The various public space types are identified and discussed in detail. Emphasis has been given to the history and present use of these spaces. This chapter establishes the primacy of the street as an important public space in Bangalore. Chapter 8 explores the various struggles and problems taking place in Bangalore's public spaces. It especially describes the language movement in the city and the lack of imageability of Bangalore. This chapter establishes the connection between these issues and the contest for public space and the absence of a clear city centre. Chapter 9 describes the evolution of M.G. Road as Bangalore's de-facto city centre. It studies M.G. Road in detail and how it is used today. It also outlines the future issues facing M.G. Road. Chapter 10 makes the argument that Bangalore today is faced by three main problems – the congestion of M.G. Road (Bangalore's evolving city centre), the lack of an imageable city centre and the contest for public space and its privatisation. The chapter suggests a solution to the above issues by way of a central public space, which will address the various issues and become a binder physically and socially while portraying a coherent city centre image.

CHAPTER 5: BANGALORE: MUD FORT TO SPRAWLING METROPOLIS

Today Bangalore is India's fifth largest city and one of the fastest growing. It has a population of around 5 million and is a true cosmopolitan city. However it had modest beginnings and the origin of "Bengalooru" is lost in history. Though several artefacts have been found dating back to 900 AD and even earlier Bangalore in its present context was founded when a mud fort was built at "Bengalooru". Kempe Gowda I, a feudatory of the Vijayanagara Empire, built it in 1537 AD and made it his capital.

5.1. KEMPEGOWDA TO TIPU SULTAN (1537 AD TO 1791 AD)

The fort built by Kempe Gowda I was of modest dimensions with mud as the main building material¹. Within the fort the town was divided into *petes* or localities such as Chickpete, Dodpete, Balepete, Cottonpete and other areas earmarked for different trades and artisans. The town had two main streets, Chickpete Street ran east to west and Dodpete Street ran north to south, their intersection forming Dodpete Square, the heart of Bangalore. Kempe Gowda I encouraged the construction of temples and lakes and planned residential layouts, or *agraharams*, around each temple². The construction of the mud fort and several temples and lakes transformed Bangalore from a sleepy village to a centre of culture based on the Hindu religion³. Kempe Gowda II was an able successor to his father under whom Bangalore developed in the tradition of the Vijayanagara cities, a mosaic of bazaars, temple complexes and *agraharams*. He also built the four famous towers that marked Bangalore's boundary. Kempe Gowda II suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Bijapur armies led by Shaji in 1638 AD who made Bangalore a centre of Maratha culture⁴. Bangalore, though, soon fell to the Mughal army under Khasim Khan in 1687 AD, who leased the city and the surrounding areas to Chikkadeva Raya Wodeyar in 1690 AD. Chikkadeva Raya Wodeyar (1673 AD- 1704 AD) built an oval shaped fort south of the old mud fort. After the death of the Wodeyar in 1704 AD, Hyder Ali usurped the throne and ruled Mysore with his son Tipu Sultan until the British defeated him in 1790 AD. Hyder Ali got the oval fort in the south rebuilt in stone⁵. The palace started by Hyder Ali was built within this fort and was completed by Tipu. The town was about 5 kilometres in circumference, with the fort at the south end, with well planned streets and prosperous shops indicating a flourishing economy⁶. A big market stretched from the north gate of the town to the oval fort, a predecessor of today's Avenue Road. Hyder and Tipu also contributed towards the beautification of the city by building Lalbag Garden in 1760 AD. Under them Bangalore developed into a commercial and military centre of strategic importance.

5.2. COLONIAL PERIOD (1791 AD to 1947 AD)

The British found Bangalore to be a pleasant and appropriate place to station their garrison and thus a cantonment was built. It was separated by an 11.5-kilometer wide strip of open land, from the 'native town' or *pete*. Maya Jayapal explaining the origin of the word cantonment says,

*"The origin of the word 'Cantonment' is from the French canton, meaning corner or district. It has become, through usage, an Anglo-Indian word and is applied to military stations in India, built usually on a plan, which was originally that of a standing camp or cantonment. Each cantonment is essentially a well defined and clearly demarcated unit of territory set apart for the quartering and administering of troops"*⁷.

Cantonments were built by the British primarily for security and health. With the defeat of Tipu Sultan the British became the foremost power in south India. Bangalore ceased to be a strategic citadel in the medieval sense, instead becoming a British cantonment. Bangalore fort slowly passed into oblivion, the fort walls coming down in stages to make way for the expanding city. The Parade Ground, surrounded by a ride or mall called Rotten Row, was more or less the heart of Bangalore Cantonment⁸. Around this grew the Civil & Military Station (CMS). A civilian population of lower economic strata, attracted by the opportunities for employment and trade and offering subsidiary services to the military personnel, settled in a high density and congested, unhealthy locality. This is due to lack of concern shown by the British towards them. This area evolved into a general bazaar called Blackpally, which is today's Shivajinagar area. According to Prof. M.N. Srinivas some parts looked like a small Tamil town like Vellore, with houses having Tamil style verandas facing the street. These verandas were important spaces to socialise and also to segregate the private areas of the house from the outside. There were also slums on the outskirts of the colonial city like Pottery Town⁹. According to P.D. Mahadev the colonial city unintentionally helped decongest the old native city and also provided much needed 'lung space'¹⁰. Several developments, led to the rapid growth of the city. The most important of these being the telegraph connections introduced to and from Bangalore to all the important cities of India in 1853 AD and the rail connection to Madras in 1864 AD. Hence with city walls gone and unprecedented growth of the city it began to sprawl into the countryside unchecked. By 1881 AD, Bangalore had two nuclei: one a high-density area around the fort and its market (K.R. Market area) in *pete* and the second Blackpally (Russel Market area) within the colonial city. Both of these comprised the inner city of Bangalore with Cubbon Park acting as a large green buffer. Several suburbs were built at the turn of the century. By 1931 AD the CMS's population was 134,113 and that of Bangalore was 308,000.

5.3. POST INDEPENDENCE (1947 AD to Present)

In 1947 India gained independence and the Indian and colonial cities were merged in 1949. Bangalore has since remained the capital of Karnataka state. Bangalore continued to grow and several public sector industries were set up from 1940 -1970 transforming it into a science and technology centre. By 1961, Bangalore had become the 6th largest city in India with a population of 1,207,000. Between 1971-1981, Bangalore's growth rate was 76%, the fastest in Asia. By 1988 the Electronic City had been developed and Bangalore emerged as India's software capital. Consequently the 1990's saw a construction boom fuelled by Bangalore's growing reputation as "India's silicon valley", which saw many young professionals migrate to the city.

5.4. CONCLUSION

Bangalore continues to grow at a rapid pace and today the city has expanded into a large metropolis, an international technology hub specializing in aerospace, information technology and biotechnology. Today Bangalore's population stands at roughly 5 million. Though Bangalore grew in all directions, pressure has been particularly intense on the inner city, which continues to grow with two nuclei, though over the years this distinction has blurred. One is the very high-density area around the city railway station and K.R. Market and the other being the M.G. Road and Russel Market areas. The stress in these areas is still intense, especially on public spaces such as streets, as the outward growth of Bangalore continues. As early as the 1970's Rao & Tewari suggested that Bangalore should integrate various areas and elements of the city with the street and land-use structure, and develop a cellular and hierarchic city structure¹¹. Even today Bangalore comes across as an unstructured city without any hierarchy. Attempts have been made to introduce ring roads and radial roads to give structure. In addition, attempts to decongest core areas have been partly successful with new satellite commercial centres developing in the better-planned suburbs such as Jayanagar.

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CHAPTER 6: PUBLIC SPACE: COLONIAL PERIOD

This chapter examines the evolution of public space during the colonial period. The evolution of the colonial city into the Central Business District (CBD) of Bangalore and the role of M.G. Road as the primary public space are discussed in detail. This chapter draws conclusions regarding the urban form and the types of public spaces that developed during the colonial era.

Bangalore in the 19th century was a twin city comprising the *pete*, or Indian city, and the cantonment, or the colonial city. Both followed their own traditions of urban form and thus evolved different sets of public spaces. However, each presented a highly imageable urban structure: the Indian city continued the medieval tradition of high-density, mixed-use neighbourhoods with temple squares and markets forming nodes and open spaces in the otherwise close-knit urban fabric; the British on the other hand adopted the cantonment type urban form, which was the antithesis of the Indian city. In contrast with the narrow meandering streets of the *pete*, the cantonment developed with wide tree-lined avenues and spacious bungalows. The mall, parade ground and park were some of the public spaces that were developed in the colonial city.

By 1812 AD the colonial city developed as a low density “Garden City”, with a parade ground, clubs, churches, bungalows, shops, markets, cinemas, and parks and other open spaces interspersed by water bodies. The colonial city had a strong European character, with public life and thus public space centred on and around South Parade. South Parade, today’s M.G. Road, and the area around it became a fashionable mall with bars and restaurants and all sorts of shops catering to European tastes with Blackpally catering as a bazaar for everyday needs¹. A bridle path also existed around Parade Ground, which was a popular place to promenade. Cubbon Park, which was developed in 1864 AD on about 120 hectares of land, was a popular public space for people from both the *pete* and the cantonment². Besides Cubbon Park several smaller parks were developed in the colonial city, which were popular community spaces. Also an amusement park called ‘Hollywood City’ was set up on Police Parade grounds during the Second World War and a skating rink owned by a Jewish family existed at the corner of Cubbon road and Curzon road³. The streets in the cantonment were important public spaces and were straight and wide and were designed for vehicular traffic, but of a different kind from today’s motorised traffic. The streets had slow moving traffic with plenty of space for pedestrians and bicyclists. Cars were introduced in Bangalore in the beginning of the 20th century. The car, scooter and motorcycle slowly replaced the carriage and bicycle as the preferred mode of transport from the 1960’s onwards and the quality of the streets rapidly deteriorated.

The Indian city had a clear edge, which differentiated the high-density city from the countryside and hence was clearly legible. The streets were carved out of the mass of buildings and hence were “elemental streets”, as identified by William C. Ellis. In other words the street had felt volume and became an outdoor room with the facades of the buildings belonging to the street rather than the buildings. Therefore the streets had a very strong character and were highly imageable. They were channels of communication and interaction, which held the city together. Where two streets intersected they opened up to form temple squares or market squares and these acted as nodes. They were important punctuation points in the rhythm of the street and were highly imageable spaces. Hence going by Kevin Lynch’s theory of imageability the Indian city had a strong *edge* differentiating it from the country side, had *paths* in the form of streets as external rooms, which opened up into squares as *nodes* with a *landmark* overlooking it like a temple or a market. The city itself was divided into *districts* based on trade and caste each having a unique character. Therefore one can conclude that the Indian city was a highly imageable entity.

The colonial city was developed on the “tower in space” model of urban development. But in spite of this it had a strong image. Firstly South Parade, which was the centre of the colonial city, had a very strong character of low-rise commercial buildings facing a parade ground with a bridle path around it. This

formed a highly imageable city centre. Around this grew residential neighbourhoods and the cantonment proper, which had a strong colonial character and were divided based on class. Hence they can be called *districts* based on Lynch's theory. The whole city was interspersed by parks and lakes, which formed *nodes* throughout the city. Cubbon Park, which separated the Indian city from the colonial city, formed a major *edge*. Finally the juxtaposition of the high-density compact Indian city and the low-density sprawl of the colonial city made them highly imageable due to the contrast between them.

The only feature that tied the two cities was the 'Garden City' image, which was pursued in the colonial city and the suburbs of the Indian city. Bangalore's 'Garden City' image originated with the development of Lalbag Garden. In 1908 Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV appointed Mr. Krumbiegel as the Government Horticulturist. During the period 1908 to 1932, he not only developed Lalbag Garden but also beautified the entire city. He planted several avenue-trees along streets and promoted the idea of "serial blooming". Dr. Mari Gowda who succeeded him continued his good work⁴. Bangalore's parks and lakes along with the spacious bungalows all combined to enhance its image as a 'Garden City'. Bangalore continues to be called a garden city although few parks and lakes have been added to the city in recent years and high-rise buildings have replaced many bungalows. A concerted effort is underway to improve the existing open spaces and enhance Bangalore's 'Garden City' image.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion the Indian city developed like other traditional south Indian cities with *agraharams*, narrow meandering streets and temple and market squares. The streets and squares formed 'outdoor rooms' where people performed their daily chores. The city was mainly a pedestrian precinct. The public spaces that evolved were bazaar streets, temple squares, lakes and *maidans* (open grounds). These spaces responded to the type of urban fabric and were thus intimate in scale responding to the needs of a pedestrian. Public space was closely connected with religion and thus temple and mosque squares were important. Also the Karaga festival, which was an annual procession, used the *pete's* streets as a stage. *Maidans* were important recreation spaces for children to play and for the elderly to walk and socialise. These public space types will be discussed in detail in the following chapter. Lalbag Garden, which was initially developed as a resort for the rulers, became a very popular public park. It wasn't until the reign of the Wodeyars (19th century) that public gardens were developed in the suburbs adjoining the traditional city. The newer suburbs that were developed like Basavangudi were influenced by western planning ideas and had wider roads with large plots for bungalows and several parks and gardens. These suburbs were sprawled out in comparison to the *pete*, and thus people who could afford to commute by carriage or *jutka* lived there. The streets were in a gridiron pattern and were designed to cater to heavier traffic.

During the colonial period the pattern of development moved away from the traditional form and introduced a cantonment form of development. The city that developed thus had wide roads with buildings set back from the sidewalk within large compounds. The mall, parade ground and the park were the preferred types of public spaces. The British tried to create 'a bit of England in India' in Bangalore. People were expected to commute by carriages or bicycles hence the streets that were developed were wide and the cantonment in general was sprawled over a large area. The street being the primary public space developed as a boulevard with wide pedestrian space to stroll and window shop. Ample tree canopy provided shade from the summer sun. South Parade or M.G. Road developed as the centre of the colonial city and continues to evolve today as the centre of Bangalore. Prof. M.N. Srinivas feels that the British could have planned a "fine city" but chose to ignore the civilian areas growing around the cantonment, which led to haphazard development with narrow windy roads⁵.

As a result Bangalore has evolved into a bi-nuclear city – with *pete* and cantonment areas as its two cores. After independence the city was merged into one entity and grew rapidly tending towards a compact circular shape. Though the city is more unified than before the bi-nuclear nature of the city remains to date. M.G. Road area lying roughly at the centre of the two cores has evolved as the CBD and the de-facto centre of Bangalore. Bangalore's evolution was rapid, from a colonial outpost to administrative/commercial city, and from a science/education city to InfoTech and services centre. With Bangalore's rapid growth came related problems, which led to the city bursting at its seams and the infrastructure buckling under pressure. In a continuing bid to slow down Bangalore's growth and divert some of the development pressure to other cities, satellite townships were developed and it was proposed that counter magnets to the city be encouraged. Besides pressure on infrastructure and congestion in the city there was a gradual loss of public space due to developmental pressures. Lakes were covered for development, parks were encroached upon and insufficient open spaces were allocated in the new illegal developments in fringe areas. Growth of the city has changed the demography and hence the new users have different needs, which will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

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CHAPTER 7: PUBLIC SPACE: POST INDEPENDENCE

This chapter examines the evolution of public space after independence and the current status of these public spaces. It examines the various public space types that are being used today and draws conclusions for future trends in use and development of public spaces.

7.1. STRUCTURE OF THE CITY

After independence the two cities were merged and both types of public spaces, traditional and colonial, became familiar to the citizens. Traditional families continued to prefer the *pete* area, which supported their life style, while the more westernised citizens found the cantonment area to be more to their liking. In spite of the differences between the public spaces of the two cities one can draw parallels between them – for example the parade ground was similar to the *maidan*, spatially at least. Like wise the bazaar street was similar to the mall in function, if not spatially. The two old nuclei though, did not merge because of Cubbon Park and the Administrative Complex, which separated them. Hence even today Bangalore can be called a bi-nuclear city, although this distinction is becoming blurred. Rao & Tewari felt that Bangalore's bi-nuclear character was an advantage and should be maintained without letting them fuse, with Cubbon Park acting as a green buffer¹.

After independence most foreigners owning property and living in the colonial city left Bangalore either with or after the British troops left India. Many Anglo-Indians also migrated to England or Australia because they felt insecure after the departure of the British. The density in the Cantonment area though, continued to rise after independence, in spite of the presence of large public open spaces, the racecourse, golf club, and spacious grounds attached to clubs, colleges, schools and other institutions. Even until the 1960's Bangalore retained its "Garden City" image (see appendix) as a result of which it became popular with retired people and others who wanted a quiet and green city to live in. Many people who wanted to escape from the hustle and bustle of other metropolitan cities decided to settle down here. In the 1970's land allocated for recreation was 8% of the city land. It was the highest among metropolitan cities of India. According to Fazlul Hasan, Bangalore's reputation as a 'Garden City' began with the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of the rule of His Highness late Krishna Raja Wodeyar IV in 1927². The years that followed saw several works aimed at beautifying Bangalore. Parks, public buildings and hospitals were built. It seems that this romantic image of Bangalore faded quickly and as early as the 1970's Hasan laments that the rapid industrialization and increase in population had damaged the beauty of the city, with slums proliferating in many areas². Bangalore registered record growth during this decade and as a result land prices escalated. Developers bought land and high-rise apartment and commercial buildings started replacing the bungalows. In 1889, open space was four times the built up area. By 1980 the built up area was four times the open space area.

Many of the public spaces that exist today are a legacy of the colonial period. The streets and bazaars of the Indian city continue to function in a similar way as before independence. South Parade has transformed into M.G. Road but continues to be a fashionable shopping and business street. Cubbon Park and Lalbag Garden are as popular as ever. With the changes in urban structure and demography of the city have come some changes in recreational activities, which have implications for the types of public spaces and their uses in Bangalore.

7.2. RECREATIONAL USE OF PUBLIC SPACE IN BANGALORE

Streets have always been important public spaces in Bangalore. M.G. Road and Avenue Road are some of the popular streets for shopping and recreation. Bangalore is also known for its flowering trees, continuing a tradition started by Krumbeigal and Dr. Mari Gowda. Many of the city's flowering street trees were planted during their tenure. Some of the popular flowering trees of Bangalore are the champak (*Michelia champaka*), jacaranda (*Jacaranda mimosifolia*), Africa tulip tree (*Spathodea campanulata*), the cannon ball tree (*Couroupita guianensis*), starry frangipani (*Plumeria rubra*), Gulmohar (*Delonix regia*), and the rain tree (*Entolobium saman*). According to Venkatarayappa, in the 1950's walking on the tree-lined streets of Bangalore was a common habit for the retired officers and others, both in the evening and the morning³. Even today one sees many senior citizens taking morning walks and younger people jogging on Bangalore's avenues and parks.

Bangalore has many playgrounds and sports fields, some more organized and structured than the others. For example the facility in Madhavan Park has a skating rink, basketball courts, a running track and soccer and cricket grounds, whereas some of the others are just open fields or *maidans* where several groups are playing different games, mostly cricket and soccer. These look chaotic but each group is following their respective matches and games as if they were the only ones on the field. Several of the schools and colleges, especially those run by the government, allow the general public to play on their fields on holidays and after they close for the day.

A survey conducted by Rao & Tewari in the 1970's revealed some interesting facts regarding public space use – only 4% of the people surveyed went to parks and walked as their primary leisure activity⁴. Thirty nine percent preferred going to movies and 26% to places of worship. As a second and third preference, 8% and 17% respectively of the people surveyed listed going to parks as a leisure activity. They concluded that there was a case for a “recreational complex” being developed in each neighbourhood based on the survey⁴.

While recreational uses have changed over the years, for the most part the traditional public space types of parks, gardens, streets, markets, and *maidans* continue to serve the needs of Bangalore's residents. However, the changing demography and people's life style has resulted in new needs, which are not being fully met by the traditional public spaces, especially in the Central Business District (CBD). At present semi-public spaces such as shopping malls and open-air cafes are catering to these new needs. Also the quality of many public spaces has deteriorated due to over crowding or lack of management. As a result they no longer cater to the needs of people. This calls for a careful study of the existing public space types to identify the needs that are being met and the needs that should to be catered to and the implications for future use of public spaces.

7.3. PUBLIC SPACE TYPES IN BANGALORE

Traditionally parks and lakes have catered to the city's need for being close to nature, and streets and markets have catered to the need for urban life and interaction with people. Temples and mosques have served religious people and senior citizens, whereas *maidans* have been used by children to play. These traditional uses of public spaces continue even today. However these traditional spaces are not fully meeting today's needs, especially those of the lower income groups, the nationalists and young professionals and teenagers. This will be discussed in detail in the following chapter. This section will study the traditional public spaces and arrive at conclusions pertaining to their use and future trends. The urban public spaces existing in Bangalore can be broadly

categorized into those that cater to people's needs to be close to nature, such as parks and lakes, and those that cater to people's urban life needs, such as streets and markets. The following are some of the traditional types of public spaces existing in Bangalore today:

PARKS AND GARDENS

Today Bangalore has many parks and gardens, of these two of the most important parks in Bangalore are Lalbag Garden and Cubbon Park. Sir Richard Sankey developed Cubbon Park in 1864. Cubbon Park served as a setting for Attara Kacheri (public offices which has been converted into the Karnataka State High Court) and later Vidhan Soudha (Legislative Assembly). Cubbon Park also had a bandstand where the military band played for the public. This tradition started with the celebration marking Queen Victoria's 60 years of rule and went on till the 1960's when an orchestra used to perform once a week. According to Maya Jayapal the bandstand in the 1940's and 1950's was a place to promenade – to see and be seen⁵. Today Cubbon Park occupies about 150 acres of land in the centre of the city and the Attara Kacheri (High Court), the Seshadri Iyer Memorial Hall (Central Library), the State Archaeological Museum and the Karnataka Government Insurance Department are housed there. It also has a children's park with an amusement ground in a park setting. Next to this is the complex of buildings housing the city aquarium, Government Art Museum and the Visveswaraya Science Museum. Throughout the Cubbon Park are groves of shady trees and bamboo, turf, grass, flowering plants, creeks and ponds, promenades, seats and shady nooks for pleasure and rest, meadows, woods and lawns. It is a naturalistic garden and is heavily used on holidays. Cubbon Park today caters to peoples' active and passive recreation needs. The lawns and meadows provide space for families to picnic, the children's amusement ground has many rides and play equipment, the woods provide space for solitude and contemplation and the many paths are popular among joggers and senior citizens. Thus Cubbon Park caters to people's relaxation and engagement needs (as identified by Carr and Lang), cognitive and aesthetic needs (by observing and enjoying nature), and has become a sacred space full of meaning for the citizens who have formed a connection with it over several generations.

Lalbag Garden covers an area of about 240 acres. It was built during the reign of Hyder Ali and was originally only 40 acres. The original design was influenced by the Mughal garden at Sira. It once housed a small zoo, which was very popular. A bandstand was built in the mid-1800 where the military band used to play. After independence an orchestra gave performances there till 1976. The bandstand was also the venue for flower shows till the Glass House was built. The Glass House, which has a plan in the shape of a cross, was modelled on the Crystal Palace in England. Today horticultural shows are held in the Glass House throughout the year, which attracts many visitors. The Lalbag Lake, which is towards the southern end of the garden, is a popular attraction. It covers 30 hectares and is bordered by Gulmohar trees. The lake is a great habitat for various birds, some migrating all the way from central Asia. Lalbag Garden now also has an aquarium. The eastern end of Lalbag Garden has a small hillock on top of which stands one of the Kempe Gowda towers. One can get a panoramic view of the city from here. Lalbag Garden today has become a very important botanical garden and a national landmark, especially the Glass House, the hill with Kempe Gowda's tower and the Mughal gardens. The rest of Lalbag Garden is a naturalistic park, which is used in much the same way as Cubbon Park. Like Cubbon Park it caters to people's relaxation and engagement needs (as identified by Carr and Lang), cognitive and aesthetic needs (by observing and enjoying nature, the horticultural exhibitions and historic sculptures), and has become a national landmark, therefore steeped in symbolic meaning and importance.

Though they are city parks, Cubbon Park is patronized mostly by people from the *pete* area and the CBD and Lalbag Garden by residents of the southern suburbs like Basavangudi and Jayanagar. People in the northern suburbs go to Sankey Tank. Because people scorn public displays of affection, many teenagers and newlyweds like spending time in relative seclusion in these parks. A walk through some of the more isolated spots of these parks reveal couples, who look like they would go into a Bollywood style song sequence any minute. It is interesting to note Venkatarayappa's observation that students at the time of examination would sit under a tree in Lalbag to study⁶. Lalbag over the years has also evolved into a place for horticultural research and has a

large library. Venkatarayappa also mentioned that no visitors left the city without visiting these gardens. He goes so far as to say that it was these gardens that gave Bangalore the name of 'Garden City'. Correa and Buch claim that it is the Defence lands, which gives Bangalore its garden city image⁷. The defence services (military) own large areas of land in the city, which are underdeveloped. Cariappa Memorial Park is a relatively new garden developed by the army on part of Parade Ground (a military land) in 1996 and named after Field Marshal Cariappa. It is a naturalistic garden with two waterfalls and a few children's play equipment. The rest of Parade Ground is under-utilised and there is potential to develop this into a central public space.

Open spaces are the lungs of a city. Correa and Buch lament that while Indian cities have tripled and quadrupled in population, the development of new open spaces and *maidans* has been negligible except in Delhi and Bhopal⁷. Even Bangalore which claims to be a "Garden City" has not added any significant open space. Even the older spaces like Cubbon Park are being encroached into. The 1995 CDP however has proposed some "regional parks" to be developed. Venkatarayappa in the 1950's believed that "if Lalbag were not in existence in Bangalore, life in Bangalore would not have been so pleasurable and so fine as it is today"⁶ – this holds true even today. In conclusion Bangalore's parks and gardens cater to people's relaxation, engagement, cognitive, aesthetic needs and are symbolic of the green city image. These parks will continue to be used as they are and efforts will continue to preserve and enhance their quality. In addition some of the "regional parks" will be developed on the lines of Cubbon Park and Lalbag Garden and will contribute towards the much needed recreational space in other areas of the city presently not catered to by the large parks and lakes of Bangalore.

LAKES

The lakes of Bangalore were the main source of water during Kempe Gowda's time. These were slowly forgotten as modern methods of water supply were used. They have a pleasant impact on the climate of the city and provide a habitat for flora and fauna. Rapid urbanization has led to deterioration in the quality of the lakes due to increase in impervious surface area. Maya Jayapal summarizes the plight of these lakes thus,

*"The number of lakes has decreased from 262 in the 1960's to 82. Many of these lakes have been converted into residential layouts, bus stands and stadium. Some have been reduced to slums. Various reasons can be cited – failure to protect the beds, neglect of the embankments, decline in rainfall, encroachment of lake beds for agriculture and construction, garbage dumping and the wild growth of the water hyacinth. All these cause ecological and environmental problems, like the drying up of rivers and streams, and the stopping of movement of seasonal birds"*⁹.

Many of the lakes were and still are associated with religious festivals like Karaga and Ganesh Chaturti. Besides this several lakes have boating facilities and are very popular on holidays. Many lakes have also developed gardens along their banks, which is used by people for relaxation, and active and passive recreation. It is unlikely that more lakes will be developed in Bangalore but intense pressure will continue to be exerted on the city authorities to maintain and improve the lakes that remain. These lakes will continue to be great resources for the city for recreation and along with the parks and gardens will serve people's urge to be close to nature and maintain Bangalore's garden city image.

TEMPLES AND MAIDANS

Temples and *maidans* were important public spaces in the Indian city. The *agrahara* pattern of neighbourhood planning that was adopted in some parts of Bangalore placed the temple or temple square as its nucleus. Many of these temples had a lake or a garden attached to them. These became important public spaces. The temples even today usually have spaces around the sanctum sanctorum where devotees can bask, meditate or socialize. The Indian city also had a few *maidans* interspersed within the city. These were open grounds like 'the commons' and were used for several purposes. Some of these *maidans* are still used in the same ways. *Maidans* are usually used by certain age groups – mainly teenagers to play cricket and football or by middle aged or senior citizens for their morning or evening walks. They do not provide play areas for toddlers, which are usually found in neighbourhood gardens. Congregations and carnivals are also held in the *maidans*. The Parade Ground on M.G. Road, though not strictly a *maidan*, could be grouped in this

category. It is an open field of levelled dirt, which is used as a ceremonial space and also as a parade ground by the defence services. This space has great potential to be integrated along with Mahatma Gandhi Garden, Chinnaswamy Stadium and M.G. Road forming a green city centre for Bangalore.

In conclusion we can say that religious spaces will continue to be important community spaces. They are not truly public spaces but will cater to the human interaction needs of their respective communities. Religious spaces will continue to be developed throughout the city. However it is unlikely that traditional *maidans* will be replicated, although single-use and multi-use recreation facilities will continue to be developed such as cricket grounds, soccer fields, basketball courts, swimming pools and children's playgrounds. Some of the existing *maidans* are being converted into neighbourhood parks. This trend will continue although some of the *maidans* will be preserved and will continue to be open spaces for pick-up games. This will result in segregation of incompatible uses such as active recreation of teenagers, from the active recreation of adolescents, and passive recreation of middle aged and senior citizens.

MARKETS

The older markets of Bangalore continue to be used in the same way as a century ago. Small shops are still commonly seen today with neat piles of goods surrounding the proprietor as he sits in the middle haggling with customers. K.R. Market and Russell Market are the two most important markets in Bangalore. Russel Market was built in 1927 on a *maidan* in what was called Blackpally. The area around Russel market and parts of *pete* even today have streets specializing in different goods and services like the *pete* of old. City Market, now called K.R. Market, was built in 1928. During festivals vendors are allowed to display their goods on the sidewalk and the flowers being sold gives the place a festive atmosphere. Most of the suburbs developed in the 1950's had a city-sub-centre comprising of markets, theatres, schools, recreational and health facilities. This trend continued throughout the 1970's and 1980's when several new suburbs were developed. Many of these public markets continue to be popular places to shop for produce and other goods and are lively public spaces, which cater to people's human interaction needs, where one can see people haggling with shopkeepers and vendors on push carts.

Over the last two decades internalised, Singapore style shopping malls have also proliferated throughout Bangalore, more often in the city centre rather than in the suburbs as in America. These spaces range from semi-public to strictly private depending on the extent to which the owners screen entry. Many of these malls are arranged around central interior spaces, which often try to replicate a square, plaza, street or courtyard. These atriums are actually highly controlled indoor spaces, which act as buffers between the street and the individual shops. Many malls have tried to extend the street or link the street to these interior spaces in a superficial way, creating a sort of theme park atmosphere. However in practice these actually present another layer to filter out undesirables, the entry being the first filter between the street and mall, and the atrium being the second filter between the atrium and shops. This will be further discussed in the following chapters. For now we can conclude by saying that these spaces are not really public in nature and hence do not satisfy people's public space needs, especially that of the lower income groups. The lower income groups and teenagers prefer shopping from vendors, especially when they hang out in markets and streets. The traditional neighbourhood and city markets will continue to cater to people's need for human interaction but will become increasingly congested over time. However these spaces do not cater to the human interaction needs of teenagers and young upwardly mobile professionals. Their needs are being currently met by the semi-public spaces mentioned earlier. This calls for a study of people's urban life needs and re-evaluation of existing spaces, drawing conclusions for development of future public spaces to meet these needs.

STREETS

The street is one of the most important public spaces in Bangalore. It is used as a place to do business/trade, to work/manufacture/provide a service, to socialise, and in some cases to live. New uses are introduced on streets and sidewalks, "often temporary sometimes permanent"⁹. Sidewalks resemble

factories like in Tilaknagar where small hand-made goods are manufactured or goods are stored and vehicles parked. The street-side “cobblers, bicycle repairer, key makers depend on fair weather and passing patrons for their livelihood”⁹. The street becomes a fair ground on festivals such as Karaga (pete area), Kadalekai Parishe (Basavangudi) or Hoovina Pallakki (Ulsoor). Streets are also venues for protests and rallies. The sidewalks have become sites for religious shrines, which over time transform like anthills into large structures. Several of the main streets have developed into major commercial and entertainment areas. B.V.K. Iyengar Road became the retail hub of the Indian city. Like wise M.G. Road, Brigade Road and Commercial Street evolved into important shopping, recreation and office areas. Over the years the South Parade metamorphised into M.G. Road, the hub of commercial and entertainment activity in Bangalore. It continues to serve the city as its de-facto centre, a space to stroll in the evenings, to see and be seen.

The Bangalore bus service is inadequate to cater to the city’s needs. In the mid 1990’s an Elevated Light Rail Transport System was proposed which has not yet seen the light of day. Bangalore desperately needs an efficient metro rail service to ease traffic on the roads and reduce pollution. The increase in traffic has led to the deterioration in the quality of Bangalore’s streets. The shrinkage of sidewalk space and air pollution makes it difficult for pedestrians to enjoy the street. The streets, especially M.G. Road and Brigade Road no longer cater to people’s need to linger. Over time the city has tried to convert its small town boulevards and avenues to freeways and major arterial roads. The street as a public space is in real danger of extinction in the city due to this. The rapid urban sprawl that has occurred in Bangalore has resulted in pressure on the CBD’s infrastructure and has led to congestion. As the entertainment and social hub of the city, the CBD has suffered as a result, and one can no longer take a leisure stroll along the shop-lined avenues. This trend will continue over the years with increased congestion on the streets, eroding their quality as public spaces. The streets will be reduced to the function of circulation, especially in the CBD area and the old *pete* area. Their public space function will have to be catered to by new types of public spaces, which will have to be developed adjacent to the streets to decongest them and provide respite for people to relax and linger.

SPONTANEOUS PUBLIC SPACES

Certain urban spaces acquire new uses and activities in response to the needs of their users, becoming important public spaces. These are spontaneous public spaces. Spontaneous spaces are never really designed but take on a life of their own due to market forces and people’s needs. This introduces activity into the space, lending it an image and thus converting an anonymous space into a ‘place’. Since they are spontaneous in nature they are never lacking in activity. Easy accessibility and a suitable functional mix usually characterize such spaces. In Bangalore spontaneous spaces crop up at nodes (strategic points within a city), near institutional buildings, religious buildings, and around landmarks. These spaces accommodate vendors and hawkers, street performers and street theatre. Today one can see many vegetable vendors congregating along main streets of residential areas or at convenient open areas such as Gandhi Bazaar Street in Basavangudi and 4th block shopping complex in Jayanagar. Every November a fair is held in the Bull Temple in Basavanagudi. The temple premises and surrounding areas come alive, drawing large crowds.

“*Bylatas*” or folk theatre is very popular even today in the villages of Karnataka; “*Bylatas*” were common in Bangalore right up to the 1960’s¹⁰. The “*Bylatas*” are spontaneous public spaces. Sheds are built in a couple of hours in some parts of Bangalore, mostly in the inner city and the labour colonies, where this art form is popular even today and performances are held on weekends or during religious holidays. There is a need to encourage such spontaneous activities. The circus and consumer fairs are other types of spontaneous, temporary public spaces, which are set up on open grounds and *maidans*. The circus was very popular in Bangalore, but the frequency of circuses coming to town has reduced over the last two decades. Exhibitions are still very popular in Bangalore especially home consumer fairs showcasing home appliances and furniture. Some of the larger fairs have an amusement ground with Ferris wheels and other rides and food stalls. Many dried up lakes are also used for political rallies, as fair grounds, or by children to play cricket. Mysore Bank

Square, Banappa Park and Chick Lalbag used to be venues for protests and demonstrations. Today Mahatma Gandhi statue and Kempe Gowda statue have become the new venues for protests.

Most people in India criticize spontaneous urban spaces as encroachments and unwanted development. But market forces and people's aspirations are too strong to completely rid cities of such spaces. That is assuming these spaces are undesirable. However many of these spaces are popular and have a lesson for urban designers. It is better to work with this phenomenon rather than totally reject it. In future these spontaneous public spaces will continue to proliferate in a haphazard manner. At present there are no public spaces in the city, which are specifically designed to accommodate fairs and carnivals, circuses, political demonstrations or street theatre and outdoor concerts. Stephen Carr believes such activities are very important for the public life of a city (Carr, Francis, Rivlin, Stone). Therefore there is an urgent need to accommodate and provide space for such activities to take place in a programmed manner.

7.4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion Bangalore's rapid urbanization has led to congestion in the city and pressure on its infrastructure. Bangalore was essentially a small town, which has grown rapidly. Thus streets and public spaces, which were designed for a much smaller population, are now being subjected to enormous pressure by urban development. The unquenchable thirst for land for development has led to many public spaces being eliminated. This has resulted in reduction in percentage of land devoted to open spaces and deterioration in the quality of the public spaces. Streets which once had only horse drawn carriages and bicycles commuting on them have to bear the burden of today's high-speed automobile traffic. The narrow streets of Bangalore have not been able to cater to this and roads have been widened to the extent possible, in some cases leaving no space for a sidewalk. This has adversely affected street life and eroded the potential of streets as quality public spaces as well. The demand for land for development has led to encroachment into other public spaces. For example part of Cubbon Park has been used to build government offices and road widening has eaten into the sidewalk on M.G. Road. Also several precious lakes have been drained and built on. Therefore over the years public space has shrunk and become even more precious. This along with the zoning of the city has led to competition for public space among various groups, which will be discussed in detail in the following chapter. The loss of public space and the chaos on Bangalore's streets has led to the city becoming illegible. The garden city image has been lost and replaced by an image of a chaotic city with no clear city centre. Even the bi-nuclear character of the city has become eroded. These issues will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

As Bangalore grows, parks and gardens will continue to be developed in the form of neighbourhood gardens and "regional parks" (city parks). These public spaces will cater to people's need to be close to nature. The lakes on the other hand will continue to deteriorate due to developmental pressures and silting and they are unlikely to be replicated in other areas. However continued pressure from citizen groups and neighbourhood organizations will result in existing lakes being preserved and their quality improved over the years. The streets and markets will continue to become busier and congested over the years and will be reduced to circulation. They will no longer serve as places to linger and hangout, especially in the CBD and the old *pete* area. It is here that serious rethinking needs to be done to evolve new forms of public spaces, which can cater to people's need for human interaction and urban life. This problem is especially relevant in the CBD area where a real potential exists to create such a public space for human interaction. Bangalore today lacks a central public space to host festivals and concerts, a space to demonstrate and protest, a space for teenagers and lower income groups to hangout. These issues will be discussed in detail in the following chapters, concentrating on M.G. Road as Bangalore's primary public space. This brings up the question of the future of

M.G. Road as a public space. And since pressure on the CBD is increasing by the day, what is the solution or alternative to this public space? This will be discussed in detail in Chapter 10.

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CHAPTER 8: PUBLIC DOMAIN – CONTESTED SPACES AND LACK OF IMAGEABILITY

“The essence of urban life lies in the exuberant diversity, in the making available to anyone, at any time, a vast range of choices of things to do. That diversity can be generated by the form of the street itself. The planner, who in addition to planning the physical environment, also wants to plan the lives of the people who will live within it. So he plans his meeting rooms, his art rooms, his pedestrian malls with their outdoor benches and those neat globular lights, which make all planned urban schemes elsewhere look the same”. – Jane Jacobs, Death And Life Of Great American Cities.

Public spaces in Bangalore, like other Indian cities, are places for trade, manufacture, socializing and even to live. Public spaces, especially streets, provide space for the homeless to sleep at night; cobblers, key makers and hawkers to do their trade during the day; *bhel puri* and *idli dosa* vendors; teenagers and others to window shop and promenade; middle aged and senior citizens to take their morning and evening strolls; neighbours to gossip; children to play; merchants to display their goods; women to manufacture *agarbattis* (incense sticks), dry grain, hang clothes and do their house hold chores; carnivals and fairs to be held; processions during festivals or for mourning; rallies and demonstrations; illegal shrines to be built; the list goes on. In short entire humanity seems to be on display. Janaki Nair believes that, *“If the city is one of the most important sites of democracy, then the actions of citizens in the public realm are its vital signs. The vitality of citizens who may celebrate, demonstrate, commemorate or agitate, are important moments in the history of public life. Public actions take on meaning and importance depending on the location and timing of the action; in turn, these actions redefine the meaning of a public space”*¹. Certain events give meaning to certain places, making them ‘public spaces’, and vice versa. Cubbon Park, which was usually used for rest and leisure, transformed into a political public space during rallies, likewise Mahatma Gandhi statue provides a symbolic backdrop to a demonstration. Mysore Bank Square, Banappa Park and Chick Lalbag used to be venues for protests and demonstrations. Today Mysore Bank Square has lost its symbolic meaning due to Kempe Gowda Road becoming a busy commercial street dotted with movie theatres, and rallies have been banned in Cubbon Park¹. Mahatma Gandhi statue and Kempe Gowda statue have become the new venues for protests. Janaki Nair believes that, *“the more robust signs of democratic cultures in the city are the wall writings, the political spectacles and the carnivals of the oppressed, which may temporarily occupy the public spaces of the city whether in protest or celebration”*¹. She feels that public forms of celebration, leisure or religiosity have declined over the years, as shown by the decline in interest in Rajyotsava celebrations and May Day rallies¹. Karaga and Muharam though, continue to be two vibrant displays of public forms of religiosity. Society is slowly moving from ‘participation’ to ‘observation’, the television and Internet being the greatest perpetrators of this.

Janaki Nair believes that today the city *“is marked by regional, national and global forces and interests in very different ways. These interests lay claim to the city, its many pasts, and possible futures, and thereby make it their own”*¹. These forces affect the future of public spaces in the CBD area in Bangalore. In particular, two issues confront public space and hence the city today: the contest for space between different groups in the city due to spatial stratification and the illegibility or lack of imageability of the city.

8.1. STRATIFICATION OF THE CITY ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC, RELIGION-CASTE, AND LINGUISTIC LINES

According to Rao & Tewari the ecological structure of a city is the product of social, economic and locational characteristics of its inhabitants and their activities². They add that,

“The structure is stratified because the households of similar socio-economic status and similar activities tend to cluster at various locations in the city, and the locations are determined by social, economic and historical factors. The end result is a tripartite structure: a combination of ‘zones’, ‘sectors’, and ‘nuclei’. Thus a city’s ecological structure tends to be characterized by both socio-economic isomorphism and spatial stratification/segregation”².

Based on population density Rao & Tewari divided Bangalore into ‘three – tier zoning’: the core (149 persons/acre), the intermediary (109 persons/acre) and the periphery (28 persons/acre)². Through their studies Rao & Tewari found that population density is directly influenced by type of land use, occupational structure and socio-economic status³. Rao & Tewari applied the Sjoberg model, which is a classical structure of a pre-industrial city characterized by “rich centre and poor periphery” to Bangalore. They concluded that the city’s ecological structure is not a simple “rich centre and poor periphery” but a complex one with a middle class city centre and both “high status and low status periphery”². Rao & Tewari identified the core of the city as being trifocal, with the City Market, the Russel Market, and Vidhana Soudha forming the three foci. They found the overall ecological structure of the city to have an east-west zoning (segregation) based more on religion, and a core, intermediary, periphery zoning (segregation) based on socio-economic variables⁴.

Janaki Nair reiterates the east-west zoning that continues to exist today in Bangalore, in spite of the two cities merging into one in 1949. Drawing parallels with Rao & Tewari’s work, she says that the *pete* and the CMS areas continue to bear signs of their divided past, “... *with two densely populated commercial areas served by their own bus and train depots and markets*”⁵. The CBD which evolved out of the former CMS, especially M.G. Road area, has become the “*core of the unified city – a blend of business space with the residential that has appealed to national and international capital – the old city cores have remained important production and commercial centres*”⁵. Besides the east-west zoning, a more striking division says Janaki Nair is on linguistic and cultural lines⁵. The cantonment attracted large numbers of Tamil speakers from the Madras Presidency whereas *pete* was predominantly Kannada speaking. It was only after independence that Kannada speakers started moving into the colonial city and the new suburbs, due to an influx of immigrants from other parts of the enlarged state of Karnataka. Public sector units and educational institutions provided more opportunities for Kannadigas from the rest of the state to migrate to Bangalore. The years 1941-1951 and 1971-1981 saw many immigrants from northern Karnataka, Coorg and other parts of the state, tilting the linguist scale in favour of Kannada over Tamil. Even today many parts of the city are divided along caste and linguistic lines, like Ulsoor, which is Tamil dominated or Tilak Nagar, which has a sizeable dalit (lower caste) population. Kannada speakers make up only 35% of Bangalore’s population, business being dominated by “north-Indians”, and industrial work and unions being dominated by Tamils and Malayalis according to Janaki Nair⁵.

Janaki Nair says that, “*The primacy of class over caste in the ideologies of city planning has obscured from view the very real ways in which upper castes have historically appropriated and controlled space in the city*”⁵. She adds that caste and community dominated the vision of the town planners during colonial times, as illustrated by Basavangudi, Malleshwaram, Knoxpet and Murphy Town. Post independence, “*the class-based ordering of space has repressed, not effaced, the operations of caste, with lower castes more or less exclusively being confined to the burgeoning slums and poorer areas of Bangalore*”⁵. The movement to install Dr. Ambedkar’s statues in public spaces of some parts of Bangalore, such as Tilak Nagar and Kadugondahalli, also illustrates caste-based division of the city, where dalits (the lowest caste in the Hindu social hierarchy) try to territorialize their neighbourhoods by erecting symbols, or MLA’s (Members of Legislative Assembly) erect these symbols to gain their sympathy and develop vote banks⁵. The spread of Kannada flagpoles is another attempt by a group to symbolically stake claim over territory. She says, “*the state too deployed public spaces within Bangalore in accordance with emerging political alignments, sometimes on avowedly caste basis*”⁵. She says that, “space that has been ‘deterritorialised’ by the operations of the real estate market or the town planning process is being ‘reterritorialised’ in new ways”⁵.

In conclusion one can say that the zoning of Bangalore based on religion, caste, class and language has led to divisions among the citizens, creating various interest groups. This division is being played out in public spaces and the contest for it by different interest groups.

8.2. CONTEST FOR SPACE

“City space is always produced by human action, and often under conditions that are not always acceptable to one or another section of society. The monuments and symbolic spaces of a city commemorate only the triumphs, but are silent on the processes and negotiations, or even the battles, that have led to its present form. The naming of a street, the location of a statue, the character of a new locality or the language of a religious ceremony are examples of moments in this city’s recent history when consensus was difficult to evolve. Contests over such events by groups in the city are a sign of democracy at work: social groups thus claim a right to the city itself, and make it their own”. – Janaki Nair, Beladide Noda Bengaluru Nagara.

Janaki Nair believes that the primacy of Bangalore has led to conflicts over the uses and meanings of public space⁶. Those in conflict include the Kannada nationalists and the lower income groups on one side, and the corporate interests and middle class on the other. The Kannada nationalists and the lower income groups feel side lined today due to globalisation and are feeling the need to express their rights over the city. This is being played out in Bangalore’s public spaces, where they erect flagpoles and other monuments in honour of Kannada heroes. The corporate interests and the middle class on the other hand want these public spaces to be secular and free of any alliances to particular groups. They envision Bangalore as a city-state like Singapore, which preserves its garden city image and colonial heritage while encouraging today’s trend of consumerism. Their attempts to privatise public space are real and hence they are at loggerheads with the nationalists, and to a lesser extent with the lower income groups.

KANNADA MOVEMENT

Kannada nationalism arose in Karnataka (a state in India for Kannada speaking ethnic groups) as a reaction to imperial and royal nostalgia. Also after independence Kannadigas (Kannada speakers) felt they had to overcome another form of dominance and influence: that of the troika of English, Hindi and Tamil popular culture. These factors led to the Kannada movement. Whether as a democratic movement or a cultural movement it soon began to challenge some of the symbols of the colonial periods as claimed by Janaki Nair⁶. Such movements gained momentum after 1956 with the re-organization of states. The demolition of the colonial cenotaph (which honoured British soldiers who died in the battles against Tipu Sultan and was replaced by Kempe Gowda’s statue) and the movement to enshrine Kannada as the state language were some of the early outcomes of this movement⁶.

Also Bangalore and Kannada culture was beginning to come out of the shadow of the Madras Presidency and hence Tamil culture. According to Janaki Nair Bangalore of the 1960’s, especially the former CMS area was “awash with English, and, more distressing, Tamil popular culture”⁶. Hence immigrants from other parts of Karnataka and even people from the *pete* area felt like “local refugees” in their own state capital. Tamil was more visible in the city through newspapers, movies and trade unions. Therefore the Kannada movement was a concerted effort to give more visibility and audibility to their language and to stake their claim over the city by renaming streets, making it mandatory for businesses to display signage in Kannada, and by demanding more Kannada films to be made. At the time Kannada films lagged behind English, Hindi and Tamil films. They demanded more movies, which resulted in the Kannada film industry moving from Madras and taking root in Bangalore⁶. Today Kannada movie posters compete with those of Hollywood and Hindi film posters on Bangalore’s streets, especially Kempe Gowda Road, which is lined with theatres with huge hoardings in their frontcourts. Kannada trade unions proliferated

in an attempt to counter the Tamil and Malayalam dominated unions and as a consequence vitalized the Kannada movement. It is interesting to note that in Janaki Nair's view, *"the erasure of a colonial memory was thus accompanied by an assertion of regional pride, which in turn was swiftly deployed against other linguistic groups in the city ... The focus ... of the Kannada movement, is more clearly on keeping other linguistic and cultural heroes away from the public spaces of the city"*⁶.

Janaki Nair says that 1982 was a watershed year for the Kannada movement⁶. Tamil dominated slums were targeted by rioters and slum clearance schemes. The roadsides of older, more established Tamil or non-Kannada dominated neighbourhoods were symbolically reclaimed and visually occupied by constructing flagpoles on concrete bases, with an image of the Kannada goddess Bhuvaneswari, above which the Karnataka/Kannada flag flapped⁶. These flagpoles have since proliferated throughout the city, proclaiming the pride of the Kannada sons-of-the-soil and the male gendered politics of language (the linguistic movement is male dominated)⁶. Some of the Kannada groups went on to target foreign fast food chains, the Japanese township in Bidadi, GATT, the proposed Bangalore-Mysore corridor, globalisation, and the proliferation of corrupt western culture in general. Janaki Nair claims that they have staked their claim on new developments based on linguistic lines⁶.

CLASH OF THE TWO MOVEMENTS

According to Janaki Nair cultural and political movements are emerging in Bangalore, with attempts to reterritorialise the city, and *"(refashion) its symbols, monuments or open spaces to evoke other memories, or histories that reflect the triumphs of the nation state, the hopes and aspirations of linguistic nationalism or of social groups who have long lacked either economic or symbolic capital in the burgeoning city of Bangalore"*⁶. While Kannada groups are trying to replace place names and symbols of the colonial era with Kannada ones, corporate groups and "old elites" are trying to preserve some of Bangalore's colonial and royal architectural legacies. Today the corporate sector dreams of turning Bangalore into a "city-state". Also citizen groups have become more active over the years, as demonstrated by the protest to protect Cubbon Park in 1998. According to Janaki Nair the Cubbon Park protest illustrated the elites' and middle class' anger towards politicians and the erosion of "cantonment character"⁶. The Cubbon Park protest mobilized women and children in large numbers, unlike the male dominated caste and linguistic movements⁶. The "dignified" protest attracted public and media attention because of its sharp contrast from "the traffic disrupting" and "slogan-shouting" protests of the caste and language movements⁶. Also, unlike Madras, where statues of local heroes and heroines littered the city, no such movement took place in the public spaces of Bangalore except for the Ambedkar statue and Kannada flag movements; instead the statues of Queen Victoria, King Edward and Sir Mark Cubbon remained firmly in place due to middle class support for these 'heritage pieces'⁶.

In conclusion Janaki Nair says that linguistic and caste movements are highly political and express their desire for democracy⁶, while the corporate world and civic movements represent an urge for modernity⁶. Quoting Partha Chhatterjee, Janaki Nair says, *"At a time when the instrumentalities of the state (the judicial or the planning apparatuses) are skilfully deployed by those possessed of a vision of modernity, the untidy often violent spatial strategies of political society may well 'reterritorialise' space that has been 'deterritorialized' by the globalisation of capital so that we may well be witnessing an emerging opposition between modernity and democracy in the contests over city-space"*¹⁹. Arindam Dutta feels that under the pretext of liberalisation and auto-resolution of land value (prices being dictated by the market without government intervention), what is being done is "... nothing less than a form of spatial 'apartheid'", whose map is made invisible by economic rather than racial differences⁷. Arindam Dutta claims that in today's globalising world various "para-statal and international financial agencies" are influencing and manoeuvring state institutions in the South (developing countries) and the nationalist groups and the nation state cannot be relied upon to safeguard the interests of weaker sections of society⁸. Hence he says, *"In this context, architectural vanguards in the South must begin to formulate a politic of occupancy and of programmatic agendas. Who occupies what space or place and to what end? In this more*

*'universalised' terrain, the character of individual identities of the future will hinge more on these processes of exclusion and inclusion rather than simply those of 'cultural difference' per se*⁸.

Due to this contest for public space among various interest groups in the city, there is an urgent need to address the issues discussed earlier. Since present public spaces are not accommodating everyone's needs, there is great potential to create and design public spaces in the city, which will accommodate the needs of its citizens, and reconcile their differences. Echoing Arindam Dutta's observation, we can say that Landscape Architects have a leading role to play in conceiving and facilitating the creation of good public spaces for the benefit of the city.

8.3. LACK OF IMAGEABILITY OF BANGALORE

Whether it was the Indian and colonial twin cities of pre-independence or the garden city of post independence, Bangalore had a strong character and was a highly imageable city. Rao & Tewari believed that Bangalore's twin city character was an advantage and should be preserved. However, they lamented that by 1970's Bangalore had become a city of "two colours" – the green "old city" and the non-green "concrete jungle" of new extensions⁹. Today the twin city and garden city character have disappeared and Bangalore has become notorious as a bland middle class city. Much of Bangalore's old world charm was due to its public spaces like Cubbon Park, Lalbag Garden and Ulsoor Lake. Although they have been preserved, very few such public spaces have been created in the past 50 years. As a result the city has crowded around these spaces and become imageless. There is great potential today for the creation of public spaces which will make the city highly imageable again.

Laxmi Chandrashekar says that according to Janaki Nair the essence of Bangalore lies in its non-descriptiveness and the overwhelming presence of the middle class¹⁰. Janaki Nair claims that Bangalore doesn't have a distinctive edge or landmark, which can be immediately recognized through any pictorial representation, as does Madras, Bombay, Calcutta or Delhi¹. She adds that, *"This lack of an image is itself a sign of how this reluctant metropolis has grown, as a gradual replication of the low rise, low density structures, separated by green spaces, annexing more and more of the rural to its boundaries"*¹. Further explaining the lack of imageability of the city, she says,

*"Other aspects of the difficulty of capturing Bangalore as a metropolis in the visual medium are a consequence of its unique history of invisibility: there has been no smoke stack industrial growth for instance, which is a dominant feature of many cities. This is far from suggesting that there is no industry but that it is largely invisible, tucked away in large and distant industrial estates, or more recently, tech parks, or slums, which are hidden from the public eye. Similarly invisible are its workers, in an overwhelming middle class city. Its green cover masks its high levels of pollution, visually neutralizing the tedium of fumes and dust, which frustrate its inhabitants. And the blandness of innumerable middle class layouts hides the sheer scale of the problem of housing"*¹.

In an attempt to preserve the colonial and royal legacy of the inner city under the pretext of beautification schemes, the state government has prevented lower income groups from consuming the land.

As the physical manifestation of people's ideas and aspirations, architecture is a good instrument to understand a city and its people, especially because it informs the design of formal elements of public spaces and has come to dominate the urban landscape. It is a strong part of our image of cities today, with public spaces taking a back seat. Bangalore's architectural vocabulary has changed with time and fashions and today is a blend of several different styles. According to Tara Chandavarkar, modern architecture was introduced to Bangalore in the 1950's by the young architects who moved to the city¹¹. Modern

architecture in Bangalore helped proliferate the 'tower in space' type urban development. The gridiron suburban development gained currency during this period. Public space was reduced to parks/gardens and shopping streets. The market square or temple square type public spaces were not encouraged and were confined to a large extent to the *pete* area. But during this modern movement, a very traditional building, the Vidhan Soudha, also appeared. It reflected a renaissance of traditional Indian architecture along with Mughal garden design. The Vidhan Soudha houses the Karnataka State Legislative Assembly and offices of state ministers.

The 1970's, a decade of unprecedented growth in Bangalore, saw a great demand for housing and office space, which resulted in box-like architecture to attain the maximum floor area ratio (FAR). It is interesting to note that while Rao & Tewari (in the 1970's) celebrated Bangalore's low-rise character they also felt that skyscraper complexes exhibited "superb architectural skills" and were necessary for a city to build a national and global image¹². They felt the "magnificent skyscrapers" of Public Utility Building and Visweswaraya Centre was the emerging image of Bangalore. In conclusion they said that – "*...the emerging metropolis is one of many images. Whether it follows the path of the least desired urban monsters or the most desired 'garden cities', or the most elusive mirage of the golden mean, is a question which should be debated upon and answered by the citizens and the planners of the city within the accepted and phased plan framework*"¹². These "skyscrapers" led to widespread condemnation and resulted in a land ceiling act, which restricted the height of buildings.

The 1980's saw a resurgence in colonial architecture, with buildings trying to imitate Gothic, Greco-Roman, Residency and Regency styles. According to Mrs. Chadavarkar, "... a longing for something more ornamental ...", was perhaps the cause for this drift away from modern and functional spaces¹¹. Nandita believes that Bangalore's colonial tradition does not exist merely as a phase in architectural history, but seems to have become an obvious answer in which Bangaloreans seek an identity⁷. Many contemporary architects and developers use the architectural vocabulary and semiology of colonial architecture as safe tools – primarily because they represent a familiar and tried and tested formula¹³. Also a lot of people still idolize colonial architecture as the epitome of grandeur and a statement of prestige and power. Besides the bungalows and public buildings one can see European styles in the parks and gardens of the city, and people still prefer naturalistic Victorian parks and gardens for recreation. On the other hand there are people who feel we should go back to the domes and *gopurams* of our ancient buildings and temples like the Vidhan Soudha, although this hasn't resulted in the creation of new lakes or gardens around temples. Reddy & Bavadekar believe that "*Bangalore's Dravidian roots are being salvaged and applied as pastiche all over its public architecture, almost apologetically trying to conceal its pubs, shopping malls and pizza outlets*"⁹.

The second category of architectural style that is still in vogue was started in the 1990's. With the liberalization of the Indian economy Bangalore became a favourite destination for several MNC's (Multi-National Corporations) and software companies. The CBD area around M.G. Road, as the fashionable hub of Bangalore, became the obvious choice for corporate offices, shopping arcades and expensive high-rise apartments. This resulted in a new wave of building activity, which mainly relied on glass and steel to give a corporate or global image. This style became popular among architects who wanted to break away from pseudo-colonialism. But unfortunately they were jumping from the frying pan into the fire, from one cliché to another. This also resulted in more complex and disparate urban forms¹⁴. Unfortunately even this new trend in development did not result in creation of modern public spaces to cater to citizens, especially the young and upwardly mobile. Most developments were for the rich, totally ignoring the needs of the middle and lower income groups.

There has been a great influx of people into the city over the last two decades. Along with people, culture and context too appear to have immigrated, defying all laws of locality. The city, especially the former CMS, has become a melting cauldron for all sorts of architectural styles. This has made the cityscape a jarred composition lacking coherence. Huge hoardings and billboards have also appeared all over the place to add a kind of aesthetic spice or garnish to the

already messed and muddled up dish, which is the CBD area. Hence Bangalore is becoming a metropolis dominated by pseudo-colonial and pseudo-global buildings scattered with token parks and lakes. Janaki Nair a few years back posed the question – *“Which of the city’s many histories would the new masters evoke in their monuments, spaces and architecture?”* She suggests that Bangalore’s colonial and royal legacies continue to overwhelm, with national and social movements taking a back seat⁶. Nationalism was never strong in Bangalore, she says, hence, *“Predictably, the imperial and indigenous royal legacy is writ large in the form of place names, parks and statues, and architectural features which the newly migrant multinational houses have found uniquely allied with the styles of consumption they wish to promote. Pride in, and nostalgia for this aristocratic past, has clearly marked conservation efforts, architectural imaginations and literary genres alike”*⁶.

According to Reddy & Bavadekar (late 1990’s), “Bangalore encapsulates all the contradictions of the Indian urban space today”¹⁵. Sathya Prakash Varanashi believes that Bangalore can today be said to represent India in microcosm¹⁶. He says many claim that Bangalore is not yet a city but is a large urban village. Also many studies claim that Bangalore is not yet a true urban centre. The organic growth of Bangalore has also contributed to its illegibility as a city. Sathya Prakash Varanashi goes on to add that the city is suffering from an identity crisis. He says that the city has accepted an extraordinary range of disparate architecture with equal ease, with no attempt to *“coalesce them to any common parameter which would enable a reading of the city as a coherent text. Diversely born, all these attitudes and architecture have been living diversly”*¹⁶. He believes that the question one must ask is – should Bangalore have an image decipherable by all, or should it stay imageless so that people can perceive it any way they want? This lack of imageability is a real problem for a city, which is trying hard to project itself as a global city and aspires to be the “Singapore of South India”. Explaining the reason for the illegibility of Indian cities Rahul Mehrotra says that,

*“A major reason for this is that ‘end-state planning’ – where the final product is explicit, has been out of fashion among planners. In a democratic political system, for obvious reasons, the idea of the superimposition of a grand design or a definable image is taboo. Participation, incremental growth, pluralism, etc., are valid at the scale of housing or the neighbourhood, in the context of city design they spell doom. The laissez-faire growth that results from these processes is precisely what makes our cities highly illegible entities”*¹⁷.

To add to this problem, he says that the land use maps and other documents produced by planners are not given images through architectural renderings and urban design guidelines to “make explicit a visual structure which would give the city legibility”¹⁷. In contrast, he says, Jaipur typifies an “end-state” approach, which combined “end-state planning” for the major streets and nodes, forming a skeletal structure while allowing flexibility at the neighbourhood level¹⁷. Also, Correa & Buch suggest that, *“Important civic buildings should be treated as urban ‘events’, giving identity to different neighbourhoods and generating a greater sense of civic life, thus allowing the city to expand, not as an amorphous undifferentiated mass of built form, but with a coherent and rhythmic syntax”*¹⁸. Rahul Mehrotra believes that the goal of urban design should be to create and maintain those aspects of the public realm, which are important to the collective urban memory¹⁷. He believes it is especially the poor, under-represented and rural migrants whose aspirations need to be incorporated into the emerging public image of Indian cities¹⁷.

As far back as the 1960’s Prime Minister Nehru saw Bangalore as India’s city of the future. Hasan reiterated this idea in the 1970’s, saying Bangalore has a pre-eminent position in India with respect to science and technology. This prophecy has somewhat come true as Bangalore spearheads India’s Information Technology revolution. Bangalore today is trying to rise above regional, national, ethnic and cultural identity, to assume a global identity. According to Arindam Dutta, in today’s free trade culture, Bangalore is being posed as “vaunted exemplar” of the global economy in the south; with its overwhelming concentration of direct foreign investment and “networked trans-national work force”, it hopes to overcome the cliché of dependency on the north. Urban planners compare it to *“the new innovative nodes of a new global urban map such as Seattle, Silicon Valley, Taedok, Tsukuba or Kansai science city”*⁸.

8.4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we can say that Bangalore is still perhaps the most liveable of Indian cities. Bangalore is perceived as a cosmopolitan city because of its diverse demography and comparatively fewer slums. It may be a misnomer to call it a 'garden city' but Bangalore still has one of the highest percentages of land devoted to green spaces in India, and in no other city has the government undertaken tree planting on such a massive scale. Rao & Tewari in the 1970's suggested that in order to maintain Bangalore's image as a 'garden city' future developments should provide "intimate spaces" in each neighbourhood and that the size and shape of open spaces and the street pattern could help monitor the spread and texture of the city¹². As people have become more discriminating, apartments and office complexes with well laid out landscapes are becoming the rule rather than the exception, especially in group-housing projects on large plots. Cubbon park, Ulsoor Lake and other traditional open spaces and lakes lend Bangalore a strong green character. These, along with institutions, which have large open spaces, form a sort of green skeleton, with the bungalows and residential neighbourhoods and their gardens forming the flesh. It is important today to preserve not only the skeleton but also the flesh for Bangalore to continue to be a 'Garden City'. So enduring is this image of Bangalore that in spite of all the development that has taken place over the last three decades Bangaloreans still like to call their city a 'Garden City'.

Much of Bangalore's old world charm was due to its public spaces like Cubbon Park, Lalbag Garden and Ulsoor Lake. Although they have been preserved, very few such public spaces have been created in the past 50 years. As a result the city has crowded around these spaces and become imageless. Today the twin city and garden city character have disappeared and Bangalore has become notorious as a bland middle class city. There maybe hope for a more legible urban fabric in the only vestige of Bangalore's good taste: that is its fondness for parks and gardens and other public spaces. There is great potential today for the creation of public spaces which will make the city highly imageable again.

Bangalore has beautiful public spaces like Lalbag Garden and Cubbon Park but neither of them is symbolic of Bangalore. A public space which would be immediately associated with the city is missing. As mentioned in the earlier chapter, the traditional public spaces like parks and gardens will continue to be created. But to further enhance Bangalore's green city image and to make it more imageable Bangalore needs to structure its Central Business District into a coherent whole with a central public space. A central public space within a larger district level master plan would go a long way in accomplishing this and acting as a pilot project that will encourage the development of more public spaces around the city. This would draw from Bangalore's tradition as a Garden City and its highly imageable traditional public spaces. Also due to the contest for public space among various interest groups in the city, there is an urgent need to address the issues discussed earlier. Since present public spaces are not accommodating everyone's needs, there is great potential to create and design public spaces in the city, which will accommodate the needs of its citizens, and reconcile their differences. Echoing Arindam Dutta's observation, we can say that Landscape Architects have a leading role to play in conceiving and facilitating the creation of good public spaces for the benefit of the city. Once again a central public space for the city will provide for the needs of various groups and facilitate reconciliation among them.

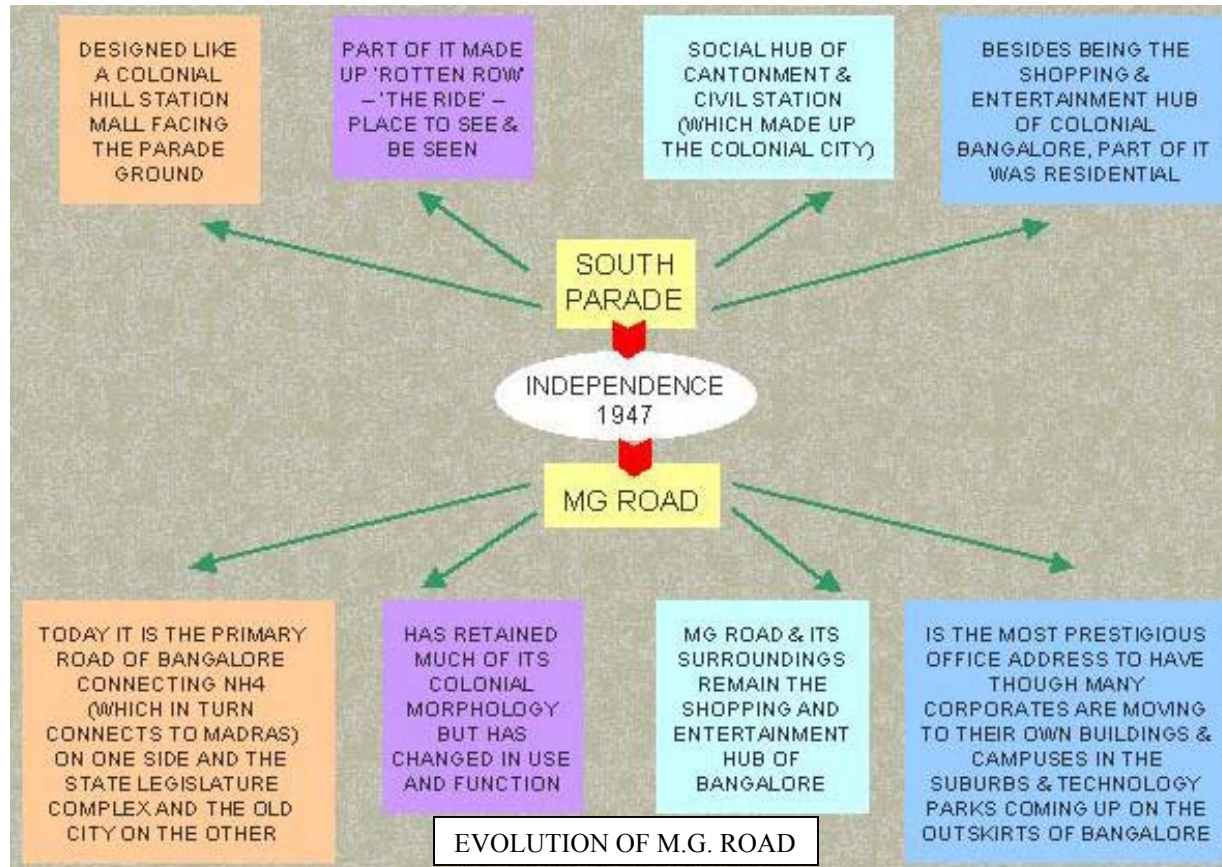
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CHAPTER 9: EVOLUTION OF STREET AS THE PRIMARY PUBLIC SPACE IN BANGALORE

As mentioned earlier, streets are the most important public spaces in Bangalore. Whether as residential streets or bazaar streets, they support a plethora of activities. People live, work and socialize on streets. They celebrate, mourn and demonstrate on streets. Children play on streets and women gossip on streets. The street is the primary public space type in Bangalore. It is primary in several ways. It is the primary business space, primary retail space and primary entertainment space and the intensity of its use far exceeds those of the other public space types. Also as discussed earlier, M.G. Road has slowly evolved into the heart of Bangalore. Located roughly at the centre of the city between the two old cores of Russel Market and City Market, it is today's entertainment and business hub.

9.1. EVOLUTION OF M.G. ROAD



When the British built M.G. Road in the early part of the 19th century it was purely a military road. It continued to be a military street right up to independence due to the presence of the Parade Ground and the army barracks. Over the years though, the civilian areas that developed around M.G. Road created market pressures for commercial and entertainment uses. As the central street of the cantonment, M.G. Road started responding to these pressures and evolved into a fashionable main street or a colonial street mall. Like other colonial malls it had churches, a parade ground, shops, restaurants, bars and bungalows. The area around the Parade Ground came to be known as 'the ride' and became a popular promenade. Cubbon Park was soon developed on one end of M.G. Road, lending it a pleasant character.

Over the years M.G. Road became the social hub of colonial Bangalore. This tradition continued after independence and M.G. Road continued to be the heart of the former CMS, which had merged into the *pete* or 'city area'. The sharp division, both physical and cultural, that existed between the two parts of the cities continued well into the 1970's. But over the years M.G. Road came to become the heart of the Central Business District and hence the de-facto centre of Bangalore. By the 1990's Bangalore was being projected as a global city and large amount of capital was channelled into it. M.G. Road, which had an elitist history, became the obvious choice as the business and entertainment hub for the affluent. Today M.G. Road clearly caters to the rich and increasingly attempts are being made to control its public spaces. A slow process of privatisation / corporatisation of public space is underway.

9.2. PRIMACY OF M.G. ROAD

M.G. Road can be said to be Bangalore's primary road. This is due to several reasons –

- It is centrally located with respect to the Bangalore Urban Area. It is roughly equidistant from the airport and the city railway station. It is also roughly equidistant from the City market and Russel market, the two high-density commercial cores.
- It is a major traffic corridor for east-west moving traffic. Even north-south moving traffic has to cross it or passes through its vicinity.
- It is adjacent to the administrative complex (Vidhan Soudha – State Legislative Assembly, Attara Kacheri – State High Court and other government offices) and a major open space (Cubbon Park).
- It is the most important business and entertainment destination.

9.3. LAND USE AROUND M.G. ROAD

According to the 1995 CDP the predominant land uses along M.G. Road are commercial and defence. Next come public buildings and parks and open spaces. Some residences still exist in spite of a land use conversion to commercial. Also several apartments blocks belonging to the military exist on M.G. Road. The surrounding areas also have large areas of residential land use with lesser amounts of public and commercial land uses. The tendency towards commercial and high-rise office complexes is likely to proliferate over the years.



9.4. LAND USE ON M.G. ROAD

M.G. Road is roughly 2 kilometres long and accommodates a wide range of activities. It has banks and office buildings, shops and restaurants, museums and theatres, government offices and public buildings and parks and open spaces. It is hard not to visit M.G. Road or at least pass by it during a visit to the

city. Some of the uses of M.G. Road are listed below. Also the following two diagrams attempt to capture the use of the street and highlight the cross section of activities taking place along M.G. Road.

CIVIC

M.G. Road has several civic amenities such as a sports stadium, museums and government offices. Most of these facilities are concentrated in Cubbon Park on the western end of M.G. Road. Chinnaswamy Cricket Stadium is the largest cricket stadium in Bangalore and hosts national and international matches. It also houses the Bangalore Cricket Club, which has a restaurant and other facilities for its members. Cubbon Park is home to several of Bangalore's museums. The Government Art Museum, Visvesvaraya Science Museum and the city aquarium are located on the edge of Cubbon Park near M.G. Road and are great attractions for tourists and Bangaloreans alike. The interactive science museum is especially popular among children and teenagers. Another popular attraction for children is the Jawahar Bal Bhavan, an edutainment centre. It has a toy train and mini amusement park in a wooded setting. This has been an all time favourite for school picnics and outings. On the eastern half of M.G. Road are Mayo Hall and the Utility Building. Mayo Hall is one of the oldest buildings on M.G. Road and today houses courts and government offices. The Utility Building was built as an extension to this and has a movie theatre and shops on the lower levels and government offices on the upper floors. The Utility building is the tallest on M.G. Road and perhaps the tallest building in the city. Despite the presence of extensive civic amenities, they are all scattered and do not share any unifying features. The museums and the stadium along with Cubbon Park need to be more integrated especially for the pedestrian. Underground pedestrian crossings and an overall master plan to develop a City Civic Complex needs to be initiated.

PUBLIC DESTINATIONS

The most important public space on M.G. Road is the sidewalk. The sidewalk here is alive with all sorts of activities throughout the day and into the night - people strolling, window shopping, waiting to go to the movies and vendors selling their goods. Several vendors do brisk business on the sidewalk filling in gaps in market supply, catering to the pedestrian's demands. Next in importance come the theatres. They draw large crowds and act as magnets, which in turn support other businesses like shops and restaurants, as well as vendors. The food court outside Food World is one such popular spot where people stop for a quick bite. Also Coffee Day and Barista, which occupy the forecourts of their respective buildings, have become popular places to linger, especially for the young. Kids Kemp, a garment showroom, also generates a lot of activity and interest in its forecourt. Several cartoon characters at the door wave to people and try to attract them into the store, especially children. They also have several small rides and a horse drawn carriage to keep the children entertained while their parents shop. Cubbon Park is a major public park on the western end of M.G. Road. Besides being a large park it also houses many of the civic amenities like the Jawahar Bal Bhavan and the museums. It is a great tourist attraction and is also popular among Bangaloreans. Mahatma Gandhi Garden and Cariappa Memorial Park are two other green public spaces on M.G. Road.

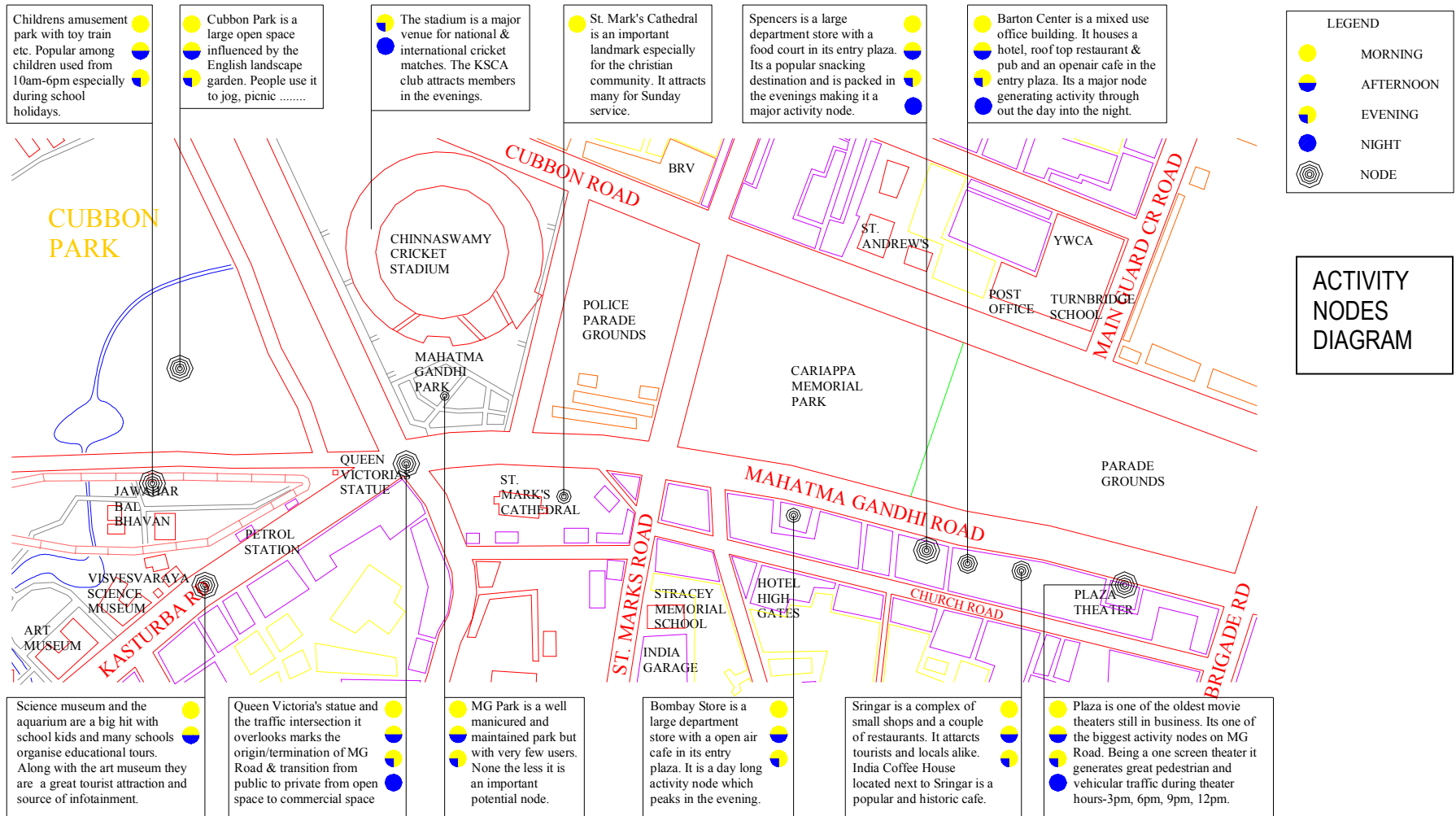
COMMERCIAL / BUSINESS

M.G. Road has several banks, office buildings and hotels. These places are very busy during the day but are dead at night. Hence the nighttime activity is restricted to the shopping and entertainment section of M.G. Road between St. Mark's Road and Residency Road. These buildings, and as a result the street life, would benefit by incorporating some businesses such as restaurants and shops on the ground floor, which will sustain nighttime activity.

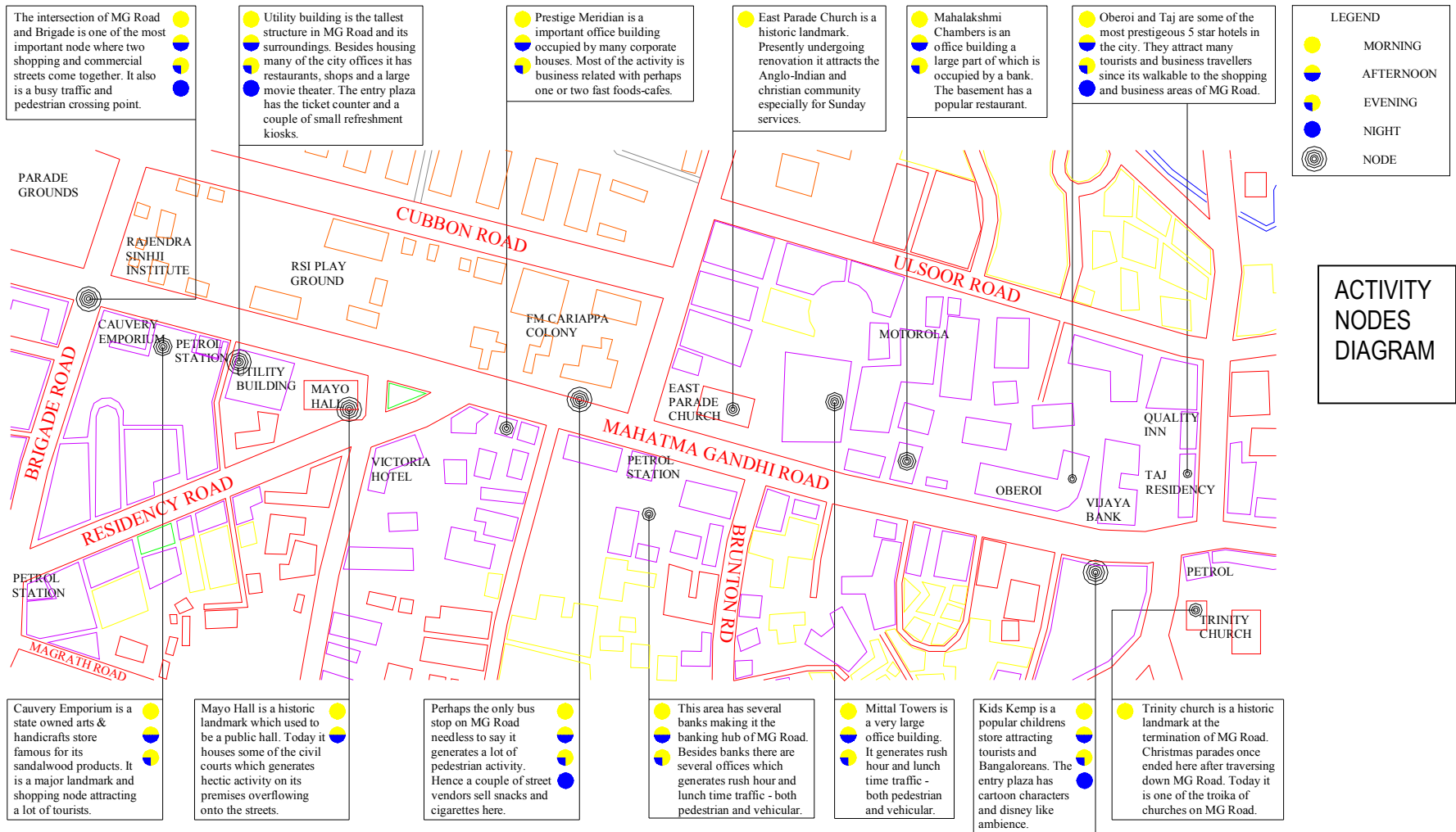
RELIGIOUS / MILITARY

M.G. Road has three churches, which are among the oldest in Bangalore. St. Mark's Cathedral was built along with South Parade (M.G. Road), which formed the heart of colonial Bangalore. East Parade Church and Trinity Church are the other two churches on M.G. Road. St. Mark's Cathedral and Trinity

Church are at the two ends of M.G. Road and formed anchors for military and ceremonial processions during the colonial era. Today they serve the area's Christian community. The Parade Ground and Ranjit Singhji Institute (RSI) are roughly at the centre of M.G. Road. In the colonial days, the Parade Ground was an important ceremonial space where the military band played and parades were held. Today it continues as a parade ground for the army and is sometimes used for music concerts and as parking space on New Year's Eve. RSI is a club for the officers of the Indian Defence Services (military).



The diagrams above and below illustrate the different activity nodes, the intensity of uses, type of use and time of the day / night they are used. M.G. Road has a diverse mix of land use and hence activity. Consequently it not surprising that M.G. Road has slowly evolved into the city's centre.



9.5. MORPHOLOGY OF M.G. ROAD



M.G. Road can be divided into different zones based on character and use. The predominant zone is the stretch between the Utility Building and The Bombay Store. This forms the main shopping and entertainment part of M.G. Road, which I have called 'The Shoppers Boulevard'. Next comes the elevated promenade along the Parade Ground, which I have called 'The Green Corridor'. The third prominent zone is the stretch from Mayo Hall to the Global Trust Bank building and from Mittal Towers to Vijaya Bank, which is the main business part of M.G. Road and can be called the 'Office Zone'. The designation of these abstracted 'zones' is partly based on the architectural/landscape character of the place, and partly on land use.

9.6. ISSUES AND PROBLEMS CONFRONTING M.G. ROAD

The increase in population of Bangalore has resulted in increased demand for public space. The CBD area, especially M.G. Road as the heart of retail and recreation space, attracts people from the suburbs. Hence a space that used to cater to a city of 2 million in 1980 has to now cater to a city of 5 million. Consequently traffic has increased exponentially in the CBD area, especially M.G. Road, which forms an artery for the city's east-west traffic. As a result the road has been widened and the sidewalk space is slowly being consumed for further road widening. The loss of sidewalk space has a direct adverse effect on the quality of the public space. The change in land use in the CBD area has led to the erosion of its strong cantonment character. Except for M.G. Road, which was the main street facing the Parade Ground, the rest of the area had narrow winding streets with bungalows on 1 to 4 acre lots. Developers have replaced them with office buildings and high-rise apartment blocks. Hence an essentially small town fabric has been burdened by big city development. As a result the tree-lined avenues, which provided adequate public space, has now become congested physically as well as visually because of the high-rise buildings. This change in land use has resulted in higher density in the CBD area and hence greater pressure on the infrastructure and on M.G. Road, which is getting congested. The increase in population and the change in land use have resulted in a tremendous increase in vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the CBD area, especially M.G. Road, Brigade Road and Commercial Street. The increase in vehicular traffic has led to road widening at the expense of the

sidewalk. Also some buildings have encroached on the sidewalk. Hence the space available to the pedestrian is shrinking. The sidewalk has been an important public space and is slowly being reduced to the function of circulation.

The change in people's needs and use of public space has resulted in several problems and issues for the city. For example change in people's life styles has led to under-utilisation of the Parade Ground, and the bridle path has disappeared. Likewise the sidewalk along M.G. Road is over utilised and is congested. Bangalore has always attracted people from various parts of the world. The Information Technology boom today has seen people migrating to Bangalore not only from all over India, but also from around the world. This cosmopolitan image that Bangalore has acquired has resulted in the creation of several eclectic spaces such as pubs, open-air cafes, and food courts. The young and globalised citizens of Bangalore crave a space to 'hangout', to shop, to meet friends, to recreate and to see and be seen. Thus far a private services industry and the streets have catered to these urges, though in a haphazard way. Those who cannot afford to patronise these services are being left out of this semi-public realm, causing a social rift. Also with pressure increasing on the streets it is becoming difficult to cater to entertainment and recreation needs in an appropriate manner. Hence the street, which used to be a democratic public space, is being reduced to the function of circulation. The public realm is slowly diminishing and the semi-private realm is filling in the void. This calls for a re-evaluation of the role of the street to determine how effectively it meets the current needs of various user groups, in Bangalore and exploration of type / types, which can be introduced in the public realm to meet present and projected future needs.

In addition to the above, some of the other issues contributing to the deterioration of the public space functions of M.G. Road are:

- Encroachment by illegal structures such as roadside religious shrines and cigarette kiosks.
- Increase in the number of roadside vendors.
- Lack of amenities like drinking water and public toilets.
- Lack of spill over/open space at important junctions.
- Road sections in some parts reveal a strong delineation of street from site, which is detrimental to the quality of the street.
- Chronic shortage of parking space.

The quality of M.G. Road as a public space is slowly deteriorating. The diagram below illustrates the relationships among the various issues contributing to this problem.

9.7. FUTURE TRENDS IN THE USE OF M.G. ROAD AS PUBLIC SPACE

Bangalore continues to be one of the fastest growing metropolises in India and perhaps in Asia. The growing population and the continuing flow of capital will continue to converge on M.G. Road for its business and entertainment needs, making it the de-facto centre of the city. Under these circumstances the present problems and issues facing the street will further worsen and complicate if drastic steps are not take to conserve what is good and develop a long term plan to improve and sustain M.G. Road as a good public space that can serve as the centre of a growing metropolis.

CHAPTER 10: FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR PUBLIC SPACE IN THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT OF BANGALORE

Globalisation has created a trans-national work force in Bangalore, which is becoming increasingly mobile globally. At the same time the phenomenon of call centres is churning out a neo-middle class population that works in different time zones and speaks in different accents, having different aliases while being just cubicles apart. This infusion of global capital into Bangalore is resulting in a pan-global culture fuelling the dreams of people who want to see the city evolve into another Singapore, a city-state that will take its rightful place on the world stage. Though globalisation and liberalisation of the Indian economy has led to large sections of the population graduating to the middle class, a significantly large part still lives below the poverty line. Today class competes with caste in dividing the city. The historic east-west division continues today due to the bi-nuclear nature of the city, with its two cores (KR Market area and Russel Market area). Bangalore also continues to have a core-intermediary-periphery zoning. Besides the east west zoning based on religion and the core-intermediary-periphery zoning based on socio-economic factors, the city is divided along caste and linguistic lines. These divisions in the city have led to urban and public spaces being contested by different groups in an attempt to “territorialize” and stake a claim on the city. The underprivileged are being pushed to the fringes and undesirable parts of the city. This coupled with increasing control over and the corporatisation of public space, is disfranchising the masses.

Bangalore’s urban primacy has led to a large influx of migrant workers, young professionals and entrepreneurs. This has led to the burdening of infrastructure in general. Thus it has also adversely affected the quality of public spaces and led to congestion, especially of streets throughout the city. As a consequence of M.G. Road being Bangalore’s main street for recreation, it is becoming more and more congested, reducing it to the function of circulation.

Bangalore today confronts several problems – congestion of M.G. Road, Bangalore’s evolving city centre; contest for public space based on language and caste and privatisation / corporatisation of public space; and lack of an imageable city centre.

Today M.G. Road and Brigade Road have evolved into a “public entertainment zones” selling a “Westernised, branded lifestyle”¹. In addition to restaurants and theatres, shopping is an important activity on M.G. Road and Brigade Road, which supports and influences the use and character of these streets. The life of these streets has been generated through shopping activity and the urge to promenade during colonial times. Consequently a change in the very nature of shopping is now directly influencing the use and vitality of these streets.

One can trace three stages in the evolution of shopping, and thus the use and public life of these streets. In the first stage the colonials created malls, which were streets with shops, restaurants, churches, and bungalows, where they could live, worship, shop and promenade. After independence the affluent rich classes and upper castes replaced the colonials. Their streets were partly democratised over time, with hawkers selling their goods on sidewalks, rallies being held in Cubbon Park and the poor masses occasionally strolling down these streets on their way to or from a weekend outing to Cubbon Park. In the second stage in the 1980’s internalised shopping malls (of the Singapore type) replaced several old shops and bungalows on Brigade Road and M.G. Road, their entrances and atriums acting as buffers between the street and shops, as a response to the democratisation of streets. It was a way to segregate the elite and the upper middle classes from the poor. Liberalization and globalisation led to a newly affluent middle-class, feeding a consumption frenzy, resulting in the third stage which manifested itself in the form of large exclusive department stores or ‘super-stores’ (such as Macy’s in the USA) selling expensive designer goods, where the undesirables were screened right at the gate. These monuments for shopping did not need a context to support business. In fact

isolation from the street and shopping areas was perhaps seen as an advantage, which would screen window shoppers and loafers. They were destinations by themselves for serious shoppers, without any distractions from the street.

Shopping malls, large exclusive department stores, pubs and cyber cafes are some of the largely indoor semi-public spaces that have proliferated in the city. Another type of semi-public space that has evolved along M.G. Road and in many other parts of the city is the open-air cafe. The forecourts (and in many cases the compounds) of many buildings have been converted into open-air cafes, Barton Centre and The Bombay Store being two such examples. These spaces, which until recently had no function and were merely superficial attempts at landscape architecture or plaza design, were converted into cafes as an after thought. But unlike European cafes these spaces have sharp spatial segregation (by means of level differences or hedges) from the sidewalk making their exclusivity obvious. Also they are highly controlled spaces, unlike many European street side cafes. The transparent malls and restaurants allow visual access while denying physical access to the lower income masses. These spaces accentuate the division between haves and have-not's, intimidating the poor and effectively keeping them out of even the sidewalk space. Sidewalk space and streets, which in Bangalore can be said to be the predominant public space in the daily life of its citizens, have maintained a certain extent of democracy (depending on the area in the city).

To add to the problem of spatial segregation of the city, as described by Rao & Tewari and Janaki Nair, renewed efforts are taking place along M.G. Road to claim private space from public space. Thus a mostly elite and middle class population is occupying the CBD area, slowly corporatising its public life and exerting more and more controls by the day. Recent trends like the proposal to clear M.G. Road of hawkers and the banning of bicycles, coupled with the new corporate aesthetic sensibilities, are threatening to privatise Bangalore's streets, especially the sidewalks. This is a dangerous and un-civic tendency, which may result in further fissures between the "democratic" and "civic/ corporate" movements, as identified by Janaki Nair, which could make the deprived more militant and aggressive in staking their claims. Public spaces should reconcile these differences rather than aggravate them. With pressure on land due to increasing population and density, a contest for space is inevitable. What is important is to reconcile these two movements and evolve a strategy through which public space can be returned to the people for the common good, irrespective of religion, caste, creed, class or political alignment, without compromising on aesthetics. At the same time the poor and deprived need to feel a sense of belonging and ownership in the city. Public space is one of the few mediums for such expressions and hence it is the duty of the city to provide it. While in a democracy it is difficult to control private land and how it is used (which will continue to influence the character of the sidewalk) it is surely possible to create new public spaces, which would incorporate into their programs the needs and aspirations of the underrepresented and underprivileged.

To curtail violent and disruptive demonstrations of ideas and aspirations by various interest groups, especially the suppressed, the city needs a democratic, civic space in the perceived/evolving heart/centre of the city – M.G. Road. Such a space would attempt to bridge the zoning of Bangalore and the lack of imageability of the city; providing its citizens a space to speak their minds, to protest, to celebrate, to mourn, to recreate, and most importantly to unite.

In the late 1970's Rao & Tewari raised the question whether Bangalore has any city centre to reflect its historical, cultural and cosmopolitan image. They went on to add that although there was no civic centre, some symbolic elements such as the Vidhana Soudha, Cubbon Park, the Sheshadri Iyengar Library, the Chinnaswamy Cricket Stadium, already existed and a full-fledged civic centre could be planned and developed incorporating these elements with art galleries, opera hall, and places of worship. They said such a centre should be a pedestrian precinct, insulated from motor traffic with fumes and noise, and should serve the citizens of all age groups, all socio-economic classes, and all religions¹. To the civic amenities that they mentioned, today several other public amenities exist which can be incorporated into a city centre structuring master plan, such as the Government Art Museum, The Visveswaraya Science Museum, the Aquarium, Jawahar Bal Bhavan, the tennis stadium, Mahatma Gandhi Garden, and Field Marshal Cariappa Memorial Park.

This advice was not heeded and even today Bangalore has no real city centre to represent its image and cater to its citizens. The Vidhan Soudha and Cubbon Park on one hand and M.G. Road on the other have come to symbolise Bangalore. These are the first images that come to a person's mind and a visit to Bangalore is incomplete without visiting these places. M.G. Road has also become Bangalore's single most important road. The elements of a city centre already exist, as observed by Rao & Tewari; it is a matter of giving them structure and enhancing their unique characteristics.

As explained earlier, in its present form as Bangalore's primary public space and evolving city centre, M.G. Road is saturated, with little room, both literally and figuratively speaking, to accommodate a city centre of metropolitan proportions. M.G. Road needs to be redeveloped to accommodate and streamline present and future needs and uses. At the same time the widening of sidewalk to cater to public space needs has its limits. The M.G. Road area, besides being a business and entertainment hub of Bangalore, is adjacent to the administrative complex (Vidhan Soudha, High Court, etc.), Cubbon Park, Chinnaswamy Stadium, museums and a children's park and amusement ground. An urban revitalization project, which would incorporate the above into a meaningful whole, would evolve into a city centre lending added imageability to the city. The instrument or element, which will tie them together, could be derived from the strategic location of the Parade Ground. The Parade Ground lends itself to such a project due to the following reasons –

- 1) Centrally located with respect to
 - a) Shopping areas – M.G. Road, Brigade Road, Commercial Street.
 - b) Civic amenities – museums, stadium and park.
 - c) Traffic along – St. Marks Road, Brigade Road, MG Road – part of North-South and East-West city traffic corridor.
 - d) The proposed ELRTS passes through it and is an ideal location for a metro station/ interchange node.
- 2) Part of it has already been converted into a public park and is adjacent to Mahatma Gandhi Garden and Cubbon Park.
- 3) Cubbon Park and M.G. Road area have been used for rallies and demonstrations. Hence it can provide space for peaceful demonstrations, festivals, concerts, etc.
- 4) As a relic of the colonial past reinterpretation of this space can help reconcile differences. A democratic space open to all which can be a symbolic city centre mediating between Tamil Ulsoor, colonial/corporate M.G. Road, political Vidhan Soudha and High Grounds, and Kannada *pete*, besides the cosmopolitan middle class suburbs and the slums.

To the amenities mentioned by Rao & Tewari I would like to suggest an open space truly public in the heart of the city. Such a space will be a critical space that will bring the city together and link the city's civic centre (Vidhan Soudha & High Court) and commercial and recreation centre (Cubbon Park & M.G. Road). A central public space on Parade Ground, within a larger district level master plan would go a long way in accomplishing this and acting as a pilot project that will encourage the development of more public spaces around the city.

The central public space would have to cater to the needs of four major groups in the city: the lower income groups, the nationalist groups, the middle-income groups and children, senior citizens, teenagers, and young professionals. Each of these groups has specific needs and aspirations, which the central public space should meet. The public space should facilitate the different groups to indulge in their activities without conflict with others and should help bring them together where their interests meet.

As mentioned earlier the lower income groups are slowly being squeezed out of M.G. Road and their primary needs of active and passive recreation and entertainment are not being met. They need to feel a sense of ownership and belonging in the city which public space can provide them by enshrining their right to free access. They also need to have more interaction with the middle-income groups so that they become assimilated into the main stream of society.

Therefore there is immediate need to provide a public space, which will support the various active and passive recreation, needs of the lower income groups and facilitate interaction with people from the middle-income neighbourhoods.

The Kannada language movement being a grassroots reaction to cultural dominance by outsiders, consists of the working class (lower income groups), the farmers from the periphery of the city, and the poor. The nationalist / Kannada groups feel the need to symbolically stake a claim on the centre of the city. This is necessary to mitigate their insecurity and facilitate expression of their sense of pride and ownership. Since rallies and protest have been banned from Cubbon Park and M.G. Road they need a space to hold rallies, protests, demonstrations, celebrations and other forms of congregation in a structured and nondisruptive manner. They need a space to voice their opinion and place their agenda on a central stage. This is important to start a democratic dialogue with other groups in the city and to spread awareness among the citizens. This would also facilitate in bringing various groups into the main stream of society. Therefore there is urgent need to provide a public space for the nationalists, which will proclaim it to be the symbolic heart of Karnataka, a state of Kannada speakers who have always been accommodating to outsiders with whom they have co-existed peacefully for centuries.

The liberalisation of the Indian economy has for the first time in centuries unleashed an economic revolution. As the country's Information Technology capital, Bangalore's middle-class has particularly benefited by this and their ranks are swelling every day. This new middle-class is today increasingly confident and positive of their future and aspires to place Bangalore on the global map. Consequently they have formed citizen's groups to influence the development of the city. They are increasingly exerting pressure and lobbying with the government to improve the infrastructure of the city and beautify it, while preserving and enhancing the 'Garden City' image as well as propagating the image of a modern, vibrant, secular, and democratic city. For them the city is a symbol of prestige and Bangalore today lacks an imageable and prestigious central public space worthy of a global city; this needs to be corrected. Like the nationalists they need a forum where they can voice their opinion and participate in democratic processes. They also need a space for recreation and entertainment and it is this common interest that they share with the lower income groups that can facilitate more interaction between the two, so that social tensions between the 'haves and have nots' can be reduced.

The needs of the fourth group comprising children, senior citizens, teenagers, and young professionals, cannot be ignored. A central public space will have to incorporate children's needs such as play, education and entertainment. Also teenagers and young professionals today crave spaces for active and passive recreation, to linger, socialise and just 'hangout'. This is especially acute for those who cannot afford to patronise the cafes on a regular basis. They also crave for spaces with cultural activities such as concerts, street performances, and films in the open air. Being the future generations of the city they need to be exposed to the democratic process and dialogues taking place among the various groups. This will provide them with a highly cognitive space where they can learn and eventually participate and influence developments in the city. Given the hustle and bustle of M.G. Road and the surrounding areas, senior citizens need spaces where they can rest, linger, and socialise. They also need spaces where they can take their morning and evening walks.

The creation of the public space would also alleviate the problem of parking and congestion along the sidewalks of M.G. Road & Brigade Road providing more pedestrian public space for the city to enjoy. Thus a central public space would be created which would essentially be a pedestrian friendly 'green corridor' or 'green infrastructure' for the city.

REFERENCES

1. Prakasarao, V.L.S. and Tewari, V.K. – The Structure of an Indian Metropolis: A Study of Bangalore, pg. 307.