

LEAFLET'20-'22

BIENNIAL BOOK OF ISOLA TN&PY



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CHAPTER

Indian Society of Landscape Architects
Tamilnadu & Pondicherry Chapter

PUBLIC SPACES

Connecting to Context, Culture & Communities



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There's been a lot of focus on Public Spaces with the recent developments on the regeneration of our cities, especially with programs like Smart City Development. The definition of a Public Space has widened from Parks & Plazas to Streetscapes, Roundabouts, Building Fronts, Water Fronts, Residual Spaces and even to Burial Grounds, connecting to the Context, Culture & Communities, of the place. The resurgence of interest and focus on Public Spaces is creating a new relationship among Local Authorities, Urban Designers, Artists, Architects and Landscape Architects.

In India, more than 30% of the population lives in urban areas. But most of the Indian cities including Chennai are falling short of per capita open space standards. Hence there is a pressing need for improving both the quality & quantity of our Public Spaces.

PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS



CRICKET GROUND - CHEPAUK



SEMMOZHI POONGA



SOMASUNDARAM PLAY GROUND

BEACHES



KOVALAM



MARINA



THIRUVANMIYUR

The most utilised PUBLIC SPACES of our city are distributed throughout the city & thanks to the conscious & consistent efforts from the Govt, their numbers increased remarkably in the past decade, adding more Greenery to the city. Still long a way to go to reach the standards of cities like Delhi & Bangalore.

Excluding a few parks like Adyar Poonga, Semmozhi Poonga & Anna Nagar Tower park & a few sensory parks most of the parks are generically designed addressing only the functional requirements – there's a lack of contextual uniqueness. Finally, the maintenance & management of these parks are still a challenge on a long term scenario.

The most popular & celebrated PUBLIC SPACES of Chennai.

They are fantastic spaces in terms of expansiveness, carrying capacity, very flexible & multipurpose in usage. And Bay of Bengal adds to the sense of place and character to these beaches.

In fact not doing anything will do lots of good to these spaces. Just keeping them clean & addressing its city edges with some recreational features, street furniture & public conveniences will make them awesome public spaces of all times!



MARSHLAND | LAKES | TANKS



They are the prominent water ecology of Chennai region. Unfortunately they are shrunk by 50% in their spread in the past 2 decades.

The issues involved are very complex (ie) ownership issues, encroachments, pollution levels and lack of political will. Kudos to the NGO'S & the public for their fantastic restoration efforts which have saved lots of these water bodies.

MEMORIALS



Memorials are more of tourist places. They stand out for their unique design, the contextual background and the appeal to the people at an emotional level.

RIVERFRONT | ESTUARIES | CANALS



Chennai is blessed with 3 rivers & a canal.

Great efforts like Adyar Poonga an estuary park, Kotturpuram Tree Park & others have been implemented along the river fronts. But these are just parts.

A long term wholesome exercise to clean, restore and recreate these rivers fronts with peoples space would give a massive face-lift to the city of Chennai.

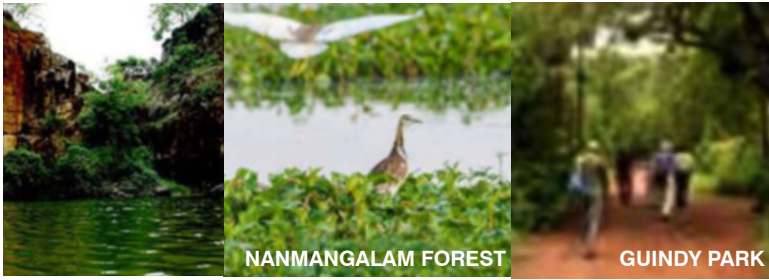
PLACES OF WORSHIP



Traditionally they were the great open spaces of our city.

Little more efforts of conservation & restoration shall bring back to glory!!

FORESTS



NANMANGALAM FOREST

GUINDY PARK

Very few cities in the world are blessed with a national park at the heart of the city, like Chennai.

Though these forests are fantastic lung spaces and do a great contribution to the microclimate & environment of the city, more efforts like ecotourism are required to make these as great public spaces. Nanmangalam forest is a great example of such efforts.

Things like Nature study centre, trekking, forest camps & workshops can be encouraged at these places.

CAMPUS GREENS



IIT

HIGH COURT

ANNA UNIVERSITY

Though they are semi public in nature, the campuses can become great public spaces of Chennai especially Theosophical Society, IIT, Anna University, MCC, YMCA which have so much of greenery & biodiversity.

They have to open their gates little more to the public participation. In the same way, Govt should take efforts to make these places – Ripon Building, Secretariat, all Govt buildings, Bus Terminus & Railway stations where people visit in thousands everyday – as better Public Spaces!

STREETSCAPES AND RESIDUAL SPACES



This is one typology of public space which is getting so much attention & evolving in beautiful ways, thanks to the smart city developments & the corporation schemes.

Pondy bazaar is an iconic example to mention.

BURIAL GROUNDS|CEMETERIES



Presently, these are the least cared public spaces of Chennai. We should all remember that these are our final destinations & they deserve to be much more dignified spaces.

More than 100 of them are in our city but most of them are yet to really catch up with the western districts of Tamil Nadu, where they have addressed these spaces and transformed them into beautiful Public Spaces!



CONCLUSIONS:

There are lots of issues with the status of our public spaces – ownership, encroachments & other things, pollution etc. so, for a long term master planning, we need to take a comprehensive survey of all the spaces.

We are loosing lots of open spaces for development year after year. While so much funding, planning & development is done on the development “PUBLIC SPACES” deserve the same level of focus, and contribution.

For this PUBLIC SPACES has to be the focus of the city & regional level policies.

A cross disciplinary & collaborative design & planning approach with the Planners & Urban Designer, Architects & Landscape Architects, Ecological & Economists, Psychologists, Social Behavior Experts, Artists & Lighting Experts along with the community participation would work wonderful for the Public Spaces.

Understanding the Context & Culture of the Public Spaces becomes really important, to create spaces of unique sense of place & imageability.

Less of vehicular & more of pedestrians! . And if all these Public Spaces are integrated with bikeways & pedestrians ways, it would lead to less pollution & great wellbeing for the people.





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