

Name of Scholar- Nidhi Sachdeva

Supervisor's Name- Prof. Qamar Irshad

Name of Faculty-Faculty of Architecture and Ekistics

Name of Topic-Exploring Spatial and Temporal transformations of an Urban Space during Local festivals

Findings

This study undertook an exploration of the spatial and temporal transformations of urban space during three local festivals: Chhath Puja, Durga Puja, and Dussehra. The findings underscored the significant role these festivals play in reshaping urban spaces temporally and spatially. They revealed how festivals contribute to community cohesion, cultural identity reinforcement, and the creation of vibrant public realms. Furthermore, the study highlighted the adaptive capacity of urban spaces during festival periods, accommodating large gatherings and fostering unique social interactions. The selection of Chhath Puja, Durga Puja, and Dussehra as focal festivals for this research is deliberate, reflecting their cultural significance within Delhi's diverse community landscape. Delhi, renowned as a melting pot of cultures and communities, hosts vibrant celebrations that symbolize the customs and identities of its inhabitants. Chhath Puja holds particular importance for the Bihari and Purvanchali communities, who observe it fervently, while Durga Puja is a cornerstone for the Bengali community, marked by elaborate rituals and festivities. Dussehra, celebrated widely by the Hindu community, carries profound cultural and religious significance across the city. These festivals attract substantial crowds of devotees, tourists, and spectators, underscoring their prominence as major cultural events in Delhi's calendar. The significant influx of attendees during major festivals not only transforms the urban environment but also poses distinct challenges for urban planning and design. The spatial dynamics and impacts on city infrastructure and public spaces are profoundly influenced by the large crowds these festivals attract. The survey analysis revealed significant differences in expectations among attendees of Chhath Puja at Kalindi Kunj Ghat, Durga Puja at C R Park, and Dussehra at Red Fort, reflecting diverse religious beliefs, cultural perspectives, and demographic profiles. Notably, Durga Puja at C R Park consistently exhibited the highest mean values across all evaluated criteria compared to the other festivals. Several factors contributed to the prominence of Durga Puja at C R Park. The locality benefits from a strong social and economic standing of its residents, coupled with its status as a well-developed residential area known for its vibrant food and market scenes. The meticulous planning and execution of the festival further

enhanced its appeal, garnering positive survey responses from the community. Conversely, Chhath Puja at Kalindi Kunj Ghat received the fewest survey responses, primarily attributed to the deeply religious nature of the festival participants who were less inclined to engage in survey activities. The area faces significant challenges related to accessibility and connectivity, which emerged as critical concerns affecting various analysed parameters negatively. Based on the qualitative analysis through activity mapping of festival sites, Dussehra emerges as superior when compared to Durga Puja and Chhath Puja. This conclusion stems from several key factors observed across these festivals. Dussehra's advantage lies in its frequent celebration in government-owned or designated public locations. This strategic choice facilitates effective crowd management and minimizes disruptions to residential areas. Moreover, substantial government involvement in planning and sponsorship ensures robust resource allocation, meticulous coordination, and comprehensive logistical arrangements, encompassing traffic control and security measures. The cultural and social significance of Dussehra further enhances its management and organization. The participation of celebrities, public figures, and tourists underscores its prominence, necessitating meticulous planning. Activities such as mela gatherings, Ramlila enactments, and effigy burnings demand careful orchestration, contributing to the festival's attraction and smooth execution. Conversely, Chhath Puja and Durga Puja often remain localized or community-driven, varying in the extent of planning and organization at the grassroots level. This decentralized approach occasionally results in disturbances within neighbourhoods during these festivities. It has also been found that during their operation, festivals have the power to drastically change the dynamics of public spaces, includes both the physical surroundings and human behaviour. A festival alters public space in a variety of ways that have a perception on different facets of urban life. Looking at how festivals alter public areas and how it affects people behaviours, the study has listed following points- ✓ Congestion and foot traffic increases ✓ Temporary infrastructures and spatial configuration Engagement with culture and art ✓ Social engagement and community development ✓ Changes in noise and sensory environment ✓ Consumption and economic activity ✓ Temporary land use adaptations ✓ Sense of belonging and identity The ANOVA results indicate that for all the three parameters (spatial, infrastructure and socio-cultural), Durga Puja celebrated at C R Park is the most significant followed by Dussehra celebrated at Red Fort and then Chhath Puja at Kalindi Kunj. This is explained by the way that festivals are constructed, arranged, and designed, which promotes social cohesiveness and movement around the venue. These findings have also been corroborated with Post-hoc analysis, observation analysis and visitors' perceptions.