City Space Architecture

Steering Through Negotiations on the Self and the Surround.
The Youth's Attempt at Navigating the Duality of the Urban and The Digital

Arryan Siingh
Balwantsheth School of Architecture, India
siingharryan@gmail.com

Abstract

In 2021, youth in India amounted to 371.4 million, representing a 22.7% population share (Youth in India-2022 Ministry of Statistics and Implementation). The haphazard urbanisation occurring in a city like Mumbai has resulted in the creation and further development of slums. The Western outlook of urban development for a culturally rich and homogenous city like Mumbai has resulted in the "othering" of Youth. Spaces that are meant for the community are used to create commercial properties. The community is, in turn, squeezed into slum rehabilitation homes. One witnesses a slash and burn of various communities- the youth being a common target among these. The city has created an increase in voids with the absence of any human interaction, and hyperactive spaces have germinated with vehicular obstructions restricting pedestrian movement. With its dichotomies, the city has created a platform where physical conglomerations are considered loitering, while digital platforms have become virtual playgrounds for the transference of thoughts and ideas. For each member of the city's youth that lacks access to open space, there exist dozens who gather in these digital centres. We, therefore, notice an interesting dynamic in the city where digital evolution and accessibility surpasses one's physical existence in the urban fabric. There have been attempts at making spaces within this fabric that are accessible for play, education, and gathering. The digital connection grows stronger than the physical-spatial one. The youth still triumphantly evolve through these disconnected connections. It is either this or non-existence. This photo essay attempts to bring forward this tumultuous relationship between youth and the urban domain, of the privatised open spaces and the global digital stage. The youth in the city, and by extension, the country, attempt to navigate this duality.

Keywords: youth, public space, duality, self, surround, dichotomy, India

Figure 1. Gated open spaces. Credit: Siingh, 2024

Figure 2. Streets become community driven economic spillovers. Credit: Siingh, 2024

Figure 3. Stark breaking of development between urban areas and the local community area.
Credit: Siingh, 2024

Figure 4. Streets are dynamic hubs but most often lack essential pause points. Credit: Siingh, 2024

Figure 5. One Green Mile- an urban public space intervention that allows education, play and interaction.
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