

LEARNING TRADITIONAL KONKAN HOUSING

LEARNING TRADITIONAL HOUSING TYPOLOGY OF KONKAN

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LEARNING TRADITIONAL KONKAN HOUSING

Abstract

It is important for us to know the indigenous traditions of various regions and to work towards the continuity of the architecture of the past. The conservation of these traditional techniques, methods, materials and planning aspects is important to preserve the particular values and culture. The evaluation of cultural properties in its architectural, historical, environmental, visual and aesthetic characteristics is necessary. The aim of paper will be the effort which will focus on the built heritage and traditional residential architecture in Konkan. Traditional architecture is the architecture passed down from person to person, generation to generation in a particular region. The objective of the study is to study various housing typologies, town level planning considerations, residential building construction techniques. The probable outcome of the paper is to document traditional knowledge system of construction in Konkan.

Keywords - Konkan culture, traditional knowledge system , built residential heritage.



Typical Settlement pattern in Konkan

LEARNING TRADITIONAL KONKAN HOUSING

Learning traditional housing typology of konkan

Introduction

India! A subcontinent-country of culture and traditions! Tradition consistently adapts to the changing time and suitably transforms to the changed circumstances. Tradition therefore survives and remains timeless. People build their habitat responding to physiographic, regional, social-cultural context and above all because of their aspiration to construct their own house and live in their own house. The housing pattern, their needs vary from place to place depending on the differences in socio-economic, cultural and physical factors. Even the housing layout varies within the same place either with changing time and transformation of culture or with the prevailing of different cultures in the same zone. So when it comes to the housing typology there are the three main aspects: spatial aspect, cultural aspects and political aspects that define the housing form in different places within the same zone or region.

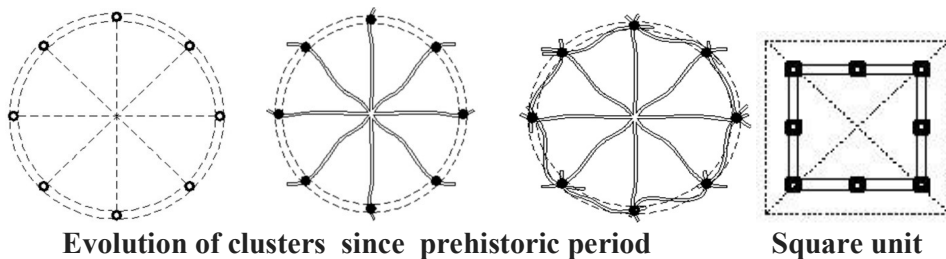
Konkan is west coastline of India. It stretches from Raigad to Manglore. Sahyadri mountain marks it's eastern boundary ,where as Arabian sea is forming beaches on western side. The seasonal, geographical, climatic and natural variations plays an important role in formation of variety of lifestyles of the people as well as the architecture. of the region. Traditional architecture is the architecture passed down from person to person, generation to generation in a particular region. The architecture of the konkan coast uses a sustainable approach and has an Indian identity. All materials used for rural house construction are generated from local sources and houses are constantly maintained and last for generations. It's interesting to see different patterns of configuration of literate sometimes mud even modern brick with Mangalore tiles on top. Even though there is abundant space available to build upon, most of the houses are forming irregular cluster. These houses share some common amenities such as *aangan*, *Tulsi vrindavan*, well, backyard etc.

LEARNING TRADITIONAL KONKAN HOUSING

Geographically, Konkan region is formed by tectonic uplift of due to collision of Indian and Eurasian plates. Due to collision it has formed variation in topography ranging from open beaches to area surrounded by hills. The evolution of early dwelling shelters date back to cave dwellers who subsequently began living in shelters built from material sourced from the environment around them. The shelters have evolved from prehistoric abodes in caves to live in full fledged dwelling shelters which began as a simple hut type shelter to a more compact dwelling unit which comprised of all the basic functions including the storage and a place for their cattle.

Traditional Housing Clusters

The material easily available for the construction of dwelling unit in ancient period were the streams trees and stones. They were arranged in circular form so as to protect the human from the harsh climates or the threats from the animals



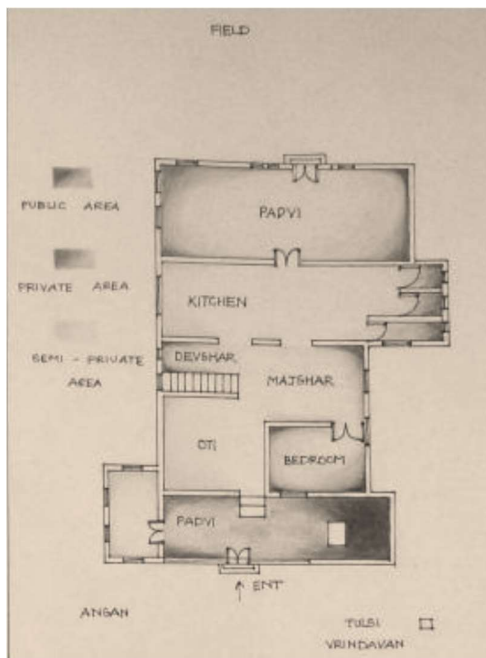
The stones gradually replaced by the vertical portions of the stems of the trees as wall enclosures. These were tied at the centre ,at the top and protecting entire space with providing the shadow. Walls served the purpose of partitions also. The space like domical form was evolved gradually with the use of the vertical and the horizontal members for thr wall enclosures and tied at centre and intermediate levels. The circular shape was difficult to the daily activities. Hence this form was modified with the square shape using the same material. This was found stable than earlier units.

LEARNING TRADITIONAL KONKAN HOUSING

Later the timber got replaced with mud. Finished walls and floors found more comfortable for users.



cluster of small dwelling units



Generally these houses are not separate entities but extensions. Generally these clusters are designed and built by people belong to same caste. Usually land own by one family, which get subdivided within family members. Generation after generation, as per need they build their place. For social security it is generally beside its origin. Small settlements generally known as *Wadi* is the traditional settlement pattern seen today also. Some of the villages are hidden in folds of hills.

Often the name of wadi or village are hidden in folds of hills. Often the name of wadi or village indicates its geographical position, such as *khalchivadi* (lower plateau), *varchi wadi*. Their daily activity is nurturing trees and harvesting their yield, which requires a lot of space, skilled people and plenty of storage. This activity pattern has been reflected in the built form of house in formal manner. The entire household including servants are involved in these farm-related chores. Naturally this space surrounding the house is utilized for this purpose. Being located on undulating terrain, terraces and pits (*khalas*) are created which have helped

LEARNING TRADITIONAL KONKAN HOUSING

in allocating different activities and distinguishing the areas from one another. The house occupies the peak of terrain with ancillary activities on lower levels. From the house one has overview of all the terraces. Figure 8 and 11 presents different activities in Konkan housing form.

The climate, physiography and the daily chores in household divide Konkani house into five parts: Angan- Padvi- OttiMajghar- Kitchen- Mala. The sloping terrain provides the facility of creating different terraces which can be earmarked for different outdoor activities which vary from harvesting the fruits, drying, cutting, peeling, making by products or utilizing various parts of trees such as wood, leaves, branches etc. These activities are manually carried out and take place in Angan or Padvi during summer season only.

Materials

In Konkan region due to the hot and humid climate, soil is formed which is rich in iron and aluminium. This soil is rusty-red because of the presence of iron oxides. This soil is developed due to the intensive and long lasting weathering of the underlying parent rock found below the top soil. Hence laterite stone is the stone which is available abundantly in very less cost, used for buildings in the region. Another material in timber which is commonly used . The wood of Saag (Teak wood) and Jackfruit are most commonly used traditionally for the construction. Saag which carries the load of the structure while Jackfruit timber is used for the other uses like in roofs, openings etc. The mud walls were used commonly traditionally in konkan for all the type of houses, irrespective of the community, while later the mud walls were being replaced by the Stone walls for the better durability of the structure.

LEARNING TRADITIONAL KONKAN HOUSING

Conclusion

Building technology has to develop locally to achieve the continuous process as occurred in history, thereby adapting to innovations in materials and changing cultural aspirations, at the same time achieving or maintaining a unique regional identity. The locally available materials were used in the traditional structures and they were recycled in the surrounding environments. They were easily available. Cheaper in cost, the processing time was less and the local labour or the craftsman was familiar to use them for the construction, from obtaining to the execution on site. Hence by extensive use of such materials, the house acted as the Eco House concept since rationally. Now-a-days such construction practices are facing the threat of extinction, rather than attempting to preserve them as such, they need to be adopted to the modern conditions and methods of construction. This paper helps to understand the traditional practice of construction which can be adopted to the modern context without severing their traditional links. A scientific knowledge and understanding of the old practices is essential to find the link between the modern and the old tradition.

LEARNING TRADITIONAL KONKAN HOUSING

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