

The “Break” Space: Then and Now

Garvitaa Singh Kushwaha¹, Sourabh Gour², Gauri S Zaveri³

^{1,2}Student, Department of Architecture, SDPS College of Architecture, Indore, India

³Assistant professor, Department of Architecture, SDPS Women’s College, Indore, India

Abstract:- “BREAK” space, in architecture, refers to the transition spaces which are connecting spaces between two confined spaces. It is a space of experience between the inner and the outer worlds; an intermediate or a third space. The study is carried out in context with Indian Architecture and compare of how they were planned and designed in the earlier times to how designers deal with it now-a-days. Indian architecture is an integration of community, culture element and sustainable development. Transitional space is a requisite part of any building be it residential, commercial, educational, industrial or any other form of structure. This paper explains about various types of spaces and its treatment with time. We will mainly focus on courtyards.

Key Words: Transitional spaces, break space, courtyard, corridors.

1. INTRODUCTION

An architectural space is incomplete without transition spaces. The inclusion of transitional and circulation spaces, in the form of corridors, atriums and stairwells, is unavoidable in the design of most buildings. The percentage of these spaces may however vary according to the function/type of the building. Their functionality also varies according to the appropriate requirements of the building or the user. Key fact is that be it ancient buildings or buildings with essence of post modernism, transitional spaces have been present in different types and scales. We will study about the changes that have occurred with passing time in these break spaces.

1.1 TRANSITION SPACES IN INDIAN ARCHITECTURE

Transition spaces have played a major role in Indian Architecture. It has varied in scale, type, use and typology. They have played a major role in the division and connection of spaces and has also been helpful in maintaining privacy. Indian architecture has witnessed various forms of transition space or break space which includes corridors, courtyards, lobbies, atriums, pavilions, entrance foyers, aisles, , water bodies, openings like doorways, pathways, grounds, patios, gardens, trellis, pergolas, foyers, lobbies etc. some of the spaces were only for visual purpose while some of them were functional.

1.2 TRANSITION SPACES WITH RESPECT TO SCALE

These spaces have varied so much in reference to time and scale. For example let’s compare two residential places with different scales, take courtyards and corridors of haveli/fort to that of residences. When we look around in havelis, specially havelis of Jaipur, we see similar kind of courtyards,

gardens, seating spaces, corridors and waterbodies in between usually known as talau.. These openings are at a very large scale as compared to that of today. When areas were big in earlier times, there was not just one but many number of courtyards. Each had a different purpose. Some were used as main entrance foyer and also for interaction of general people to the majesty, while some were used for entertainment purpose and leisure. Also they have played a major role in maintaining the privacy of women which were considered as a very big responsibility. Apart from all this, climatic conditions of that region played a major role in designing that particular area or opening. These openings were considered as lungs of that area. They were also used to keep off the hot air from the interior part of the haveli.

But in residence the element of grandness is not present. Transition spaces are getting subdued by other materials and are not noticeable. Because of small area of houses, people usually do not invest and waste their land in providing open courtyards and large corridors. As no particular direction is needed in a house, corridors and passages are also very limited. Some designers provide a small entrance foyer at a house, so it acts as a medium or a buffer zone between the interior and the exterior.

Hence scale stands as an important role in differentiating transition spaces between a spatially different but functionally similar place. A place or a dwelling may functionally be same, but physically and psychologically it has different impact on people.

2. COURTYARDS AS TRANSITION SPACES

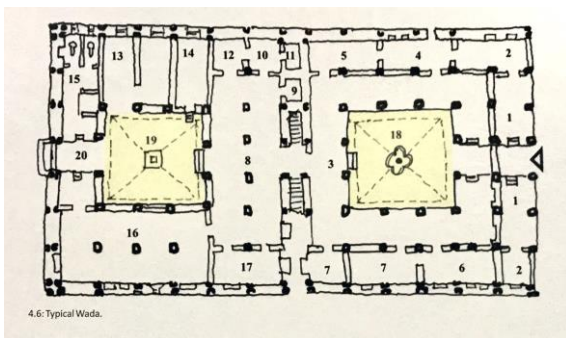
Transition space provides an opportunity for a person to interact and create a space that re-engages the person in that space or through that space, with some interruptions or pauses. Designing of internal spaces with openings, big or small which is also called courtyards, have been a practice in earlier times. Courtyard in any house is a medium that establishes a direct connection between the interior and exterior and vice versa. Along with transition, it also helps us as an interactive space. The one main factor of it is that it is semi private when designed inside, hence it helps in maintaining a cohesion between the outer surroundings with the inner world. A wide range of household activities can also be extended here. It acts as a breathing space for the whole house. Other than just being a transition space from inside to outside, it is also designed to control climatic impact on the building. It helps in providing an exit for the hot air through the opening and letting the cooler air reside in. It also helps in providing ventilation and natural light.

2.1 CORRIDORS AS TRANSITION SPACES

Corridors are an essential and a non-negotiable part of any structure. Understanding a building from its inside and also its spatial structure, a person needs a walkway which provides us with a particular direction. A corridor helps in providing a particular direction and also helps in understanding architectural settings. Different types of corridor placements are been provided in different kind of buildings. For ex. corridors in schools will be provided in such a way that one side of it opens towards the classrooms, while the other side usually opens towards an open area, to provide light and ventilation. Where as in residences, large corridors are usually avoided and also are not very much needed. Corridors there are usually facilitated only for providing a particular direction towards a room. It also helps as an interactive space which can be provided in buildings for people to engage with each other.

TRANSITION SPACES: THEN

When we study and compare about transition spaces designed in earlier times to that of now, there is no major change, rather it has evolved from it. We have already seen how transition spaces, mainly courtyards were treated in havelis and fort. Not only in Rajput architecture, but also in edifice of Maharashtra, courtyards were very noticeable. Wada Architecture is a term which explains about the courtyard culture of the structure and mansions of Maratha reigns. In a tropical region, the skylight is generally dispensed and is substituted by a courtyard. It was served as a connective thermostat, moderating and controlling the diurnal variations of temperature. Hence the courtyards were shaded in a kind that they provide shelter at the time of summer and winter sun during colder months of the year. Be it any large building, the scale of courtyards were not increased, instead number of courtyards were added. Generally in big wadas, minimum two courtyards were present. Both of them were used for different purposes. The first courtyard was served as an entrance foyer and also for public interactions. Whereas, the second courtyard was been used for private and intimate meetings, private level sessions, etc.



Corridors on the other hand have been constant in their function and design. The scales of it have been varied with time.

REVIVING COURTYARD SPACES IN THE PRESENT ERA.

Courtyard culture is still not diminished from the present era, but because of a limited amount of space available with people they usually don't go for such open spaces. Also with the trend of high-rise building culture, this beautiful space of living is getting less attention. People these days are focused on the maximum number of rooms and area for their houses but do not focus on these break spaces which is equally important for designing and betterment of living.

Some provisions that can be provided are:

1. High rise buildings can be designed in such a way that a break space (treatment by corridors) is provided between two flats which can be designed with a double height connecting the next two flats of the upper floor. A double height area is created with an area in between where people can interact. One side of this area can be remained open for light and ventilation. A subtle interaction of people will be created .It is also called atrium courtyard and was used in ancient times.
2. Two towers of a building can be connected by extending the corridors as a bridge. This bridge can be considered as a connection between them and also an interacting space between two towers.
3. In small plots where area is limited, small green areas and gardens can be provided in between. If not possible then some areas with open to sky provision can be designed. An open to sky area has approximately usability coefficient of half that of built up room. For reference, Belapur Housing designed by Charles Correa is a beautiful example of indulging courtyard culture in a small area plot.

3. CONCLUSION

We can conclude that transition spaces not being the highlight, is an essential part in designing of any structure. A structure is incomplete or is function-less without the presence of any transition space. Every type of break space be it courtyard, corridor, lobby, atrium play an important role at some point in designing. Courtyard designing to be precise, is a task in designing in the present scenario. But with the reference of old methods and with the treatments and modern technology they can be revived and be evolved out of small places and areas. Corridors on the other hand can be treated in such a way that they get sufficient amount of light and ventilation. These approaches can be applied and should be bought into use for a better lifestyle.

REFERENCES

- [1] Zhaoping Zhang "Architecture for housing: Multi functional transitional space of housing in China"
- [2] Shweta Deshmukh "Understanding transitional spaces"

- [3] Mohammed Taleghani “ The effect of transitional spaces on thermal comfort and energy consumption of transitional spaces
- [4] Charles Correa “The new landscape- urbanization in third world”