

# DEVELOPING PUBLIC SPACES FOR COMMUNITY

## INTRODUCTION

Public spaces are closely interconnected with life in the neighbourhood. A strong sense of association exists between the sense of community and public spaces. The sight of community public spaces in every locality is habitual. This establishment plays a significant role in keeping the community dynamic by encouraging members of the community to explore arts, crafts, physical, social, charitable and learning activities. There are a wide variety and types of public buildings that serve different services to the communities in rural areas. This includes community centres/ halls, youth facilities, Libraries, Art galleries, Museums and performing Art centres.

The physical, social and psychological factors have a huge impact on public spaces. This study discusses these factors that influence the users in acquiring a meaning of public space creating a sense of community, which is an outcome of participation and interaction in the physical space over some time. In order to have a better understanding of the community public spaces, the observation from the study is analyzed using a community centre in Naidi village, Fiji.

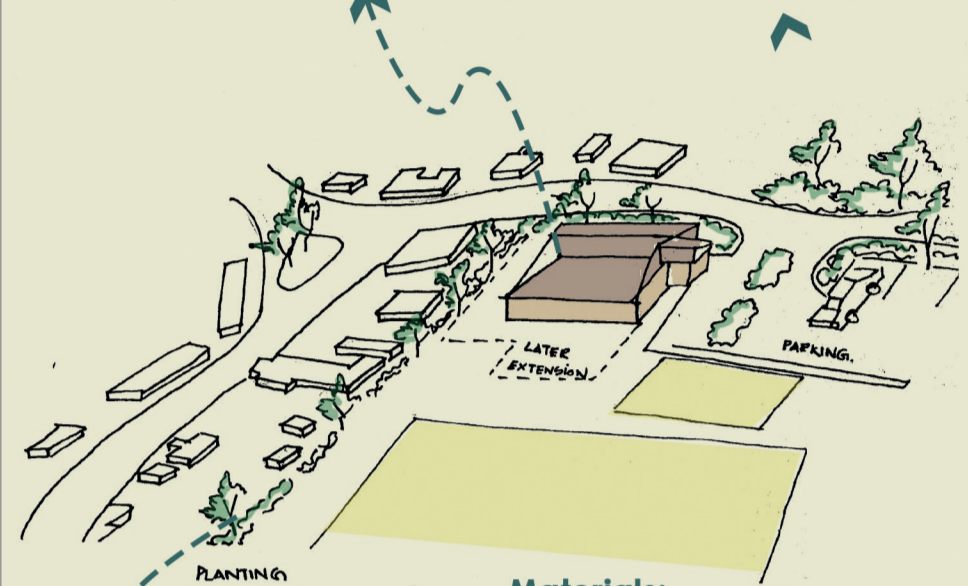
## PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:

Community buildings play an important role in the development of recreation, cultural and personal welfare of community members. Space should be able to accommodate community meetings and various group activities. More than the required functions of the building, the design should ensure a full range of activities.

**SITE:** The site chosen for the community should be able to access from all parts of the located area, which will instill prominence the building.

The building should be placed away from residential areas.

The potential site should have enough space for parking and buffering.

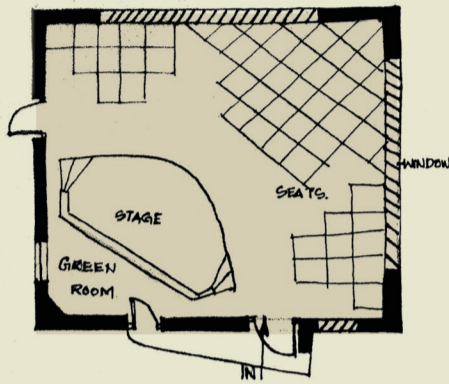


Landscape on the site will to create visual and physical connectivity.

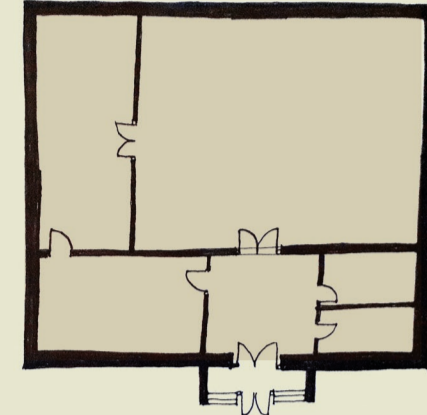
### Materials:

The right use of local materials and construction techniques will give the building durability, robustness, appearance and easy maintenance of the building.

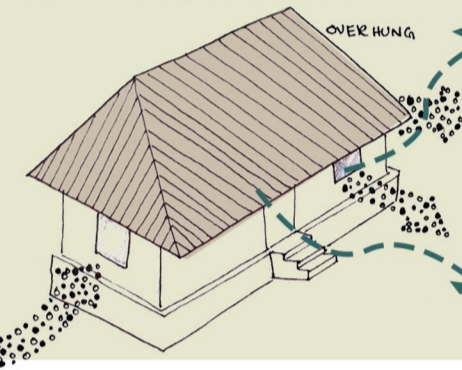
**PLANNING:** Each location has individual requirements for community buildings, but the plan should permit flexibility to accommodate all the activities of groups from all age group.



More of the functions in rural areas happens outside the building. A small hall will fulfill the community requirements.



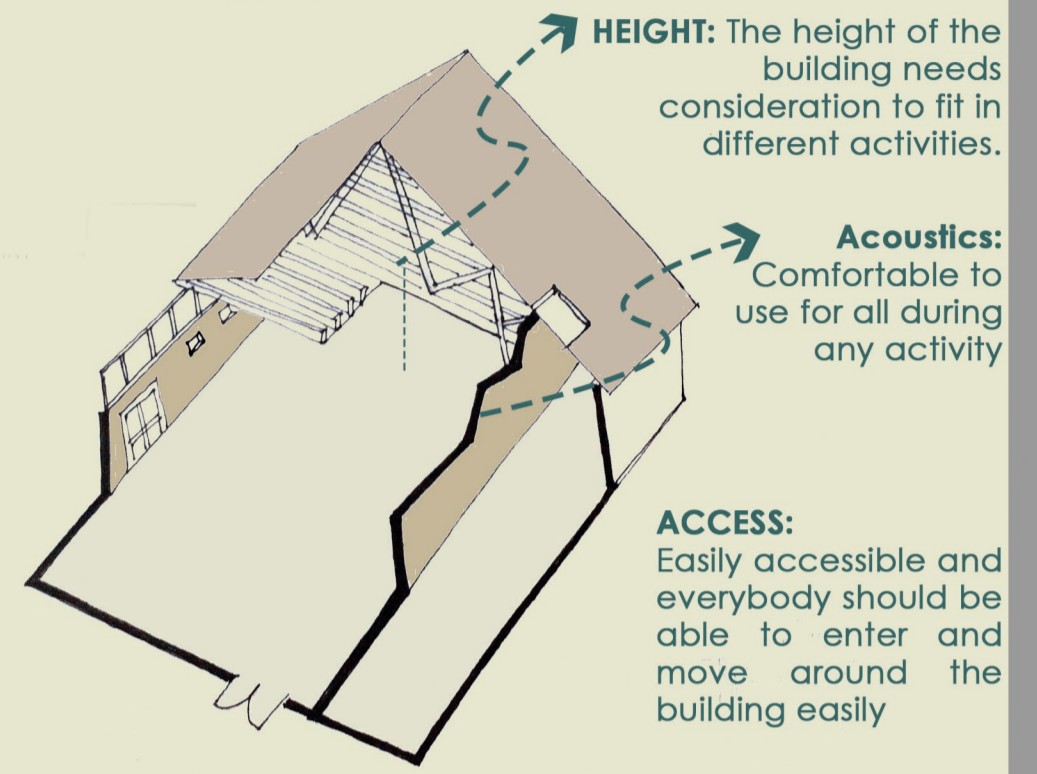
A building with supplementary rooms makes the space more flexible than a subdivisible main space



**CLIMATIC CONSIDERATIONS:** Cross ventilation and airflow within the building will help to provide good quality light and ventilation to balance the heat loss and summer heat gain.

A large sloping roof covers the building adequately during rain and sun.

**DESIGN CONSIDERATION:** Traditional domestic construction is the most appropriate method.



**HEIGHT:** The height of the building needs consideration to fit in different activities.

**Acoustics:** Comfortable to use for all during any activity

### ACCESS:

Easily accessible and everybody should be able to enter and move around the building easily

### BUILDING ENVIRONMENT:

- High levels of comfort are required to encourage people to leave their houses and make maximum utilization of the space.
- Flexible response heating and lighting and ventilation are essential to accommodate a high range of activities.
- Natural ventilation helps to provide good quality light and ventilation to balance the heat loss and summer heat gain.

## SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS:

Socio-cultural character is an area that plays a significant role in the social process through social interaction and cultural assimilation.

Use of local traditions and values in planning and designing the spaces creatively not limiting to the ideas to historical forms to create a cultural identity.



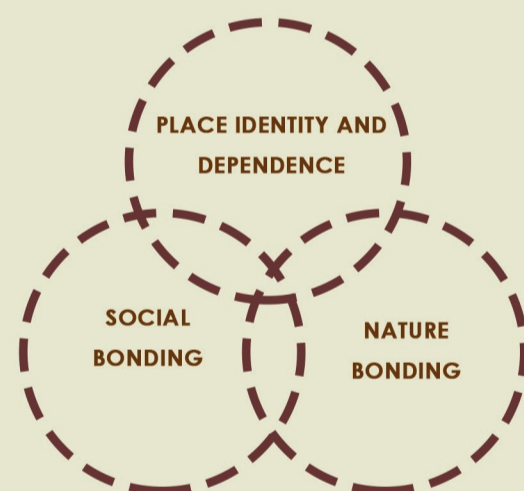
Section of cultural community centre in Kerala, India

## BEHAVIOURAL FACTORS:

Public spaces for communities are platforms for social exchange. A sense of community with spaces improves the well being of the community by creating a space of engagement, a Place of attachment and civic participation.

### Place attachment: Factors influencing place attachment

- Personal Context
- Place identity
- Place dependence
- Rootedness

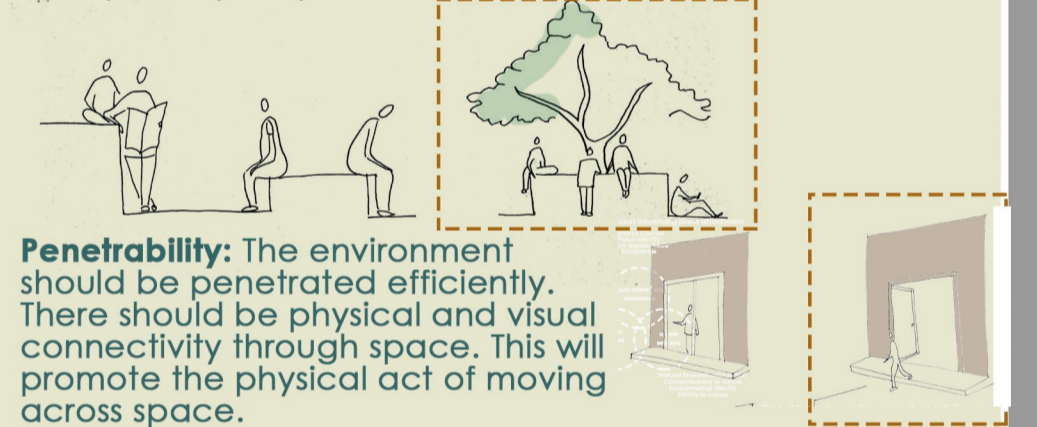


- Community Context
- Neighborhood attachment
- Belongingness
- Familiarity

- Natural Environment Context
- Connectedness to nature
- Environmental identity
- Affinity to nature

**Space of engagement:** Interventions used converting buildings into space of engagements.

**Occupiability:** Community spaces should be able to pause and get involved in the durable occupation. This makes occupiability of spaces a primary concern.



**Penetrability:** The environment should be penetrated efficiently. There should be physical and visual connectivity through space. This will promote the physical act of moving across space.

### Sociability:

- Promote social interaction
- An increase in the space used for movement will lead to more social cohesion.

### Legibility:

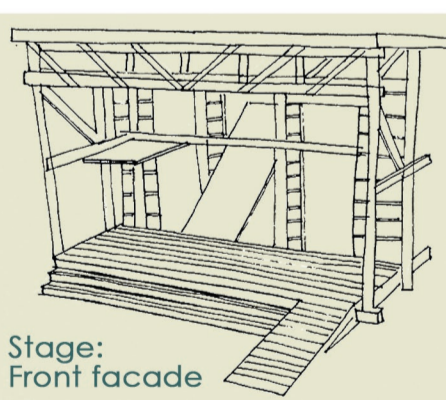
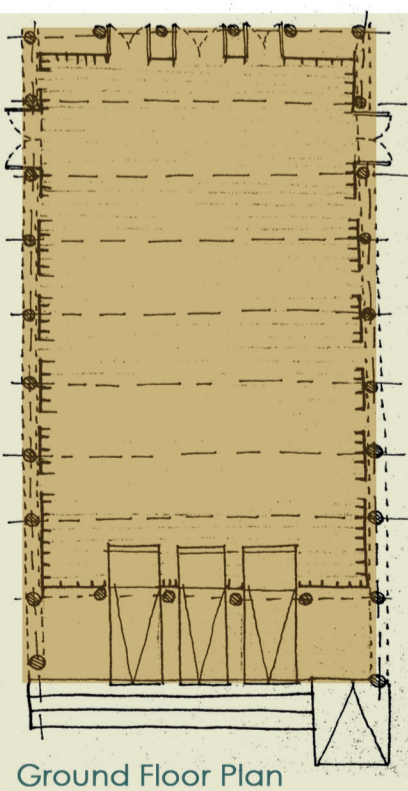
- Clear circulation
- Easy navigation through the spaces
- Connecting the spaces to easily create mind mapping

## CASE STUDY: COMMUNITY CENTRE, NAIDI, FIJI

**Propose of the building:** Naidi village in Fiji needed a community building for 7 years. It is built for 400 people ie, 75 households. The building is a hall for accommodating performing arts, creating local homemade crafts and performing their famous 'make' dance. The building is designed to provide keeping villagers of Fiji a safe, functioning and beautiful space to express themselves.



- The building is placed at the centre of the village.
- The design of the community hall is generated around a theatre staging, which is placed on the front façade which is extended to a hall.
- The building has an extended ceiling height with windows and ventilators.
- The building is constructed using local prefab timber by the Villagers. The hall is placed on a slope on stilts.
- The design is a result of a collaborative process between the villagers and professionals.



- Promotes the sociability of space
- The structural innovation used in the building makes it durable, cyclone-resistant and replicable by the villagers.

## Analysis

• This building embraces the socio-cultural activities of this village.

• Open space in front of the building gives ample space for various outdoor activities. Planting more trees and plants in order around the open space would have helped to create a more welcoming



• Sufficient space is given for the stage and the hall. Subspaces will make the spaces more flexible. The high ceiling not only makes the room convenient for all activities but helps to bring the natural flow of air and adequate daylight into the building. This also keeps the building cool during the hottest days of Naidi.

• Penetrability: Three large opening doors at the front and the windows and doors around the hall brings maximum penetrability into space.

• Participation: The collaborative approach towards the designing of the building has helped to establish a space more suitable for the villager's needs. This has helped the building to create an identity that is entangled with the culture of the village.

• The number of art performances and functions hosted after the completion of the building proves that the collaborative effort successful.

**CONCLUSION:** The Community buildings are social spaces for people in neighbourhoods. These spaces are designed to respond to the local needs and aspirations of the community. These buildings are influenced by physical, social and psychological dimension with significant overlap. Sense of community plays an important role in making these buildings a success. Appropriately developed and used community public spaces will have a good impact on the quality of life in that area. From the case study of the community hall in Naidi, Fiji, it is evident that these kinds of spaces can be developed anywhere. Using the collaborative design development process this building could be established as the users second home. People of Naidi village get together and get involved in activities to express themselves. Such places are significant for personal and community growth, which will become an expression of that neighbourhood.