
**CRITICAL ASSESEMENT ON THE CURRENT OPERATION OF
PLANNED PUBLIC OPEN SPACES IN ADDIS ABABA`S URBAN
ENVIRONMENT:**

(The Case of Meskel Square and Leghar Park)

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CONTENTS

List of Maps and Photographs	iii, iv
Acknowledgement	v
Abstract	vi
Organization of the Thesis	vii
1. Introduction	1
1.1. Problem Statement	1
1.2. Objective of the study	4
1.3. Scope and Limitations of The Study	5
2. Research Methodologies	6
2.1. Criterias for Selecting Case Areas	6
2.2. Methods Of Information Gathering	8
2.3. Analytical Framework.....	10
3. Literature Review On Urban Public Open Spaces	14
3.1. Meanning	14
3.1.1. Urban Space.....	14
3.1.2. Public Open Spaces	16
3.2. Urban Public open Space and Urban Life.....	20
3.2.1 The Roles of Public Open Spaces In Urban areas.	21
3.2.2. The Forces Shaping Public Open Spaces.....	23
3.2.3. People Perspectives Of Public Open Spaces	26
3.3. Factors for The Failure Of Public Spaces.	30
4. Contextual Background	38
4.1. Early Development Of Addis Ababa	38
4.2. Public Open Spaces From the Early Development Of Addis Ababa.....	39
4.3. Past Planning Practices and Public Open Spaces in Addis Ababa.....	43
5. Case Studies	49
5.1. Case Study I: Meskel Square	49
5.1.1. Introduction.....	49
5.1.2. Analysis and Study Findings	52
5.1.3. Conclusion.....	84
5.2. Case Study II: Leghar Park	87
5.2.1. Introduction.....	87
5.2.2. Analysis and Study Findings	89
5.2.3. Conclusion.....	105
6. Discussion	107
7. Recommendations	116
References.....	117
Appendix.....	117

LIST OF MAPS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

MAPS

1. Le Corbusier Sketch for Addis Ababa (1936)	44
2. Guidi & C.Valle: General Urban Perspective View of the new Italian centre (1936)	45
3. Addis Ababa city Centre, by C.K. Polonyi (1978)	47
4. Meskel square (user groups map)	56
5. Meskel square (Observations map)	57
6. Meskel Square (Activity map)	67
7. Leghar Park (Activity Map)	92

PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Aerial Photograph of Meskel Square	8
2. Aerial Photograph of Leghar park	8
3. Picture that Show Lack of Places to sit	30
4. Picture that shows lack of Places to sit	30
5. Paris` Park de la Villette	31
6. Paris` Park de la Villette	31
7. New York City's Bryant Park	32
8. New York City's Bryant Park	32
9. Water Front Park in Barcelona	33
10. Berlin Zoo	33
11. Arizona Park	34
12. Luxembourg gardens in Paris	34
13. George Street in Sydney	35
14. George Street in Sydney	35
15. Picture Showing Liveable Street	36
16. Picture showing dead Street	36
17. Picture showing inconveniently placed transit stop	37
18. Picture showing properly placed transit stop	37
19. Picture from Early Addis Ababa – “Gibbi area”	40
20. Picture from Early Addis Ababa – “Arada area”	40
21. Meskel Square and Its Surrounding Land Uses	49
22. New Construction at the eastern part of Meskel square	51
23. Recently Added lightings at Meskel square	52
24. Small Children Playing Football at Meskel Square	53
25. Adult People at Meskel Square	55
26. Meskel Celebrations at Meskel square	58
27. Meskel Celebrations at Meskel square	59
28. The Great Ethiopian run at Meskel Square	60
29. Audiences gathered at Meskel square for Music Concert	61
30. Music Concerts at Meskel Square	61
31. People watching Football matches on the sonic screen at Meskel Square	65
32. Running activity on the Grass Amphitheatre of Meskel Square	67
33. The physical condition of the Grass Amphitheatre	68
34. People watching Activities at Meskel Square	68
35. Sheep grazing at Meskel square	69
36. One View of Meskel Square	70
37. Homeless people sleeping at Meskel Square	70
38. Wrongly used part of Meskel Square	71
39. The Grass Amphitheatre of Meskel square	78
40. The Public Toilet at Meskel Square	79
41. Recently provided poor quality moveable toilets at Meskel square	79

42. The tribune at Meskel square	80
43. Designed seats at the grass amphitheatre of Meskel Square	81
44. Natural Stone seats at Meskel Square	81
45. New lighting fittings at Meskel Square	82
46. Leghar park and its Surrounding Structures	87
47. The Lion of Judah Monument at Leghar Park.	88
48. Users in Leghar Park Sharing the Concrete seats	90
49. People using Leghar park as a bus waiting area	91
50. Shoe shinning activity at Leghar Park.	93
51. Homeless people Using Leghar Park as sleeping area	94
52. Leghar park at Night time	94
53. Trees at Leghar Park	99
54. Seats at Leghar Park	100
55. Broken Seats at Leghar Park	100
56. Part of Leghar park which is Used as toilet	101
57. Poor soft landscaping design at Leghar Park	102
58. Pedestrian walkway at Leghar park	103
59. A Plastic house Constructed at Leghar Park	103

Abstract

The City of Addis Ababa, which is the Capital city of Ethiopia and the diplomatic capital of Africa, is currently experiencing multiple problems related with its spatial and Physical development. Its existing urban environment is characterized by poor urban image and absence of adequate facilities and services of international standards. These problems of the city are well prevailed by its poor quality urban public open Spaces, which were designed in such a manner to be utilized for various needs at a city level, among others.

The general objectives of this study are therefore to find out how two well known public open spaces in Addis Ababa, Meskel square and Leghar Park, are currently operating and how the society is using them in everyday life; and also to analyse the major factors that affect their current operation.

The study will attempt to answer the following questions: how these spaces of the city are currently operating? I.e. how does the society use them in everyday life? Besides, who is responsible for the planning, design and management of urban open public spaces In Addis Ababa? How do urban open public spaces in Addis Ababa created, developed and used? What kinds of facilities are provided by these spaces in the city? And, who actually uses these spaces?

The research focuses on the current operation of urban open public spaces in Addis Ababa (i.e. those which are accessible for everyone).It employed a case study method. The current operation of the selected case study areas are analysed according to their sociability, use and activities, access and linkage, & comfort and image. By doing so, the study tries to analyse how several factors related with their planning, management and design affect or influence their current operations or roles in the city. It also tries to draw lessons that might help in the formulation of policies and guidelines related to the issue.

The findings of the study indicated that, in Addis Ababa Meskel square play several important roles. It function as a forum for political demonstrations; as a social space whereby the community performs its historic, religious and other socio-cultural activities which include: Sport tournaments, music festivals, recreation and ritual observances. On the other hand Leghar Park. Currently functions as a transit station area though it is not designed for this purpose. The significance of both public open spaces in the city is unarguable; however, currently due to various factors their operation or performance as a public space is highly threatened.

Problems related with these spaces of the city are multifaceted. They have problems related with their management; access, environmental design; and physical design. Additionally the privatisation of considerable amount of other public open spaces in Addis Ababa has affected the accessibility and in general the public ness of such spaces in the city.

To improve their weakness and to protect and enhance the positive attributes of the public open spaces, the study recommends the following. Revitalization policies and programs that are based on urban design principles and guidelines should be developed. The programs should take into account: the users` characteristics and purposes of these spaces, the accessibility, management, environmental design and physical design of these spaces.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

The thesis paper is organized in the following manner:

The first chapter discusses the need to study public open spaces in Addis Ababa by explaining the various problems related with the current operation of these spaces in the urban environment of the city. It also tries to indicate: how the research question for this paper is developed. The objectives of the study; the envisaged outcomes of the research; and scope & limitations of the study are also discussed here.

The following chapter elaborates the type of research method selected for this study and why it is chosen. The criteria used to select the case study areas are also discussed briefly in this chapter. Furthermore, this chapter briefly explains, the various techniques and tools adapted and used to gather the necessary information for the study.

By reviewing the available literatures, the third chapter enlightens the reader on public open spaces from the point of theoretical issues. In search for relevant lessons that affect the uses of public open spaces in the urban environment of Addis Ababa, the historical development of public open spaces, the relation between public open spaces and public life, and practices in other countries are discussed here.

The fourth chapter presents the contextual background for the study. Under this chapter relevant issues related to the development of public open spaces in Addis Ababa city like the city's early development and past planning practices and approaches are discussed.

Chapter five introduces the two case study areas selected from Addis Ababa's urban environment and presents the main findings of the research paper.

The sixth chapter discusses the results of the study in relation to the theoretical background and the past planning practices and approaches.

Based on the findings of the study, Chapter seven summarizes the research process and forward recommendations which might help the use of the existing public open spaces in the urban environment of Addis Ababa and also forward important lessons for the future provision of public open spaces in the city.

CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Addis Ababa, which is the capital city of Ethiopia and a diplomatic capital of Africa, is established in 1886 by emperor Minilik and his wife without a preconceived plan. The city's early development was characterized by spontaneously grown traditional neighbourhoods around the first urban units, which comprised of the emperors palace, commercial & religious centres and the residences of the king's noble men.

Since the short period of the Italian occupation (1936-1941), however, to formalize this spontaneous development and to give the city the right growth direction different city scale urban plans were prepared and implemented¹. Despite all these efforts, currently the city is experiencing multiple problems related with its spatial and physical development. Its existing urban environment is characterized by poor urban image and absence of adequate facilities and services of international standards. These problems of the city are well manifested by its poor quality urban open public spaces, which were designed in a manner to be utilized for various needs at a city level.

Urban open public spaces provide an invaluable role and contribution towards re-generation, healthy living, social inclusion and culture, all leading to an improved quality of urban life². Similarly urban open public spaces in Addis Ababa play many important roles. They function as a forum for political demonstrations; as a social space where by the community performs its historic, religious and other socio-cultural activities which include: sport tournaments, music festivals, and recreation and ritual observances. The significance of these spaces in the city is unarguable; however, currently due to various factors, which this thesis intends to address, their functionality as a public space is highly threatened.

Today one of the challenges faced in relation to urban open public spaces in Addis Ababa is the availability of these spaces in the city. Presently there are different types of such places in the city, which provide different services, however, their availability with respect to the size, the international notion of the city and its population size, seem far from satisfaction. ORAAMP (the office for the revision of the Addis Ababa master plan) indicates that there is a marked gap between the demand for these facilities and the supply of amenities that go with the spaces. The city administration is unable to keep pace with the expectations emanating from the scale of change the city undergoes. It also indicates that such facilities in Addis Ababa hardly meet the standards provided by other competitive African cities³.

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1. ORAAMP, Addis Ababa in action: city development plan 2001-2010, executive summary,1996,(p.6)
 2. Unused public spaces in the Maltese urban Environment, (2004).Available: http://www.bicc.gov.mt/bicc/files_folder/k%20caruana.pdf
 3. ORAAMP(1996),Ibid.(p.32)

The current distribution of these spaces within the city also seem uneven and tends to be concentrated on or around a certain part of the city, specifically on the area which is designated by the master plan as the city centre. It might be due to these problems of availability and distribution that too many activities have been taken place in one or two of the city's urban open public spaces, for instance on Meskel square and Jan Meda and other public spaces are often seen to be used for unintended purpose. The occurrence of different activities in a single urban space, which is a case of some urban open public spaces in Addis Ababa, might have its own negative influence on the identity of these spaces.

Other Problems related to urban open public spaces in Addis Ababa are multifaceted, one of which is their level of cleanliness. According to preliminary literature review cleanliness is one of the operational attributes for good quality urban open public spaces which produce a memorable image and a pleasurable feeling in the user. These are expressed as sociability, walk ability, and delight to the pedestrian⁴. However, in Addis Ababa most of these spaces are not clean. Even in some cases, these spaces of the city are places where homeless people live with their dogs, dump their garbage and excrete their wastes. In addition absence of efficient and timely cleaning and maintenance services further aggravate this problem.

These spaces of the city have also problems related with climate which affect the way people experience and use them. It can be observed that it is difficult to use them during harsh climatic conditions of the different seasons and also at night times of the day. These might be due to the fact that most of these spaces do not have necessary amenities, which create comfort and convenience for its users. Amenities such as shaded public gathering areas, proper landscape elements & lighting fixtures are among few to mention. On the other hand the problem might also be due to the fact that these spaces of the city are not designed in accordance with climate.

Comfortable access to open public spaces is critical for their quality. It enhances the comfort, safety & security of pedestrians and also encourages different activities to take place in these spaces⁵. However, in Addis Ababa it can be observed that most of these spaces are not convenient for free pedestrian movement. One of the reasons for these might be the domination of heavy vehicular traffic near or around these spaces. Other reasons may include lack of maintenance and lack of conformity between their surrounding land uses.

Urban public open spaces are spaces primarily designed for the public at large where different and related public activities can takes place. Therefore, in principle they have to be open for a general public. In contrast to this, however; some of these spaces in Addis Ababa are closed places, which do not give any kind of service for the public. This in turn might conflicts with the public welfare, the environment, visual quality and the economic development of the city. After all the very existence

4. Residential street pattern design, (2002). Available: <http://residentialstreetpattern/index.htm>.

5. Project for public Space (PPS)-How to Turn a Place around, 2005, P. 18.

of such public spaces are to promote the public welfare and the quality of the cityscape.

In addition urban design concerns with the physical character & order of a city and that of the relationship between people and their environment⁶. Similarly urban public open spaces, which are the basic urban elements of a city, are related to different issues of the city. All kinds of societal developments (including economic, demographic, socio-cultural and political trends) on a macro level shape these spaces of the city. They also have consequences on the uses and attractiveness of these places at the level of individuals. On this line of arguments the privatisation of urban public open spaces in Addis Ababa, which is a very recent scenario, might have its own impact on decreasing or degenerating public access to these spaces of the city. For instance the current practice of constructing fences, installing gates on the public domain and asking for fees or paid tickets to enter these public places would be good examples.

Furthermore due to the above mentioned problems or some other reasons, it appears that except some occasions people usually do not frequent these spaces of the city. Consequently, most of the time these places are empty or vacant lands which are devoid of activities. A situation that might have a negative impact on the efficient use of urban land.

In summary, it seems that urban open public spaces in Addis Ababa are not operating properly or are not used appropriately. In most cases these spaces of the city have been seen to be unused vacant places which are devoid of activities in most time of the day and inactive at night times. In addition, there are problems related to the extent of availability, practicality and geographic distribution of these spaces in the city. They have also other problems regarding aesthetics, maintenance, cleaning, access, climate, and traffic. This strongly indicates that their development pattern and their spatial distribution throughout the city are wrong. This might be resulted from the approach taken in the planning and design of these spaces, or in their management or perhaps the combination of all these.

Finally, the problem statements in the above paragraphs lead to quest the following research questions. How these spaces of the city do currently operating? I.e. how does the society use them in everyday life? Besides, who is responsible for the planning, design and management of urban open public spaces in Addis Ababa? How do urban open public spaces in Addis Ababa created, developed and used? What kinds of facilities are provided by these spaces in the city? Who uses these spaces? These are the questions that this thesis work attempts to give answers.

6. "Space and society are clearly related: it is difficult to conceive of society without social content and equally to conceive of a society without a spatial component" Carmona et. al. (2003.p.119) *public places – urban spaces: The Dimensions of Urban Design*. Oxford: Architecture press.

1.2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study tries to analyse urban open public spaces in Addis Ababa, which were designed in such a manner to be utilized for various needs at a city level. It does so according to their current operation from an urban design point of view. The main intention being to identify those essential users' needs that have to be: addressed to improve the current condition of these places in the city and well thought in the future, to create successful public spaces.

Through selected case studies, this research will also try to analyse the major factors that affect their current functionality. I.e. the forces that have been acting upon during their operation. Furthermore, Current use and evaluation of public spaces by individuals and groups will be examined as they influence the form and design of future public spaces. For instance, an increasing sense of insecurity has already lead to the installation of gates and other barriers in the public domain. On this line, this study will try to draw lessons from the current practice of urban open public spaces in Addis Ababa and also to forward recommendations that might help decision makers in the design and implementation of policy guidelines related to the research issue.

In addition, the recently revised master plan of Addis Ababa identifies the absence of adequate public facilities and services of international standards, as one of major current problems of the city. It also indicated that this problem of the city coupled with the city high rate of urbanization entails re-examinations of constraints and opportunities with the aim of devising appropriate measures and strategies for action. The Suggested government strategies as stated in the report by ORAAMP include “to increase and Improve the service provisions of these urban amenities”⁷ among others .However these needs identifying, studying and analysing the current and other problems encountered during the development of these urban spaces so as to draw lessons and forward recommendations. On this line this research might help as an additional input for the government effort to change the current image of the city.

Besides the preliminary research on the topic indicates that too little is known about how public spaces in Addis Ababa are created, developed and used. Therefore this research can be considered as an addition to the very limited literature available on urban open public spaces in Addis Ababa. It can also be used as a basis to future studies by people interested in the subject.

In summary therefore, the major objectives of the thesis are as follows:

- To find out how urban open public spaces in Addis Ababa are currently operating and how the society is using them in everyday life.
- To analyse the major factors that affect their current operation.

7. ORAAMP (1996), Ibid,p.32

1.3. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Urban design has a wide disciplinary span, from architecture and planning to behavioural sciences and history. Therefore, to arrive at a deeper understanding of a physical environment in a city, it urges also for studying the activities that are going to take place there. This is because the interaction of people with their environment is a two way process in which one affects or influences the other. Similarly urban open public spaces in Addis Ababa in addition to being a physical element; they are also a social fact which inhibits certain activities make others possible. Therefore, studying the current practice of urban open public spaces needs multidisciplinary research from both social and natural science streams.

In this study, however, more emphasis is given for the physical aspect of the study without ignoring the social aspect. Therefore it also tries to analyse issues related to the social aspect of the study in terms of who owns; uses and controls them.

Financial and time limitations are expected constraints on this research. The time designated for this study is only one academic semester and the money allocated is very small compared with the amount of work that the research needs.

The case studies for the research are limited to the geographic boundaries of the Addis Ababa city and focused on specific urban public spaces. However extensive library research related to the topic which also includes theoretical foundation, others works on the topic, works on related topics and real world application of the topic will be explored in order to build a general insight about the topic under study.

CHAPTER 2

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

In order to look in depth at the research issue, a “case study” method is chosen for this study. Case areas are selected based on appropriate criteria and critically analysed from an urban design point of view. By taking into account the data collected in regard to the case areas, the research bases its analysis on the approaches and framework set by different theories with regard to public open spaces.

Both primary and secondary data is used for this study. Quantitative and qualitative methods are used to collect the necessary data and also to describe and analyse the collected data. The tools that were used under the qualitative method include: personal observations, open ended interviews with participants related to the issue, discussions, site visits and use of photographs. Under the quantitative method the main tool were survey responses.

Relevant documents from planning institutions in Addis Ababa like ORAAMP (office for the revision of Addis Ababa master plan) and NUPI (national urban planning institute) and also other relevant documents from the municipality of the city were used as secondary resources.

2.1. CRITERIAS FOR SELECTING CASE AREAS

Public open spaces in urban areas can be classified under different titles. In this respect one classification could be the distinction of these spaces as: “hard spaces”, which are principally bounded by Architectural walls and the built forms and the “soft spaces” or parks, gardens and linear greenways which have less enclosure or defined boundary and are dominated by the natural environment⁸. Accordingly this study categorises urban public open spaces which are found in Addis Ababa in line with the above classification.

In this research therefore, taking this classification as a primary criterion and considering their functional and historical significance in the city, two city wide public open spaces from the Addis Ababa’s urban environment are chosen as case studies .one city square and one street side park. Furthermore, based on my personal observations and consultation & discussion with professionals who are working in different planning offices have been used to reinforce the selection criteria for the specific case areas.

The two case studies that are selected and analysed take the focus of this study, this is because, most of all due to their location in the central business district of Addis Ababa. They are public spaces most frequently used by the public. Despite of this, their physical environment is currently characterized by poor urban image and absence of adequate facilities and services of international standards.

⁸ . Carmona et. al. (2003), Ibid,p.138, cited from, Trancik, 1986, p, 60

It is therefore, the hope of the researcher that, the analysis based on these two case areas would help explore several issues related to the current practice of public open spaces in Addis Ababa in general and on the selected case areas in particular.

The case areas are:

- Meskel square- from the hard urban public open spaces ;and
- Leghar Park from soft urban spaces.



Fig.1. Aerial photograph of Meskel Square



Fig.2. Aerial photograph of Leghar Park.

2.2. METHODS OF INFORMATION GATHERING

Collecting relevant data for analysing the current practice of urban open public spaces in Addis Ababa urges for using or applying different methodologies. Various scholars who conduct successful researches on related issues argue that, the best way of obtaining a data on how urban spaces operate or used is by making site visits to the areas and observe what really is going on there. I.e. Through observing the relationships between activities and spaces. For instance, the project for public space indicates -

“When you observe a space you learn how it is actually used rather than how you think it is used”. PPS (2005, p.51)

For this study, therefore, field observations on the selected case study areas are used as a primary method of data collection. This was carried out by adapting several observational techniques such as behavioural mapping, counting, trace measures and tracking. Other techniques like interviews and questioners were also used in order to measure people’s perception of these spaces.

2.2.1. Observation techniques

Behavioural mapping

The behavioural mapping that would be used for this research focuses on studying people’s activities on the selected case areas for a certain amount of time and mapping the physical setting of these spaces. This technique was performed at the different hours of the day and at night times of both working days and weekends and also in ceremonial days.

Using this technique, peoples activities on the selected case areas were studied by documenting both stationary activities such as sun bathing, sitting, talking , reading... and activities in motion like walking, playing . Mapping of the physical settings include mapping trees, facilities, seating, fountains and any other important feature in the case study areas. Therefore, two different observation forms were prepared for this part. (See annex A)

Counting

For this study, counting is used as an important method of collecting numerical data from the case areas and also to make comparisons between the two case studies. This data could be about people, vehicles or anything else, which are relevant and have consequences to the issue under study.

Tracking

In this research, tracking is used as one simple observation technique to gather information about how the case study areas are used and how the circulation of people into and through these spaces looks like.

Trace Measures

By observing and recording the traces left when people use these spaces, this technique helps to gather information about what kinds of activities are taken place in the selected case areas. This part mainly involves tracing left over physical evidences like dirt and other litter, and also tracing signs of wear that found on the different elements of these spaces like their floor surface, walls, furniture and staircases.

Accordingly observation on the two selected case areas took place for a long period time (may 15-july 15 2007), across all days of the week and in all weathers. In addition to the author three other people who are all professionals took part in the observation process. For a better outcome and wider representation observers worked in group in one area at one time. The observers received initial training and took part in explaining their opinions about what they saw in later meetings. Most of the observations were carried out between 7am and 9pm.

2.2.2. Interviews and questioners

For this research, interviews and questioners were used to gather information that can not be obtained by observation. Therefore, these techniques help to measure the attitudes, perceptions and motivation of people about the selected case study areas.

The type of questions that would be asked in this part generally falls into two categories:

1. Use - (who uses the spaces, how often, when they tend to use them and how).
2. Attitudes, opinions, and problems regarding the spaces.

In this regard a total of 300 interviews (i.e. 150 interviews in each case area) were conducted using structured and semi- structured survey techniques. Respondents were selected to try to cover as wide a range of people as possible in terms of age and gender as well as social background. In addition for each area out of the 150 interviews 60 were conducted on site with people who were using the places during the survey while the remaining 90 were filled by respondents working in the vicinity of the case areas.

The data collected from the questionnaires & interviews and also different ideas and opinions forwarded by some respondents during the survey were coded to certain categories and qualitatively analyzed. (See appendix B).

The data collected and interpreted from field observation and from questionnaires & interviews are discussed and analyzed.

2.3. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

To conduct a more systematic analysis and to arrive at a deeper understanding, the issue under study (i.e. the current operation of urban public open spaces in Addis Ababa) is further explored and divided in to different parts.

In Addis Ababa, people of different ages, gender, ethnicities, culture and social classes have been seen using the limited public open spaces. Hence, the values of these places in the city should arise from understanding how this different social groups use the spaces? Why are these spaces frequently used or abandoned? And what they really mean to the public at large? Eventually, based on these perceived values one can analyse the success or failure of current operation and performances of the public spaces.

Besides, literature review on the issue implies that the perceived values of a public open space depend on its operational qualities as well as on the qualities of its physical settings⁹. However, some of these qualities are situational, which depends on the socio-cultural and historic context of the place, while others are designed. For instance, some users' needs or choices are culturally derived so that depending on the characteristics of the cultures in which people grow up. They appreciate the qualities of some environments rather than others. On the other hand, some users' needs such as, safety, security, comfort, and a sense of enclosure, are inherent in all human beings and they are also functions of the physical settings that are results of initial design of the public open spaces¹⁰.

Despite all this, several researchers, who succeeded on studying the issue, identified four key qualities or values of successful urban open public spaces, which include: sociability; use and activities; access and linkage; & comfort and image¹¹.

Taking these key qualities of successful urban spaces as a reference, the perceived values of the selected case areas for this research were analysed according to their sociability; use and activities; access and linkage; & comfort and image. Parallel to this, the appropriate data collection techniques to each part was applied.

9. "Use of the public realm is also a function of its quality as a supportive and conducive environment" Carmona et. al. (2003), *ibid.* p.111, cited from, Gehl (1996).

10. Carmona et. al. (2003), *Ibid.*, p.107-108.

11. Project for public Space (2005), *Ibid.*, P. 16.

2.3.1. Sociability.

Using the case studies, this part of the research tried to analyse the Sociability of urban open public spaces in Addis Ababa. So as to understand and explain the following important issues:

- Are these spaces places where people want to meet their friends?
- How do people come to these spaces? In groups? Alone?
- Do people use these spaces regularly or by choice?
- Do users know each other by face or by name?
- Is there a mix of ages and ethnic groups among users that reflect the community at large?
- How do people react when something bad happen to the places?
- How do the interactions in these places look like? Are people talk, smile to each other? Or do people engage in conversation to one another?

2.3.2. Use and Activities

This part of the research focuses on analysing the activities that occur in public open spaces. By doing so, it tried to address the following questions:

- How do people use the case areas or Are the spaces just empty? When and why?
- Are these spaces used by a range of different age groups?
- Do people cluster in groups? What kind of groups –couples, friends, workers, families? Or what kind of social groups if possible?
- What types of activities are occurring in these spaces, how often and when?
- Which parts of the spaces are used and which are not, is there segregation of spaces for different uses?
- What does the communication between the different parts of these spaces look like? Are they connected if so in what way?
- How does the overall design relate to people use of space?
- Are there obvious choices of things to do in these spaces?
- Are events and activities being held spontaneously, or made by schedule?
- Who undertake different public events?
- Do these spaces encourage a variety of socio-cultural activities that have a positive effect on the urban environment of the city as well as to the welfare of the public at large? If so how?
- How do the design of these spaces relate to events that are held there?
- Is there any kind of management in these spaces? If so who is responsible?

2.3.3. Access and Linkage

The access and linkages of open public spaces in urban area affect the uses of these spaces. Therefore the analysis made on this part helps to understand important issues by responding to the questions of the followings:

- Are there a variety of transportation options that provide access to the place for the public at large to make use of the spaces? If there are what types-bus, train, car or bicycle?
- Are these spaces visible from different angles at a distance?
- Do these spaces convenient for people to walk easily from one part to the other? Or they have problems related with vehicular traffic and others?
- Do sidewalks lead to and from adjacent areas, promote pedestrian access?
- How do disabled people use these spaces?
- How do the relation between the different parts of these spaces looks like? I.e. do the paths or lanes within the spaces match with or facilitate and direct where people want to go?

2.3.4. Comfort and Image

This part focuses on analysing the selected case areas so as to find out how the issue of comfort and image is addressed. It also helps to understand how it affects the operation of these spaces .In this regard answering the following question would give an insight about the issue under the topic?

- How the designs of amenities in these spaces do looks like?
- Are there enough places to sit? Are there appropriate provision for weather protections such as umbrellas and shelters?
- Do these spaces feel safe?
- Is there any kind of conflict between vehicular movement and pedestrians' use of these spaces?
- Are these spaces clean? Hence invite people?
- Do these places make a good first impression? What kind of impression do people have about the places?
- What does the management of these spaces look like?
- Who is in charge of their management? What kinds of management services do they provide? When?

In conclusion, therefore, this research paper has tried to its level best to look into the above four important public values attached to the case areas. Needless to say, the researcher strongly believes that by forwarding different specific questions that are concerns of the public at large and documenting and analysing the findings would help the achievement of the objectives set forward by the research.

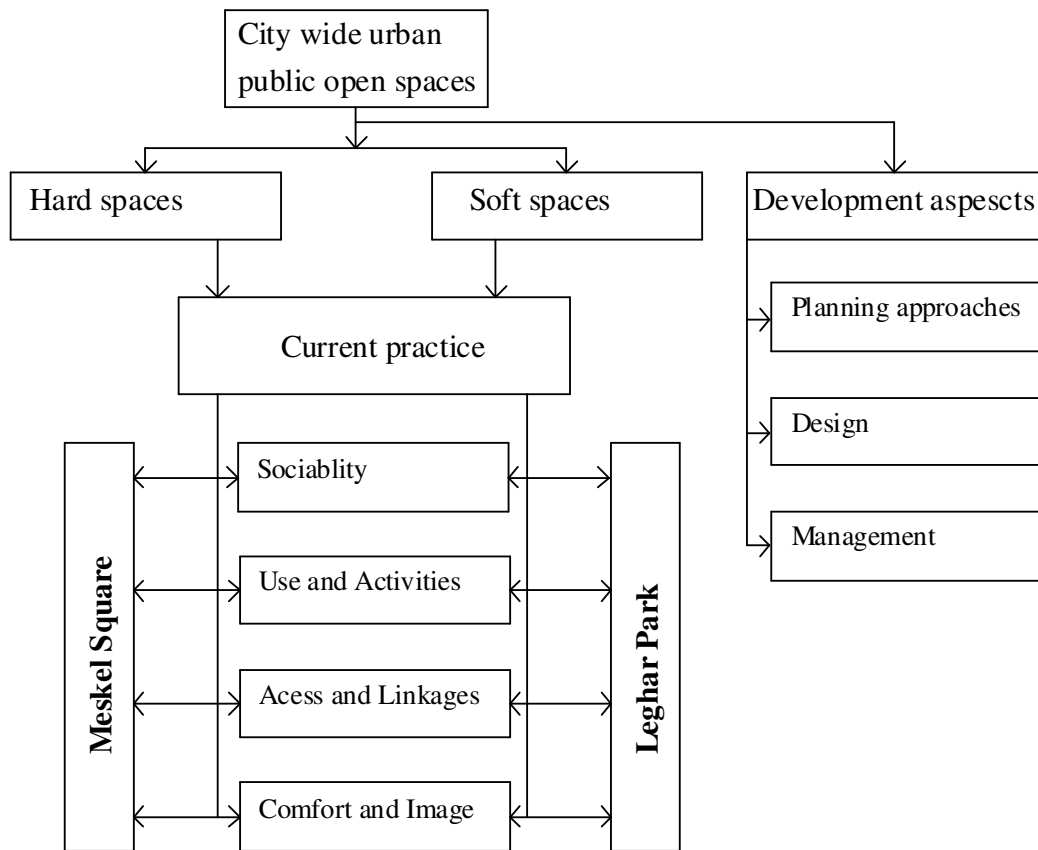


Fig.3. Diagrammatic presentation of the analytical framework for current practice of urban open public spaces in Addis Ababa.

CHAPTER 3

3. LITERATURE REVIEW ON URBAN PUBLIC OPEN SPACES

3.1. MEANNING

As its name implies, urban open public space is a space with multiple qualities as: urban space, open and public. Therefore to get a general insight about its meaning, it is helpful to review the design philosophy and aim incorporated behind such spaces as; urban space and open public space.

3.1.1. URBAN SPACE

According to Krier (1979), urban spaces are defined as all types of spaces between buildings and geometrically bounded by elevations. Similarly Spreiregen (1972) defines urban spaces as formal spaces which are the products of cities and usually moulded by building facades and the city floor. He also indicates that these spaces must be distinguished from other spaces by their predominant characteristics such as their quality of enclosure; the quality of their detailed treatment or outfitting; and the activity that occur in them. He added that if anyone of these qualities is sufficiently strong, it alone may establish the sense of an urban space.

Therefore, as long as it possesses one of the above mentioned qualities, Spreiregen argues that -

“An urban space could be a poorly designed plaza or a complex road intersection, surrounded by a group of office buildings and its floor devoted entirely to traffic; or it can be a beautifully landscaped urban park which may lack entirely the peripheral building facades which are needed for a sense of enclosure. It can be also a particular place in the city which is a locale of an important activity while possessing neither physical enclosure nor appropriate floor. Times Square in New York is such an example.”
(Spreiregen, 1972, p.121.)

Urban spaces within cities and towns could be classified into different types. In this respect one important classification could be Spreiregen's categorization of these spaces based on the sense of the space they contained as:

“Island or oasis spaces which are gathering or stopping places such as squares & plazas; and corridor spaces, which are spaces for movement like Avenues and streets enclosed on two sides or some element of unifying character trees or uniform buildings.”
(Spreiregen, 1972, p.123.)

Depending on the quality of their surrounding enclosure, urban spaces could also be considered in terms of “positive” and “negative” spaces.

“Positive, relatively enclosed, outdoor space has a definite shape. It is conceivable, can be measured, and has a definite boundary. One could imagine it being filled with water, which subsequently runs out relatively slowly. It is discontinuous (in principle), closed static, but serial in composition. Its shape is important as that of the buildings surrounding it. While negative space is shapeless, e.g. the amorphous residue left over

around buildings which are generally viewed as Positive. It is Inconceivable continuous and lacking in perceivable edges or form. It is difficult to imagine such space being filled with water.” (Carmona et. al., 2003, P.138.)

In discussing urban space, written by Trancik (1986) Carmona makes a useful distinction of urban spaces as: “hard space” principally bounded by Architectural walls, and the “soft space” or parks, gardens and linear greenways which have less enclosure or defined boundary and are dominated by the natural environment. He further elaborates, for all hard urban spaces three major space defining elements exist: These are the surrounding structures; the floor; and the imaginary sphere of the sky overhead.¹²

In addition, considering the role they play in the urban environment, Roger Trancik¹³ termed the spaces in urban areas as “urban voids”. Further he classifies the “urban Voids” into five types. These include:

- The entry or foyer space that establishes the important transition, or passage from personal domain to common territory. In form this type of urban space can be fore court; mews; niche; lobby or front yard;
- The inner block urban space- a semi private space for leisure or utility or a mid block shopping oasis for circulation or rest;
- The streets and urban squares are the third types and this category corresponds to the predominant field of blocks and it contains the active public life of the city;
- Public parks and gardens are the fourth ones and they help to create a contrast with architectural urban forms. Acting as nodes for the preservation of nature in the city, they are incorporated into the urban grid to stimulate rural settings, to provide both relief from the hard urban environment and accessible recreation; and
- The linear open space system commonly related to major water features such as rivers, water fronts, and wet land zones. These formal and informal greenways slice through districts, creates edges and link places.

Trancik further clarifies that; the size of urban spaces will vary from small intimate spaces to grand urban spaces. Similarly, in his book “*The Architecture of cities and towns*”, Paul D.Spreiregen (1972) describes the size variation of urban spaces a

12. Carmona et. al. (2003) Ibid, p.138.

13. Trancik (1943, p.103-106).

“Urban and architectural spaces from a hierarchy of spatial types, based on their size. In urban design this hierarchy ranges from the scale of small intimate court spaces on to grand urban space and culminating in the vast space of nature in which the city is set.” (Spreiregen, 1972, p.126)

3.1.2. PUBLIC OPEN SPACES

Public open space is an open space designed for the public and related activities.

“Public open space is a place where anyone has a right to come without being excluded because of economic or social conditions although this may not always be the case.” (Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia, 2007).

The historical development of open public spaces is directly related to the historical milieu of public life and the first urban formations, which dates back to at least 6000 years. Since then, within urban areas, open public spaces have been always existed and served a very important purpose. Along with the development of human society and the development of cities, these spaces acquired many more functions. The terminology of the square on this line can be the starting point and would help in understanding open public spaces.

The establishment and development of squares is directly related to the origination and development of cities.

“As towns in their totality either have grown naturally from villages, trading posts, military camps, castles and monasteries, or were built following a preconceived plan, so the individual square within a town either might have developed gradually out of certain existing conditions or might have been planned”. (Zucker, 1959, p.3).

In ancient cities, the growth and development of organically grown squares were related to several conditions. According to Zucker, these includes: the intersection of important through fares; at the beginning of a bridge or in front of the west facade of a church and most frequently a village green or an old market square expanded into a definite spatial pattern through successive erection of buildings around it.

Following the introduction of Hippodamus’s gridiron planning schema on the ancient cities of Greece and her colonies, however, squares started to be planned as one element of a city. Squares appears as clearly defined as any individual piece of Architecture.¹⁴ Moreover, in the civilizations which came afterwards planned squares continued to develop. Around the 17th and 18th centuries they reached to the level of being a basic organizing element in the planning of cities.¹⁵

Despite their way of establishment and growth, squares have been playing important roles in cities. In ancient organically developed towns they were places where:

¹⁴ . Zucker (1959), Ibid.p.3-6

¹⁵ . Zucker (1959), Ibid. p.3-6

exchange of goods as well as ideas took place; rulers with military processions and parades exercise their power. During the Greece civilization however planned squares started to appear and their functions also developed to the extent being democratic arenas and centres of free speech.¹⁶

Even during the medieval period, an epoch when continuous wars led cities to be surrounded by thick walls and became densely populated, there was always room for an open public space. Its functions were expanding too – Major places of worship were placed there, squares were used as permanent or temporary markets, monuments to important predecessors were erected and revolutions or contra revolutions were staged.

“The squares became the location of the royal courts, government buildings and city halls as manifestation of wealth and power. They were also used for races, like the palio race in sienna, bull fights, executions, or even just to collect rain water in large underground cisterns. For example all squares in venizia were used to collect rain water, as the only water source.”(Urban square project. Available/<http://www.urbansquares.com>)

Recently, theatres, restaurants and museums also find their place on public squares. Since the invention of motorized traffic, the individual vehicle has almost destroyed most of the open public spaces. Suddenly, human proportions and distances are less important. A car parking has sometimes has more value than the accumulated historical inheritance human cooperation, technological processes, architectural and urban planning that a square embodies.

“Our modern plazas, especially at the base of high- rise office buildings; they frequently showcase the buildings rather than encourage or shelter the pedestrian. They are indifferent to their climate and environs, and thus are unpleasant to walk through or inhabit.” (Shelley et. al, 1996, p.150)

In his book *“urban design: street and square”*, James Clifford (1992) suggests that there are two main methods of categorizing squares - by function and by form. The important point here is that one need to separate the various functions of a square from its basic spatial concepts. Squares might have the same shape but differences in function and sociological meaning. Similarly, squares might have the same function but different meanings and appearance. For instance, as a market square, as traffic centre, or as a parvis never produces automatically a definite spatial form. Each particular function may be expressed in many different shapes.¹⁷

3.1.2.1. FORM OF A SQUARE

There are two factors that affect the forms of squares: First the functional considerations during their planning, which affect the width and depth of the squares

¹⁶ . Zucker (1959), Ibid.p.3-6.

¹⁷ .James Clifford (1992) *urban design: streets and Squares*, Architectural Press, p.87.

and also their directions and connections; Second needs and demands of the past, which are basic for the determination of their final shape they have now.¹⁸

In discussing about a form of a public square, there are two very influential theories which were forwarded by Camillo Sitte and Paul Zucker.

After analysing the visual and aesthetic character of squares in a range of European cities, especially those resulting from organic and incremental city growth, Sitte derived a series of artistic principles. The shape of a square is among these principles. Considering the proportion of a plan of a square with the size of its main building, he identified two types of squares; “deep” and “wide” types. His argument here is that these squares have to be in proportion to their major buildings so that their shape depends on whether the main building was short & long or tall & narrow.

In *Town and Square*, Zucker (1959) explained that organised and spatially self contained squares as “artistically relevant” squares. He describes such types of squares as works of art –

“The unique relationship between the open area of a square, the surrounding buildings, and the sky above creates a genuine emotional experience comparable to the impact of any other work of art”. (Zucker, 1959, p.6-7)

He further outlined five types of “artistically relevant” urban squares: the closed square, the dominant square, the nuclear square, grouped squares and the amorphous square.

- **THE CLOSED SQUARE** – space self contained: A closed square is a complete enclosure, interrupted only by the streets leading into it and exhibiting regular geometric forms and usually, repetition of Architectural elements around the periphery.
- **THE DOMINATED SQUARE** – space directed: Accordingly the dominated square is characterized by a building or group of buildings towards which the space is directed, and to which all surrounding structures are related. Zucker’s argument here is that some buildings create a “sense of space” in front of them. He further explained that although typically the dominant feature is a building, it could also be an architecturally developed fountain, provided a sufficiently strong sense of space was created.

In his book *“Urban design: street and square”*, Clifford (1992, p.105) indicated that the two types of public squares which Sitte distinguished as: ‘deep’ and ‘wide’ types will fall into Zucker’s category of dominated squares. However, in contrast to Zucker’s description, he argued that a public square can be dominated by a vista or void rather than a building or piece of great sculpture.

¹⁸ Zucker (1959), Ibid. p.8.

- **THE NUCLEAR SQUARE** – space formed around a centre: Here a central feature – A vertical nucleus – is sufficiently powerful to create a sense of a space around itself. Charging the space with a tension that keeps the whole together. The force exerted by the nucleus governs the effective size of such space.
- **GROUPED SQUARES** – space units combined: Here the individual squares can be linked organically or aesthetically or by being grouped around a dominant building. Zucker compared the visual impact of aesthetically grouped squares with the effect of successive rooms inside a baroque palace.

In relation to this, Clifford (1992, p.112) argued that there are numerous methods by which links between squares may be formed. He indicated that a public square may be of complex shape so that it consists of two or more overlapping or interpenetrating spaces: quite clearly defined spaces may be open to each other; a series of spaces may be physically connected to by streets or alleys; one or two major buildings may be surrounded by a series of spaces which use the walls of the buildings for definition; great civic squares might also be designed to unfold along a predetermined axis; and finally, spaces may be related by an external reference.

- **THE AMORPHOUS SQUARE** – space unlimited: Amorphous squares do not fall into one of the above categories, but at least display some of their necessary qualities.

Krier (1990) as cited in Carmona (2003, p.70), makes analysis on different European urban squares and he categorizes them into three main plan shapes: squares, circles or triangles. Furthermore, the basic shapes can be adapted or modified in a variety of ways; they can occur on their own or in combination with the others; they can be regular or irregular; they can be modulated by altering their angles, dimensions and by adding or subtracting from the basic shape; they can be twisted, divided, or overlapped; they can be closed by walls, arcades or colonnades from the street around them, or they can be open to the environment. He continues that building facades frame the spaces and can take many forms; from solid, unrelieved masonry with openings of various kinds: Such as, windows, doors, arcades, colonnades to facades that are entirely glazed. The basic shapes can also be modified by a great variety of sections that substantially alter the quality of the space.

3.1.2.2. FUNCTIONS OF A SQUARE

According to Zucker a square irrespective of its size and scale, has two main functions: physical and psychological. In other words the square is an urban space that creates a gathering place for the people, humanizing them by mutual contact, providing them with a shelter against the haphazard traffic, and freeing them from the tension of rushing through the web of streets.

In urban areas squares are the hubs of social life and places for diverse activities. Clifford (1992, p.88).Therefore they are possibly the most important stages for

designing a good setting for commercial and public buildings in cities. Activity in a square is important for its vitality and visual attraction. In short as Clifford puts it –

“The most successful city squares though they have a dominant function for which each is known and by which they may be classified; are often those that sustain activity through the diversity of uses in the surrounding buildings.” (Clifford, 1992, p.88)

Based on the roles squares play in urban environments, other scholars like scholars working on urban square project, classify squares into the following types: ceremonial, cathedral, social, residential, court, park and street edges. However, one important point here is that some squares may fall in more than one of these typologies.

- **CEREMONIAL** – Central location; designed to specification; location of monuments, government, courts or other important state buildings, sometimes theatres and museums; used occasionally for public demonstrations, strikes and revolutions.
- **CATHEDRAL OR CHURCH** – Developed around a cathedral or church or another religious structure; at the beginning mainly used for religious ceremonies, often other content and usage are added later.
- **SOCIAL** – Mostly a pedestrian square or with very limited car traffic; sometimes a market place, cistern or small church.
- **RESIDENTIAL** – Social spaces in residential area; sometimes with some commercial uses etc...
- **COURTYARDS** – Public spaces within built structures; in contemporary times converted into public usage. Originally developed as private.
- **PARK** – Park squares originally developed in England, in residential areas with a public or private park in the middle; in other cultures parks are very often incorporated into the main city square, with important buildings around the perimeter, in a similar way as in ceremonial category.
- **STREET EDGES** – Street shopping (squares developed in mainly pedestrian shopping areas) usually with a lot of tourist amenities.

3.2. URBAN PUBLIC OPEN SPACE AND PUBLIC LIFE

In relation to urban open public spaces and public life, three important parameters are discussed on this part: First the roles that open public spaces play in urban areas. Second the forces shaping contemporary open public spaces in urban environments and third people's perspectives of these spaces.

3.2.1 THE ROLES OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACES IN URBAN AREAS.

In the urban environments of cities and towns open public spaces play several important roles. They are the vital parts of everyday urban life.

“Open public spaces are all around us: the streets we pass through on the way to school or work; the places where children play; or where we encounter nature and wildlife; the local parks in which we enjoyed sports, walk the dog and sit at lunchtime; or simply somewhere quiet to get away for a moment from the bustle of a busy daily life. In other words, open public space is our open air living room, or outdoor leisure centre.”(CABE, 2004, p.1.)

Critical Roles That Public Places Play In Communities

According to PPS (project for Public space) public places are stage for our public lives. They are the parks where celebrations are held, where marathons start and end, where children learn the skills of a sport; where the seasons are marked and where cultures mix. They are the streets and sidewalks in front of homes and business where friends meet into each other and where both social and economic exchanges take place. They are the front porches of our public institutions – city halls, libraries and post offices where we interact with each other and with government.

When cities and neighbourhoods have thriving open public spaces, residents have a strong sense of community; conversely, when they are lacking, they feel less connected to each other.

Places Give Identity to Cities

Without great open public spaces there would be no great cities. To support this argument PPS (2005, p.14) cites several examples. For instance, the skating rink and other public spaces around Rockefeller centre are one of the most visited tourist attractions in New York City. Thousands gather there for the annual lighting of the holiday tree or thousands stand in the street outside the “today’s show” studios hoping to be on television. These public spaces represent New York the way Eiffel tower represents Paris. While people travel thousands of miles to experience such revered places as the plaza san Marco in Venice, the Champs Elysees in Paris, central park in New York, Miami’s beaches or River walk in San Antonio ,others needs only to walk down the street to find places they cherish. Indeed, great public spaces can be world renowned, or they can be more important because the people value them.

“Think about your favourite public space in your every day’s life. It might be your neighbourhoods park, the out door café that you read the mourning paper, or the path you use to stroll around the lake after dinner. These community places are just important to the identity of cities as their more famous counter parts, because they are where the people who live and work in a community experience their neighbourhoods and each other.”(CABE, 2004, p.1.)

Places Benefit Cities Economically

A high quality public environment can have a significant impact on the economic life of urban centres big or small and is therefore an essential part of any successful regeneration Strategy.

“As towns increasingly compete with one another to attract investments, the presence of good parks, squares, gardens and other public spaces becomes a vital business and marketing tool: Companies are attracted to locations that offer well designed, well managed public spaces and these in turn attract customers, employees and services. In town centres pleasant and well-maintained environment increases the number of people visiting retail areas.”(CABE, 2004, p.4.)

Public spaces have many real and measurable economic benefits. For example, parks can contribute significantly to the land values in a city. To support this point of view several examples could be cited. For instance the project for public space indicated-

“In New York, the real estate values around Bryant Park, central park and Riverside Park are the highest in the city. Minneapolis’ prime residential areas are located along the extensive park and trail system surrounding its numerous lakes. California’s pacific coast beaches and parks provide the setting for some of the most expensive homes in the country.”(PPS, 2005, p.14 -15)

A good public landscape also offers very clear benefits to the local economy in terms of stimulating increased house prices, since the house buyers are willing to pay to be near green space.

“In deed throughout the country greenways have become the new types of open public spaces, highlighted in real estate advertisements that least houses “on the greenway” as a desirable location.”(PPS, 2005, p.15).

Furthermore, PPS (2005) argue that Revitalizing streets for walking, gathering, and shopping is perhaps the most direct example of how place making can benefit a city or town economically.

“Too many towns suffer from streets dedicated to moving high volumes of traffic quickly – a goal that effectively eliminates foot traffic, parking, and other features that are necessary for healthy street life and economic activity.” (PPS, 2005, p.15.)

Places Help the Environment

Public spaces also have environmental benefits because they give relief to urban living. According to CABE (Commission for the build Environment), these spaces not only reduce the need for and dependence on automobile but parks and other green public spaces such as waterfronts and wildlife areas, increase people’s appreciations for and stewardship over the natural environment, and also provide habitats for friendly animals. In relation to this access to good quality, well maintained public spaces can help to improve our physical and mental health by encouraging us to walk more, to play sport, or simply to enjoy a green and natural environment.

Additionally the significant increase in hard surfacing and the reduction in green spaces leads to higher temperatures in towns and cities than in the surrounding countryside, this is known as the “heat island effect”.¹⁹ Vegetation in public spaces helps to reduce this imbalance and brings many important benefits to urban areas, including the cooling of air and the absorption of atmospheric pollutants.

“The difference in temperatures between parks and that of surrounding urban areas give rise to a ‘park breeze’- a gentle wind which blows from the park to the adjacent buildings. Poor air quality in a town may be ameliorated by the fresh air blown out from the parks. Indeed, air even in small parks has on the whole been found to be purer than that of its surrounding.” (CABE, 2004, P.17)

Places Provide Settings for Cultural Activities

Often, public spaces offer free, open forums for people to encounter art and to participate in other cultural activities. Good places foster and enhance cities cultural life.

One of the benefits of high quality public space is its potential as a venue for socio-cultural events. Well managed festivals and other events can have a very positive effect on the urban environment, drawing the community together and bringing financial, social and environmental benefits. On this line one important point could be CABE’s argument as -

“Public spaces are open to all, regardless of ethnic origin, age or gender and as such they represent a democratic forum for citizens and society. When properly designed and cared for, they bring communities together, provide meeting places and foster social ties of a kind that have been disappearing in many urban areas. These spaces shape the cultural identity of the area, are parts of its unique character and provide a sense of place for local communities.”(CABE, 2004, p.12)

3.2.2. THE FORCES SHAPING PUBLIC SPACES

As mentioned earlier, open public spaces play several important roles in cities and towns. The varying uses or functions of these spaces, however, are not permanent or inviolate. Rather in recent times there are many factors that affect the uses; the quality and quantity of these places.

Space and society are clearly related –

“It is difficult to conceive of space without social content and equally to conceive of society without a spatial component.”(Carmona et. al. 2003, p.119)

Additionally the recent theories in urban design defines the relationship between people (society) and their environment (space) as – a two way process in which people (society) create and modify spaces and at the same time being influenced by them in various ways. I.e. People create, occupy and use the built environment,

¹⁹ .Lowry, W.P (1967) cited in CABE, 2004

however, when they do so the built environment also influence and affect what people can and can not do. Accordingly different issues in urban areas, which are related to public life affect and influence open public spaces.

All kinds of societal developments (including economic, socio-cultural, technological and political trends) on a macro level shape these spaces of the city and also have consequences on the uses and attractiveness of these places at the level of individuals and groups.

Technological innovation is inevitable and it has its own consequence on the use of urban public spaces. The effect of motorized traffic on this line is the most significant one. It has resulted in an urban environment in which highways, through fares, and parking lots to be the most predominant types of open spaces. Heavy car traffic has also a negative influence on sociability of open public spaces and its negative effect is usually proportional to its volume. In addition, high traffic volume creates inhospitable and unsafe collector and arterial streets, thus discouraging pedestrian use. In most cities vehicular mobility and communication increasingly dominate urban public spaces and often brakes down the pedestrian links between important destinations; as a consequence these spaces lost most of their cultural meaning and human purpose. In his book *"Finding lost space"* Roger Trancik (1986) describes this situation as:

"The desire for order and mobility has undermined the diversity and richness of urban public spaces". (Trancik .1986, p.5.)

Similarly in their book on the negative effect of automobile on our cities, Safdie and Kohn discuss the vitality of public spaces in cities before cars took over:

"Urban historian Spiro Kostof defines pre-automobile cities as 'places where certain energized crowding of people' took place. Historically cities provided intense and active meeting places for commerce, the exchange of ideas, worship and recreation. Even dictatorship produced a wide variety of spaces of formal and informal public gathering. People of diverse backgrounds came to, and lived in, the city, knowing that this conglomeration of people and the interaction offered by it would enrich their lives" Safdie & Kohn (1997, pp 12-13)

The other factor, which affects both the use and quality of urban public spaces, is the economical pressures on cities induced by urbanization. The acquisition and maintenance of urban public space for public use requires public resources, specifically public financial outlays, not only to buy and expand, but to maintain and protect and adapt to changing demands and uses. Especially in periods of financial shortage, but often also at other times, decisions on public budgetary matters will influence the extent and use of public space.

Politics has also its own impact on affecting or influencing the operation of urban public spaces. For instance, as one actor of the development process (a regulatory body); politicians play a big role in determining urban open public spaces. In addition, many decisions in the public sector are made of ideological reasons, and sometimes these reasons are of political principle unrelated with examination of concrete issues

and alternatives. For instance, the institutional neglect of urban public spaces is a monumental problem both because of minimal investment in maintaining urban public spaces and a general lack of interest in controlling the physical form and appearance of the city. Moreover politically motivated security pressures by governments in relation to both international and national instabilities also influence how publicly usable open urban spaces operates.

In relation to politics, another important issue is the privatisations urban public spaces. Privatization restricts the availability of public space directly. Most obviously, this is the result of the outright sale of public property for private uses. According to Carmona (2003)-

“privatisation in urban design terms usually entails the control of certain territories or spaces by means of segregation(such as physical distance, walls, gates and less viable barriers to exclude the outside world and its perceived threats and challenges) and also by means of policing strategies and the use of surveillance camera.” (Carmona et. al. 2000, p.119)

Similarly, others in Carmon’s book describe the problem related with privatisation –

“This has been a major problem in most of the states in which state socialist governments had earlier expanded the scope of public holdings, but it is also true in the United States, where fiscal pressures or ideological convictions have been used to effectuate the sale, often to the highest bidder, of publicly owned property.”

The other point that has to be discussed here is the effect of socio-cultural changes on urban public spaces. In this regard Carmona (2003) further elaborates that the choices people make in any given setting are influenced by society and culture.

“Through time these choices will shift in relation to the goals, values (both individual and societal) and preferences. This in turn creates distinctive local cultures that shape and reinforce their environments and are symbolised within them. Hence, by influencing ones choice, socio-cultural transformations will influence or affect the use of urban public spaces.” (Carmona et. al. 2000, p.107)

Similarly Carr et. al. (1992) as cited in Carmona (2003, p.111), argue that the relationship of public space to public life is dynamic and reciprocal and that new forms of life require new spaces. They forwarded the following examples as a point of argument:

“The last two decades, for example, have been seen the emergence of “café society”, “loft living” a culture of urban living in the centres of many British cities. There is a result of people seeking these life styles and of the media and culture industries presenting positive image of them but also developers and designers making such opportunities available. (Carmona et. al. 2003, p.111.)

Architects and planners have sometimes contributed to the erosion of the public uses of urban public spaces. The design of plazas unattractive for public use has been extensively documented, e.g. by William Whyte in PPS (1999)

“Putting “public” gardens at the top of skyscrapers, as several of the designs for development of the World Trade Centre site proposed, is hardly likely to make them easily accessible to large numbers of people. But the private development can also have a major impact on the erosion of the public uses of public space; the whole wave of mall developments, for instance, certainly contributes to the decline of the much more public areas of downtowns all over the developed world. So does the reconstitution of public spaces to protect surrounding business interests or drive out the homeless, as was the case with the redesign of Bryant Park and the role of many BIDs in New York City.”(PPS, 1999, p.58)

3.2.3. PEOPLE PERSPECTIVES OF URBAN OPEN PUBLIC SPACES

Based on a synthesis of research and ideas on the use and design of public spaces, Carr et. al. (1992) as cited in Carmona (2003) argued that public spaces should be “responsive” (i.e. designed and managed to serve the needs of their users); democratic (i.e. protecting the rights of users groups, being accessible to all groups and providing the freedom of action) as well as meaningful that is allowing people to make strong connections between the place, their personal life, and the larger world.

People Needs in Urban Public Spaces

According to the argument forwarded by Carr et. al. there are five primary needs that people seek to satisfy in public space: Comfort; relaxation; passive engagement with the environment; active engagement with the environment; and discovery.

- **COMFORT:** - Comfort is a prerequisite of successful public spaces. The length of time people stay in a public space is a function and an indicator of its comfort. The dimensions of a sense of comfort include environmental factors (e.g. relief from sun, wind, etc.); physical comfort (e.g. comfortable and Sufficient seating.); and social and psychological comfort (related to safety and security).
- **RELAXATION:** - While a sense of psychological comfort may be a prerequisite of relaxation, relaxation is a more developed state with the body and mind at ease. Carmona (2003, from Carr et. al, p, 98). To this point Carmona further states that natural elements trees, greenery, water features and separation from traffic help accentuate the contrast with the immediate surroundings and make it easier to be relaxed.
- **PASSIVE ENGAGEMENT:** - While passive engagement with the environment can lead to a sense of relaxation it also involves “the need for encounter with the setting, albeit without becoming actively involved” Carmona (2003 from Carr et. al, p, 103). perhaps the prime form of passive engagement is people-watching. Whyte (1980, p.13), for example, found that what attracts people is other people and the life and activity that they bring. The most used sitting places are generally adjacent to the pedestrian flow, allowing observers to watch people while avoiding eye contact. Opportunities for passive

engagement are also provided by fountains, views, public art performances, and so forth.

- **ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT:**-Active engagement involves a more direct experience with a place and the people within it. Carmona (2003 from Carr et. al, p.98) noted that, although some people find sufficient satisfaction in people watching, others desire more close contact, whether with friends, family or strangers. Carmona et. al. argued that successful public space provides opportunities for varying degrees of engagement, and also for disengagement from contact. In addition, design of public spaces can create or inhibit opportunities for contact. Unusual features or occurrences can result in what Whyte (1980,p.94)calls “triangulation”: the process by which some external stimulus provides a linkage between people and prompts strangers as if they know each other to talk to each other. For instances the project public space (1999.p63) observes how triangulation occurs spontaneously where there is something of interest, such as the life size fibre glass cow in Chicago.
- **DISCOVERY:** - Representing desire for new spectacles and pleasurable experiences, discovery depends on variety and change. While these may simply come with the march of time and the cycle of seasons, they may also result from the management and animation of public life. Discovery also might involve programmes of animation. Involving for example lunch time concerts, art exhibitions, street theatre, festivals. Parades, markets, society events and/or trade promotions, across a range of times and venues.

People Rights in Urban Open Public Spaces

Since the ancient Greek’s Agora to these days, in cities and towns, open public spaces have served as centres of free speech and public discourse. Even when housing was segregated along class and ethnic lines, open public spaces were places where people from all kinds of different backgrounds were meet and change ideas to each other. This is because they are defined as places which are open to everyone.

Similarly, Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia explains public open space as a place where anyone has a right to come without being excluded because of economic or social conditions, although this may not always be the case. This fallacy is indicated as:

“Whilst it is generally considered that everyone has a right to access and use public space, as opposed to private space which may have restrictions, there has been some academic interest in how public spaces are managed to exclude certain groups - specifically homeless people and young people. Also, by not providing suitable access, disabled people are excluded from some spaces.” (Wikipedia the free encyclopaedia, 2007).

According to the Wikipedia web page some of the measures taken to exclude certain groups include making of the public space less attractive through- the removal or design of benches to restrict their use for sleeping and resting; restricting access to

certain times; locking indoor/enclosed areas. Police forces are sometimes involved in moving 'unwanted' members of the public from such public spaces.

Other important points that has to be addressed here are those different key issues pointed out by Carmona (2003) while in discussing the 'social dimension' of urban design as: accessibility; exclusion and social segregation. By definition open public spaces in urban areas have to be accessible to all (i.e. everyone has the right to access these spaces). However, Carmona et. al. (2003, P.37) argued that, there are various forces in the society which purposefully reduce accessibility in order to control particular environments and often to protect investments. Carmona further points out that, if access control is practiced explicitly and widely, the public ness of these spaces will be compromised. In relation between accessibility and social exclusion, Carr et. al. (1992.P.38) as cited in Carmona (2003) identifies three forms of access:

- Visual access (visibility):- If people can see into a space before they enter it, they can judge whether they would feel comfortable, welcome and safe there.
- Symbolic access: - Cues (symbols) can be animate or in animate. For example individuals and groups perceived either as threatening or as comforting or inviting, may affect entry into a public space, while elements such as particular kinds of shops may signal the type of people that are welcome there.
- Physical access: - whether the space is physically available to the public, physical exclusion is the inability to get into or use the environment regardless of whether or not it can be seen into.

The effect of accessibility in relation with the rights of using open public spaces can also be discussed in terms of transport (i.e. if environments are only accessible by private cars those without access to cars and reliant on walking will be excluded). In terms of equitable environments (i.e. in some environments accessibility reduces the choices available to certain social groups, for instance those with disabilities); In terms of social segregation – that is wide spread prevalence of exclusion lead to social segregation and this in turn will affect one of the major functions of the public realm, which is social learning, development and information exchange.²⁰

Once again the issue of privatisation which is discussed earlier has a negative impact on people's rights of using public spaces (i.e. it directly reduces access to public spaces. For instance constructing fences, installing gates on the public domain and asking for fees or paid tickets to enter these public places would be good examples.)

Meanings and Symbolism in Urban public spaces

In urban design, environmental meaning and symbolism are directly related to man's perception of the built environment. On this, line Carmona et. al.(2003,p.93) argue that perceiving an environment is not just seeing or sensing the urban environment rather it refers to the more complex process of understanding of environmental stimuli which involves the gathering, organising and making sense of information about the

²⁰ .Carmona et. al. (2003, p.124-128).

environment. Continuing the argument Carmona explains that all urban environments contain symbols, meanings and values. These environmental meanings arise from social and cultural conventions so that as society changes, so does these significations. This is further supported by Knox as follows:

“Meanings attached to the built environment become modified as social values evolve in response to changing patterns of socio economic organization and life styles. (Carmona et. al., 2003, from Knox, 1984, p.111).

As mentioned above, meanings in environments are both interpreted and produced so that economic and political forces are highly influential in creating the symbolism of a built environment. In addition, the source of symbolism changed over time. These factors implied that the symbolic content of a contemporary built environment is multi-storied and often ambiguous. Some urban design scholars tried to analyze the physical and symbolic environmental signs that make cities more understandable to residents. One popular approach²¹ identified five defining structural elements, three of which define open public spaces (the district, the landmark, the node), one that frames their boundaries (the edge), and one that defines the experience of moving through them (the path). The social and emotional meanings attached to the urban environment will affect people’s images about these spaces (i.e. based on their meaning environments could be memorable or forgettable, liked or disliked). Therefore; the symbolic role of buildings and environments is one of the key parts in the relationship between society and environment. Similarly, in discussing the function of a square, Clifford (1992, P. 88) clearly puts the importance of environmental meaning as:

“The single most important function of an element in the city is the symbolic meaning to it”. (Clifford, 1992, P. 88)

One kind of urban environmental meaning is “sense of place” or “genius loci”. Genius loci- suggest that people experience something beyond the physical and sensory properties of places, and can feel an attachment to a spirit of that place²². According to Carmona sense of a place is more than an identity of a place. Identity of a place is something which provides individual and distinct character to a place and it has three elements- the physical setting, activities, and meaning. Sense of a place however does not reside in these elements rather in the human interactions with these elements.

“What ever space and time mean, place and occasion mean more. For space in the image of man is place and time in the image of man is occasion” (Carmona et. al., 2003, p.93-94)

Recently, however, various scholars argued that the meaning of urban space shifted from the classic and medieval and period, when it was a means for promotion of human contact, to the Renaissance, when it conveyed aesthetic beauty, to the

²¹. Lynch, K (1960) *Image of the City*: Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.

²². Carmona et.al (2003).Ibid.P.96-97

industrial period, when space lost earlier meanings and became merely a domain for circulation²³.

3.3. FACTORS FOR THE FAILURE OF PUBLIC SPACES.

William H. Whyte once said –

"It is difficult to design a space that will not attract people - what is remarkable is how often this has been accomplished." PPS (2005, p.20)

Today, many public spaces seem to be intentionally designed to be looked at but not touched. They are neat, clean, and empty - as if to say, "no people, no problem!" But to us, when a public space is empty, vandalized, or used chiefly by undesirables, this is generally an indication that something is very wrong with its design, or its management, or both. The following pairs of photographs, which are excerpted from PPS (2005), illustrate some of the most common problems of public spaces.



Fig. 4



Fig.5

The pictures show Lack of places to sit. Many public spaces don't even provide a place to sit. So, in their protracted quest just to be comfortable, people are often forced to adapt to the situation in their own way (Fig 4. above). Sometimes they simply give up, or have to sit on briefcases (Fig.5). Source PPS (2005, p.21)

²³.Lawrence A. Herzog, Return to the centre (Culture, Public Space, and City-Building in a Global Era).Available://http://www.returntothecentre.mht

A lack of *good* places to sit is an equally important issue. For example, a choice of seats in sun or shade can make all the difference in a place's success, depending on its climate and location. Allowing people to sit near a playground or within view of other activities is also crucial.

Lack of gathering points - This includes, features people want or need, such as playgrounds, or places where varying elements--bus stop, vending cart, outdoor seating--combine to create a gathering point. Food is often a critical component of a successful gathering point.



Fig. 6



Fig.7

Paris' Parc de la Villette (Fig.6) has seats that force people to sit in unsociable ways, and signs that ask them *not* to climb on the sculpture. Though located along a stretch of the Pacific Coast Highway, this park at Laguna Beach (Fig.7) has loads of activities, food, and places to sit. It is a busy, healthy gathering place. Source PPS (2005, p.22)

Poor entrances and visually inaccessible spaces - If a space is to be used, people need to see it and they need to be able to get to it.



Fig.8



Fig.9

A dark or narrow entrance such as those that used to be at New York City's Bryant Park (Fig.8) keeps people out instead of inviting them in. The same entrance (Fig.9), redesigned to be more inviting and open, has kiosks that sell coffee and sandwiches, and the interior of the park is visible from the street. Source PPS (2005, p.23)

Dysfunctional features Oftentimes features are designed simply to punctuate the space, serving a use more visual than functional, instead of encouraging activity to occur around them - as at this waterfront park in Barcelona (Fig 10). Source PPS (2005, p.25)



Fig.10



Fig.11

Good features, such as the friendly gorilla at the Berlin Zoo (Fig.11), encourage activity to occur around them. Source PPS (2005, p.25)

Paths that don't go where people want to go



Fig. 12



Fig.13

Paths that lead to nowhere are useless, as demonstrated at this Phoenix, Arizona Park (Fig.12). The Luxembourg Gardens in Paris, however (Fig.13), show the art of making a path that pulls people along it, or allows them to stop and relax. Source PPS (2005, p.26)

Domination of a space by vehicles There may be a lack of crosswalks, or streets that are too wide, or lacking sidewalks.



Fig.14



Fig.15

A main street is not a highway. One should not fear crossing the street so much that the activity needs to occur in groups, as on George Street in Sydney, Australia (Fig.14). Crossing the street should be an easy, comfortable activity. Even if you have to wait. (Fig.15). Source PPS (2005, p.27)

Blank walls or dead zones around the edges of a place The area around a space is as important to its success as the design and management of the space itself.



Fig.16



Fig.17

The blank wall (Fig.17) contributes nothing to the activity of the street. In fact, it doesn't even seem real. Source PPS (2005, p.28)

Inconveniently located transit stops Bus or train stops located in places where no one wants to use them are a good recipe for failure.



Fig.18



Fig.19

A transit stop located in a busy, active place can not only make that place better, but also increase transit use. Source PPS (2005, p.29)

CHAPTER 4

4. CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND (*of public open spaces in Addis Ababa*)

While studying the current condition of open public spaces in Addis Ababa, there are some important points that worth mentioning. These include; the city's early urban development pattern and the different urban planning practices that had been playing a fundamental role in guiding its urban development. As a Consequence, discussing these factors in brief might help to have a general insight about the provision, growth and development of open public spaces in Addis Ababa since the establishment of the city.

4.1. EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF ADDIS ABABA

As mentioned earlier in the first chapter, the establishment of Addis Ababa is directly related with emperor Menelik II and his desire to have a strong and modern capital to his empire. According to historians initially the area chosen for the establishment of the city was "Entoto"- currently the mountain on the northern side of Addis Ababa but later the emperor went down from the mountain southward to the plain of "finfini" and establish his capital Addis Ababa meaning "the new flower" in Amharic.²⁴

The reason behind changing the location of the capital from Entoto to Finfini is due to the favourable conditions the later has for establishing a city. This is the most pleasant area of the region; its climate is good; water is abundant; it has hot springs and the area is wooded.²⁵

Lord Edward Gleichen, who was in Ethiopia in 1897 with a British diplomatic mission to Ethiopia, explained the early development of the city as: at the beginning when viewed from the dominating Entoto Mountain, the town landscape showed clusters of huts surrounded by fences and, overall, a large number of white tents spreads everywhere, particularly at the fringes, this gave the town the appearance of gigantic camp, and indeed this is actually what it is²⁶.

Eventually, the first tents or huts hosting the king and his nobilities became more complex buildings and enriched by elaborated architectural features. They represent the starting point of the development of the urban architecture fabric. In addition the church also played an important role in the change of the townscape and morphology of Addis Ababa. Despite all these, the general organization of the city in its early days

²⁴ . "In 1878, prophecy became fact when emperor Menelik II declared that it would be his new capital, and built two Coptic churches and a palace on top of Entoto.He later built another church and palace down the hill, and it was round there that the township grew. He called the palace Addis Ababa, which in Amharic means "new flower". Ethiopia, the official handbook, (1969).

²⁵ . An early description of Finfini from a letter written by Father Taurin to Father Bruno da Viney on 21 October 1868 – adapted from "old tracks in Addis Ababa" a historical guide to Addis Ababa by Milena Batistoni and Gian Paolo Chiari, Arada Books, 2004.

²⁶ . Lord Edward Gleichen, with the mission to Menelik, 1897, London, Gregg international, 1898, p.157

was more like a traditional village rather than an urban area. Its physical structure was characterized by unplanned and uncontrolled growth of neighbourhoods around the palace, the church and the houses of the nobilities and this condition results in spontaneous and fragmented urban spaces.

4.2. PUBLIC OPEN SPACES FROM THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF ADDIS ABABA

Historically, public open spaces in Addis Ababa have been developed out of the city's early spatial organization. The first settlement pattern of the city was decided based on the feudal tradition of settlement layouts, which was the expression of traditional power hierarchy²⁷. i.e. The king or Governor of a certain region builds his residence on a hill top or elevated land and his officials and the rest people build their dwellings on the lower area of the surrounding.

Accordingly, in the early development of Addis Ababa the king decided the location of the residences of his noble men and gives them land according to their respective positions. The chiefs in their turn gave pieces of their land to their immediate and followers to build their huts around the chiefs' residences. Later on, these settlement systems developed to several residential clusters known as "Safars" literal meaning "camp". They were separated from one another by natural barriers like shrubs and ravines. The common meeting places for these Safars were the "Ghibbi" the current grand palace area, the churches and the Arada market area.²⁸

In his PhD. thesis Johnson explains the city's evolution as follows:

"An increase of population and the coming and going of regional governors and other people, to pay homage to the king promoted the development of commercial services around the Ghibbi and it made the Ghibbi an important place of public meeting and gathering. Arada became more important because of the increase of regional supply of basic items to the city and its being centre for the surrounding areas as well as other regions. The services of commercial activities make Arada the most popular fabric of the city with its scene of varied life of the people". (Johnson, 1976, p.87).

Another open public space from the early development period of Addis Ababa was "Jan Hoy Meda"- the contemporary "Jan Meda". It was used as a place for social gatherings and as a race course for horses.

"Additionally, in 1903 a huge open area called "Jan hoy Meda" was established. This popular area was used as a race course for horses as well as a place for state and social gathering." (Johnson, 1976, p.187)

"Jan Meda" is still one of the city's important open public spaces, which functions as: a festival ground for the city wide "Timket" celebration-(Feast of the Epiphany, 19 January) and a site for sport activities such as horse racing and athletic tournaments.

²⁷ .“The proposal of queen Taitu, the settlement pattern was based on traditional and feudal society. This pattern of traditional settlement was the expression of traditional power hierarchy.” Dandena Tufa, Urban developments of Addis Ababa: plans and Realities, Masters Thesis, 1995, p.31.

²⁸ . Johnson, 1976.Ibid. p.33.

In its web site selamta, an Ethiopian airlines magazine explains Timket celebration as:

“Timket is an extremely colorful three-day festival commemorating the baptism of Christ. The night before, priests take the Tabot (which symbolizes the Ark of the Covenant) containing the Ten Commandments from each Church. Concealed by an ornamental cloth, it is taken to a tent, close to a consecrated pool or stream, accompanied by much ringing of bells, blowing of trumpets and the burning of incense. In Addis Ababa many tents are pitched at Jan Meda, to the northeast of the city center.”(Ethiopian Festivals. Available: //http://www.selamta.net.)

Therefore, the above mentioned common meeting places can be considered as the city’s first open public spaces.

It is unarguable that these open public spaces played a fundamental role in the early development of Addis Ababa. However the quality of their physical and spatial development as an urban space was very poor and characterized by spontaneously grew and fragmented spaces. The reasons for this might be manifold, including the fact that the built up spaces in Addis Ababa by the early development were the results of strong territoriality tradition between individuals that influence the land occupation and location of individual houses; absence of the tradition of city building; and giving strong emphasis on domestic life rather than public life.

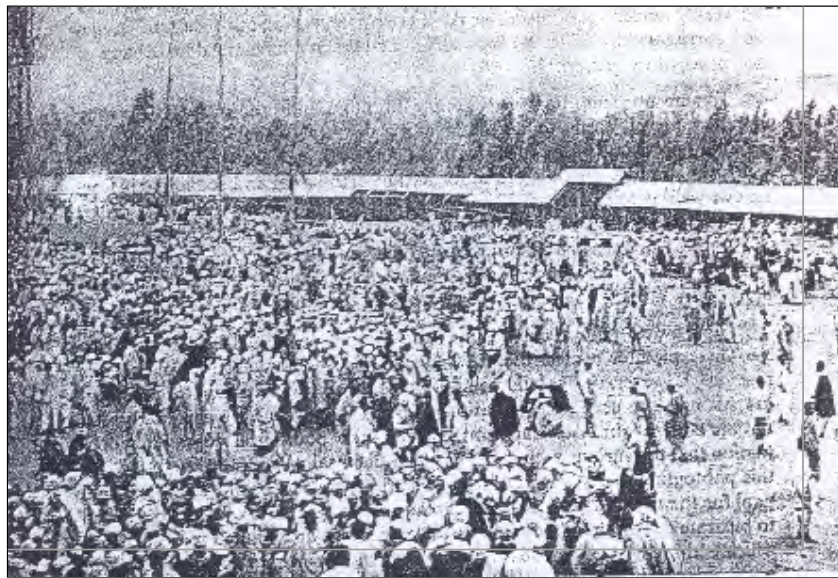


Fig.20



Fig.21.

Fig.20 and 21. The two early public open spaces in Addis Ababa, “Gibbi” and “Arada” respectively.
Source: Urban developments of Addis Ababa: plans and Realities (1995)

During the later years, however, the beginning of land charters and establishment of municipality in response to the increasing rural urban migration and to provide urban services for foreign guests and regional governors facilitated the urban development of the city. Eventually, the initial cluster settlement pattern of growth of the city was gradually changed to integrated form of urban development. Narrow streets, bridges, schools and hospitals were introduced to the city. In addition the introduction of the rail way transport in 1917 further facilitates the development of the city by providing construction materials such as corrugated iron sheet and cement.

Following this development of the city, new types of urban open public spaces were introduced to the city.

“As the traffic patterns developed based on the newly introduced streets and bridges an important type of urban open space was developed in the city, the intersection or “Adebabi” – (the term used in Amharic to explain square). Initially these traffic squares were small in size and not as such significant but through time they became important nodes of urban public spaces in the city with commemorative statues, a traffic “round about” or circle and a small park like townscapes. To make them into a ceremonial or commemorative feature was a particular contribution of emperor Haile selassai I during his 1930’s coronation.” (Ezekiel, 1986, p.7-8)

The 1930’s coronation of emperor Haile selassai I did have an effect upon the development of urban public spaces in the capital. For instance, the coronation reveals an attitude of sensitiveness towards the appearance of the city and its urban space.

“Statues at key places were considered important by the new emperor. Menelik adebabi was improved with a large statue and a circular garden and, a small statue with a star on top set in garden was located in the centre of the piazza area (Haile silassai star

adebabi).Arat kilo had an obelisk like statue erected at his vital intersection. Also the new rail road station was opened for users and gilded statue of the lion of Judah was located in a small park in the open area in front of the station. Thus these four places were considered important in the structure of the city and the fact that the railroad station was a new place of significance is clear.” (Johnson, 1976, p.289).

Furthermore Johnson (1976) argues that, the effort during the coronation also reveals that certain aspects of the city structure were considered essential in developing the appearance of a western city.

“Huge triumphal wooden arches were added at the key points of the city even though they were temporary; this could have originated in the Emperors perception of similar European urban features.” (Johnson, 1976, p.289-290).

The other important point that is originated during the coronation and still affects the appearances of the city’s urban public open spaces is the attitude of screening the old and less viable urban structures from the eyes of the visitors.²⁹ Even today stone and hollow concrete block walls which screen shabby neighbourhoods located adjacent to important avenues are common elements in the city’s urban environment. One can find such kinds of screening walls along the Churchill Avenue and the bole road, although, today the spaces behind the screening walls have been turned to investors.

Following the coronation the first constitution was written in 1931.The constitution in turn added its part on the development of the city.

“Political bodies created by the constitution needed a seat to execute their functions and consequently the first modern public building – the parliament building was completed in 1934.The place in front of this building was labelled and was named constitution square.” (Ezekiel, 1986, from Pankhurst, 1968, p.714)

In general, during the early development period of Addis Ababa (i.e. from the time of its establishment until the Italians occupation) open public spaces were common in some parts of its urban area. They served as a place for: social gatherings; rest; ceremonial gatherings; and even for recreation.

On this line of argument, Johnson’s (1976) explanation on early open public spaces around St. George node –the current piassa area, could be a good example:

“It is worth mentioning that the concept of reserving areas in a city for parks is rather alien to Ethiopian culture and history. Thus it is as significant to not find parks in the city as it is to find a few parks introduced through outside influences, as in the case today. However, functional gatherings of people are common in many places. Areas such as the St. George node do serve as a place of rest, social gathering, and ceremonial activities and even for recreation. First, of course, the forested spacious church area itself is a gathering place for thousands of people at frequent occasions. Secondly, there is a small triangular area southwest of the church that has been made into the beautiful small municipal park that serves as the setting for the monument of Meneilik II, founder of the city and of modern Ethiopia, is located just outside the main gate of the church. Third, a place with a huge tree served as a central place for administering of justice. Here courts were held and judgements were meted out including using branches of the tree to

²⁹ . Johnson (1976), Ibid. p.291-292.

carryout the death sentence by hanging. The fifth function of St. George node was terminated in 1960. Previous to that date the large open paved space near the main gate served as the main focus for the city wide Maskal celebration which is climaxed by the burning of a 30-40 feet high tepee shaped cluster of poles decorated with Maskal flower. This ceremony, celebrating the finding of the true cross (Maskal) is also a spring festival coinciding with the end of the main rainy season “kiremt”. (Johnson, 1976, p.103-104).

4.3. PAST PLANNING PRACTICES AND OPEN PUBLIC SPACES IN ADDIS ABABA

Urban planning in Addis Ababa has only a history of six decades that dates back to the short period of the Italians invasion (1936-1941). During the early months of the occupations, the colonizers showed strong intentions of restructuring and planning the city so as to make it: a modern city that can accommodate a ‘white’ population of 250,000 and the capital of all the territories in east Africa that had been occupied by Italy.³⁰

This ambitious idea of building a modern colonial city interested many Italian architects of the time to be involved in the preparation of the first Addis Ababa’s master plan. In addition the famous French architect Le Corbusier was also invited by Mussolini to prepare a master plan.

After looking the city from the air, Le Corbusier prepared a guide line sketch which reflects his principle of a city as a monumental structure. The sketch illustrated his idea of an ‘urban capital’ by describing the city as an ‘instrument of work, a centre of order, a residence of government, so to say, a large administration which is demanding for large buildings and large modern housing.’³¹

Le Corbusier’s sketch consists of monumental structures and a grand boulevard crossing the city from north to south and east to west which is a reflection of a radiant city, provision of central public square situated at crossing point of the two boulevards (east-west and north-south). The square was proposed to have public halls, church, municipality, theatre, cinema, etc around it to give it a character of a roman forum. However it was not approved and implemented.³²

³⁰ . Dandena (1995),Ibid, p.40

³¹ . Cultural Heritage promotion, an exemplary restoration of a historic building in Kasanchis, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2005.p.15

³² . Dandena (1995),Ibid, p.40



Fig.22. Le Corbusier sketch for Addis Ababa (1936).Source: Addis Ababa in action: city development plan 2001-2010, executive summary (1996).

The master plan of C. Valle and I. Guidi was the other proposal in the same time. This plan was approved and used for the restructuring of the city. The preparation of the plan was based on the modernist idea of the garden city that proposed a clear segregation or zoning of the city's functional areas. In addition this plan also segregated the living area of the local dwellers from the districts of the foreigners, i.e. the European quarters was located on the eastern part of the city while the native's city was on the western side.³³

Even though this master plan left the native's quarter by just introducing a grid pattern layout, it guided the development of the European district to have a modern urban character. On this line one of its great contributions was the introduction of modern urban open public spaces to the city.

The typologies of the newly introduced urban open public spaces included well designed, straight and wide boulevards with strong monumental character and landscapes³⁴ and modern recreational facilities such as sport centres around the current stadium area. The boulevards were two parallel axes which were situated along the newly proposed commercial area which is the present day national theatre area, and along the political axis which extends from sedist Kilo University southward to the old palace.

³³ . Dandena (1995),Ibid, p.45

³⁴ . Dandena (1995),Ibid, p.45



Fig.23. Guidi & C, valle: General urban perspective view of the new Italian centre (1936). Source: Addis Ababa in action: city development plan 2001-2010, executive summary (1996).

The second master plan of Addis Ababa was prepared five years after the Italians occupation. It was prepared by the planner of the great London, Patrick Abercrombie³⁵ who was invited by emperor Haile selassie I. His proposals considered neighbourhood units which are surrounded by green belts as basic elements of organizing the city. On the other hand radial ring roads surrounded by green belts were also the major features of his plan. Additionally to minimize the rural- urban migration he also proposed six satellite towns around the city.

Despite the proposal of Green Park ways around neighbourhood units was a new addition to the development of open public spaces in Addis Ababa, his idea of neighbourhood units was not implemented. This is due to his death before the preparation of a detail plan.³⁶

The third master plan of Addis Ababa was the one proposed in 1959 by British consultants, Bolton Hennessy and partners. They were hired to revise Abercrombie's master plan and their plan was more focused on the development of satellite towns so that their plan did not contribute to the development of public open spaces in Addis Ababa.³⁷

³⁵ . ORAAMP(1996), Ibid ,p.7

³⁶ . Dandena (1995), Ibid , p.45

³⁷ . ORAAMP(1996), Ibid ,p.6

In 1965, a consulting team of the French Mission for urban studies and Habitat led by L.De Marien prepared the fourth master plan for Addis Ababa. The plan was prepared based on the principles of formalistic urban development with Arada as the head (core) of the over all figure.³⁸ The contribution of this plan to the development of open public spaces is the structuring of a long monumental axis to be built from north to south³⁹, the widening of the existing Churchill street and the proposal of a triumphal arch at the present Tewdros square (which is found 1km south of the Addis Ababa Municipality).Furthermore this plan strengthened the development pattern once started by the Italians.

The master plan which was prepared by the Hungarian planner professor C.K. Polonyi in collaboration with the Ministry of Urban Development of Ethiopia during the socialist period was the fifth master plan of Addis Ababa.⁴⁰ Polonyi's master plan focused on two types of proposals: the integration and linkage of Addis Ababa with other towns and rural areas; and the proposal for the development of the city's central area.

With regard to the issue under study the later proposal of polonyi's master plan is of great importance. It was one of the most important spatial transformations in the development of urban open public spaces in Addis Ababa. Although the proposal was to develop the central area of the city, its major focus was the design of a public square on the former Meskel square which was used as used as a festival ground for the city wide Meskel celebration (the finding of the true cross).

The new square was designed to have to up to 200,000 spectators on its grass amphitheatre⁴¹.Its has a length of 500m and its opposite side consists of a tribune designed for the head of the government and higher officials. The middle area is meant for military and other parades; this gigantic square was intended for ceremonies of the communist government and was named "Abiot square" (literary meaning Revolution square).

The square is located at the heart of the city where major streets make their connections. These include the streets to: the Bole international airport; the Ethio-Djibouti railway station; the palace; the piazza area; the Megenagna area and debrezeit.The design of the square was soon realized and its location gives it a sense of focal point. The surrounding area of this square is composed of different types of land uses including: office blocks, school, exhibition centre, cultural museum and sport club.

³⁸ . "De Marine's proposals show his interest on an axial structure (back ground experience of Paris) that he came with the straight boulevard linking the city hall of Addis Ababa to the Gofa Safar junctions at the southern end" Dandena (1995), Ibid , p.63

³⁹ . Dandena (1995), Ibid , p.62

⁴⁰ . ORAAMP(1996), Ibid ,p.7

⁴¹ "Revolution square is the largest of the city's squares. Its grass amphitheatre can hold up to 200,000 to witness whatever rallies or speeches are talking place in the extensive tarmac area in front. It is a site of regular gatherings, like that on 12 September-revolution day, or I May-may day." Addis Ababa after 100 years, 1989, H & L communication Ltd. Okehampton, Devon, UK.



Fig.23. Addis Ababa city centre, by C.K. polonyi, 1978.The 'Abiot Square (revolution square) is designed with its emphasized link to the commercial and political axes. Source: AAMPPO

The 1986 master plan was the other plan prepared during the socialist period. This plan was prepared by a joint undertaken by the government of Ethiopia and the government of Italy in collaboration with the Venice school of Architecture.

The background study of the 1986 master plan indicated that the image of a green city where open spaces and trees play a major role and it also explained the existing situation as things were different for the users and indeed open spaces for recreation were very limited. In response to this it proposed different solutions to improve the situation, including: protection of continuous green areas along the rivers, building of public gardens and parks, avenue tree planting, preserving and widening of the wood land.

Most of these proposals were however, not implemented. For instance the Draft of the regional conservation strategy assessed the failure of the 1986 master plan concerning

recreational parks as: None of the 31 areas (together 888ha) indicated as future parks in the Master plan, had been built. Out of the 31 areas, 14 are still open spaces, where as four areas are now residential areas, three areas are used as sport fields, three areas are occupied by churches and cemeteries, one is partially owned by the film centre and one belongs to an embassy and so on.

As discussed above, urban planning in Addis Ababa had a history of only six decades. Moreover the planning approaches that have been practiced were generally focused on the functional zoning of the different land uses. As a result the development of urban open public spaces in Addis Ababa has been taken place in the absence of urban design policies and guidelines. The figure-ground diagram of the city's main centre, which shows weak patterns of urban spaces and weak linkage between them, witness this problem of the city.

Recently; however, the 1986 master plan of the city is revised due to a paradigm shift in the system of planning from conventional land use zoning to a structure planning approach. According to ORAAMP in order to: respond to the progressive change of scale of the city; define growth directions and set up a strong development frame, the structure plan is compartmented into various major components.

In this context, “the Main Social and Municipal Services” component of the structure plan is the one which deals with the city's open public spaces. This component, which has a vision of “Equitable Distribution of Affordable Services”, identified the shortage; poor quality; inefficient administration and; usage and uneven distribution of such services as the current challenges of the city. The proposed solutions for these problems by ORAAMP include: Increase and improve the service provision; Build institutional capacity and sound financing mechanisms.

In order to realize such proposals, the revised master plan has brought a new type of implementation tools and institutional arrangement. In this context the major actions taken are the preparation of Local development plans. However, due to the absence of general policy guidelines during their preparation coupled with capacity and financial limitations during their implementation; currently they failed also to bring the urban quality they intended to bring.

CHAPTER 5

5. CASE STUDIES

5.1. CASE STUDY I: MESKEL SQUARE

5.1.1. INTRODUCTION

Meskel Square, with: big grass amphitheatre, very wide road way and extensive semi circle shaped asphalt arena, lies at the center of Addis Ababa. It is surrounded by different land uses which include: a church; a museum; an exhibition center; high school; sport center; and various governmental offices.

It is the largest urban square in Ethiopia. Certainly Meskel Square is also the most significant urban public space in the country. Located at the main city centre area of Addis Ababa city, for decades this place has been playing several important roles. It served as: a festival ground for the city -wide Meskel celebration; a political demonstration field; an origin and destination place for different types of athletics tournaments and car rallies; a play ground for children and young people, a regular public gathering place for socio-cultural activities such as music festivals, occasional days, etc...and of course a place for homeless people.

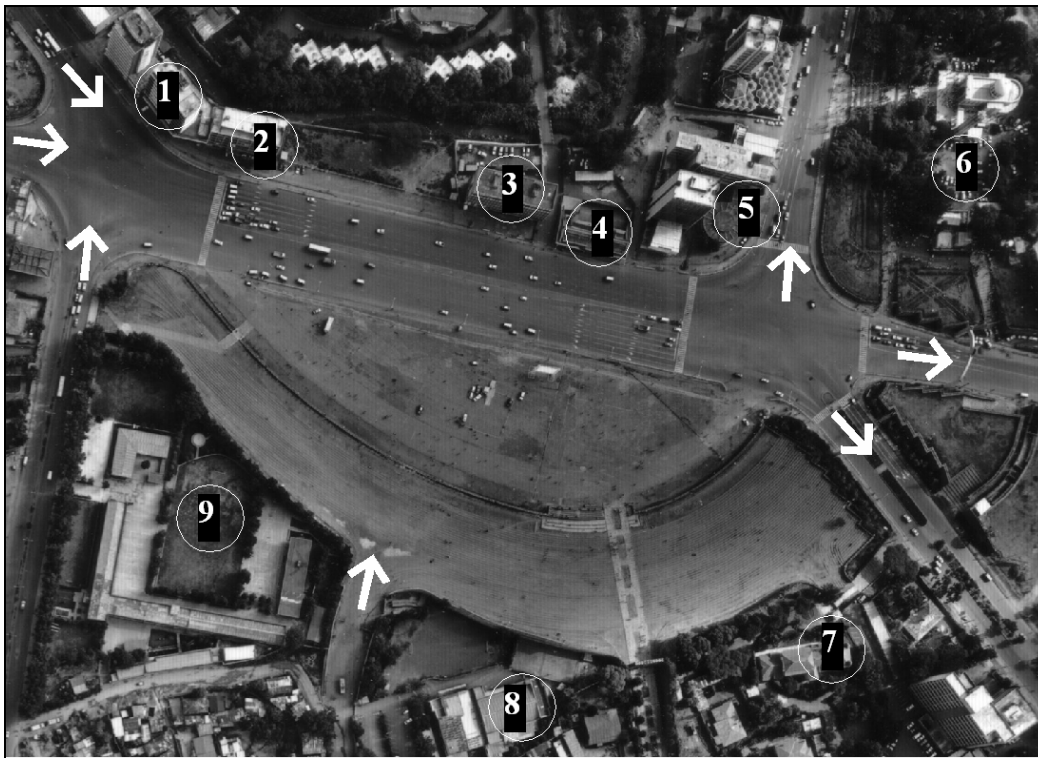


Fig.24. Meskel square and its surrounding land uses, 1, 3, and 5 – office buildings; 4- tribunal seat for respected guests; 6-St. Stephanos church;7 – Addis Ababa museum;8- an exhibition centre and 9- St. Joseph school.

While studying on the current operation of Meskel square, it is worthy to look at its evolution. Furthermore, understanding its transformation through time might help to reveal some of the factors which gave rise to the character it has acquired now and that affect its current operation or use.

Since its establishment, Meskel square has been experiencing quite dramatic changes. According to some scholars, the origination of this urban public space is related with St. Stephanos church, which was built in 1916 and the introduction of the government axis-

“Stephanos church completed the skeleton upon which the government axis developed where one of the important city squares Stephanos adebabi has grown” (Johnson, 1976, P.105)

The most significant factor, which transform this space into an important public space, was however the change that had been made on the location of the city wide Meskel celebration in 1960. Previous to that date the celebration has been taken place on the space in front of St .George church, which was one of the most important nodes during the city’s early development. But in 1960 the ceremony was shifted to the current location of Meskel square, which was termed by that time as stephanos square.

“...the fifth function of St. George square was terminated in 1960. Previous to that date the large open paved space near the main gate served as the main focus for the city wide maskal celebration which is climaxed by the burning of a 30-40 feet high tepee shaped cluster of poles decorated with maskal flower. This ceremony, celebrating the finding of the true cross (maskal) is also a spring festival coinciding with the end of the main rainy season kiremt”. (Johnson, 1976, P.105)

The driving force behind shifting Meskel celebration from St .George church area to its current location was the growth and development of the old Addis Ababa city on the south east direction.

“Transferring maskal to the south represents an element in the general trend of the southward growth of the city includes moving traditional functions as well as establishing new developments”. (Johnson, 1976, P.105)

Following the 1974 Ethiopian revolution, the Dergue regime which came to power had made several major changes to the square. On this line the design of the square that has been done by, the Hungarian planner, professor C.K.Polony was the most important spatial transformation in the development of this square. Besides, it was this design that give Meskel square its contemporary form.

“The first plan prepared during this period was that of professor C.K.Polony, a Hungarian planner, who designed “Revolution Square”. This was one of the most important spatial transformations implemented during the socialist regime.” (ORAAMP, 1996, p.7)

Other major changes that had done during the Dergue regime were: changing the name of this space from Meskel square to Revolution square; and changing the focus

of its use as a festival ground to a site of regular gatherings like that on 12, September - Revolution day, or May day, etc...

“Revolution square is the largest of the city’s squares. Its grass amphitheatre can hold up to 200,000 to witness whatever rallies or speeches are talking place in the extensive tarmac area in front. It is a site of regular gatherings, like that on 12 September-revolution day, or 1 May-may day. “Addis Ababa after 100 years (1989)

The strategies developed through Polony’s design includes: addition of large steel structure gates decorated with the slogans of socialism at places where three of the six arterial streets from the different parts of the city come and intersect the square. He also made widening of the main arterial street, which is adjacent to the square and directed along the east-west axis, so as to make it comfortable for the military marching parade that had been held on 12, September. The designing of the grass amphitheatre which help tens of thousands of people to watch activities that take place on and the half circled space in front of the amphitheatre and also along the big arterial street as well as building of tall blind walls, especially in its east and south periphery and entrances where the other elements are added. The walls are made of seamless jointed cut stones and have embedded steel poles that are used to hang flags. Polony also made with success the linking of the square with the exhibition centre by continuous flights of stairs that passed through the main entrance of the exhibition centre, which is designed in such a manner to have a grand effect.

Polony had also provided two public toilets and open latrines on southern and eastern parts of Meskel square, however the ones on the eastern side are presently demolished due to new construction.



Fig.25. New construction at the eastern part of Meskel square where one of the two public toilets of the square used to be found.

After the fall of the Dergue regime in 1991, once again this square was renamed as Meskel square and its dominant use has been to serve as a major festival ground for the city -wide Meskel celebration. Parallel to this, however, currently the space is also used for different public functions. It is used as: a political arena; a stage for various socio-cultural activities; etc.... Recently, in an effort to revitalize this space, some additions are made. These include the addition of lighting fixtures and sonic screen, and changing the surface treatment of the half circle shaped area just in front of the grass amphitheatre.



Fig.26. Recently added lightings at Meskel square

5.1.2. ANALYSIS AND STUDY FINDINGS

5.1.2.1. SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

The aim being generally examining the sociability of urban open public spaces in Addis Ababa, this part focuses on the social interactions within different user groups in the case study area. These users include different age groups, from little children to older people who come to the square for various activities like recreation, sport, for selling goods like cigarettes and so on. It also includes marginalized social groups such as homeless people and other people who come to this area to chew chat in the afternoons.

A. CHILDREN (7-18)

From the two months long site observation and an interview made with 17 small children, who had been in the study area during the survey, it was found that these kids often come to the square in groups and are composed of four to twelve members. Besides during the survey:

- (76 %) replied as they know children of other groups at least by face. From these children, who responded as they know children from other groups at least by face,

(70%) stated that they used this square as their playground and a place where they make foot ball matches with children of their age from the near by neighborhoods, moreover, (35.3%) of them said they come to the place everyday out of school hours and know other people that often found around the square like people with street vendors and bicycle renting guys.



Fig.27. Small children playing football on the semi-circled asphalt area at Meskel square

In general, children of this age group do not come to the area alone. They usually came in small groups and it is common to find them in large number of groupings. They primarily used the semi circled asphalt area near the center of the square where by there are rental bicycles. However when there are groups of older children playing in this area, this small age grouped children tended to keep out of the way and watch the older ones.

There is a strong interaction within this age group; however, interaction of this age group with other age groups is very weak. Small children were very rarely seen playing or chatting with other age groups. Even the place where they sit to watch football games differ from spectators of another age group.

B. YOUNG PEOPLE (18-34)

The field observation conducted on this case area indicated that Young people are most likely to be found in large numbers than other age groups. It also found that they gather in different parts of the square and for a wide range of time.

As the Survey and interview made with 33 people of this age group, who were using the square during the survey and often come to the place indicates:

- (45%) of them came to the square for the purpose of physical exercises. These physical exercises include: playing football, running, doing gymnastics & riding a bicycle.

During observations it was seen that most of young people of this age group and who often come to the square for the purpose of physical exercise usually come in groups of 10 to 20 people. Similarly survey results from this age group indicate that:

- (54%) of this young people know young people from the other groups at least by face.

In the survey (35%) found out to be jobless people who mostly come to the square:

- for the purpose of spending time; and
- chewing chat

These jobless people were seen in small groups of 2 to 5 people. Furthermore the survey reveals that each group knows most of the people in other group who come to the square for the same purpose.

The survey further indicates that (20%) of this age group come alone and usually come to the square for watching the different activities going on there.

The result of the survey and interview filled by 45 young people, who are working in the vicinity of the case area and whose age falls in this category, indicates as:

- (62%) of them come to the place with their friends when there is an exhibition, special events or on their way to work. while,
- (13.5 %) come to the square with their family members when there is an exhibition; and
- The remaining (24.5%) responded as they come alone for exhibition, Meskel celebration, and to watch the different activities taken place there.

In general, the majority of young people (18-34) who use the square for different activities come in groups of two or more. Usually they are of the same sex. Although young people who often come to the square know other people, it was observed that their interaction with other people in the square is very weak.

C. ADULT PEOPLE (35- 50)

An interview made with eight people from this age group and who were using the square during the survey indicates:

- (66%) come to the square for the purpose of watching the different activities taking place there.
- (34%) come for the purpose of spending time

During the observation people who were using the square from this age group have been seen in small numbers .Furthermore it was observed that they were sitting alone and do not know the other people around.



Fig.28. Adult people at Meskel square usually seen alone.

While a questionnaire filled by 22 people from this age group and, who were working in the vicinity, demonstrate:

- (25%) of them come to the square on their way to work and
- (75%) come to the square when there were different socio-cultural events like Meskel celebration and exhibitions.

D. OLD PEOPLE (> 50)

Findings from the study demonstrates that people from this age group rarely come to the square (7%). The ones encountered during the survey were also sitting alone and tended to seat far from the areas heavily used by the other age groups.

In general, Meskel square is a socially segregated space where different age groups and social groups rarely mix. For instance, in an ordinary day it is common to see different users groups at the different parts of the square: homeless people and young people chewing chat often used the area near the dead walls; young and adult people who often come to watch the different activities use the grass amphitheatre; Small kids and young people who come to this place for different sport activities use both the semi-circled asphalt area and the grass amphitheatre. (See the figure below)

Additionally, the study revealed that the different parts of the square provided opportunities for different groups to meet together in some ways and construct their identity. This might be interpreted as self segregation, the means by which people manage social contact in public places to reflect their own preference on engaging with others and the need for personal space.

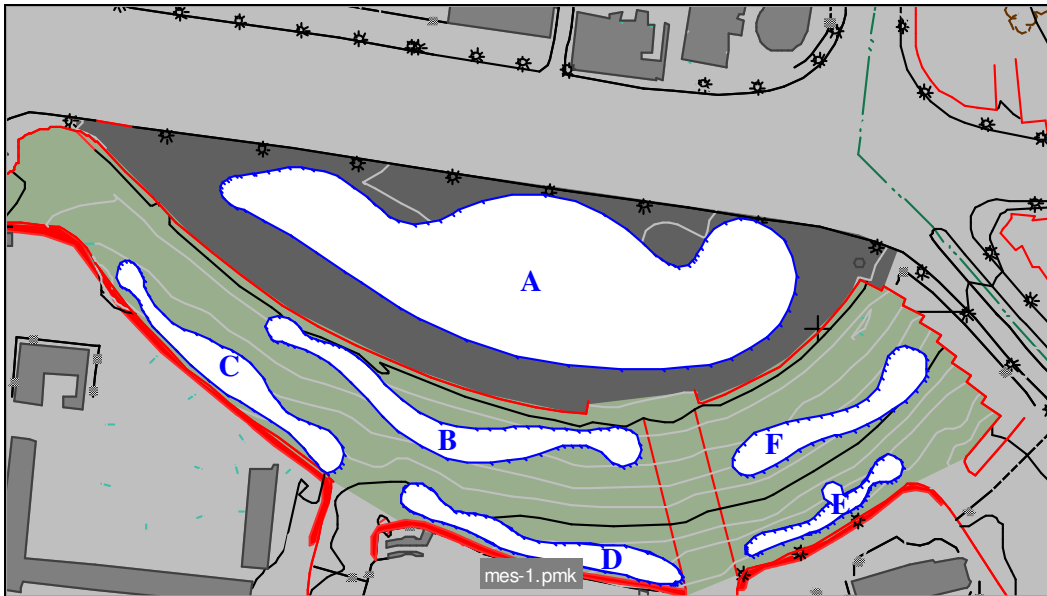


Fig. 29. The locations of different user groups at Meskel square.

- Area A - Small children and young people (Playing football and riding a bicycle)
- Area B - Young, adult and Old people(Watching activities)
- Area C - Young people and Homeless adult people (Sleeping, Spending time and chewing chat)
- Area D - Young People (Spending time and chewing chat).
- Area E - Young People (Spending time and chewing chat).
- Area F - Young People (Running Activities).

5.1.2.2. USE AND ACTIVITIES

The aim being generally examining, how urban public open Spaces in Addis Ababa are currently used. This part focuses on the different uses and activities and that take place in the selected case study area. These uses include both ordinary day uses and activities and also special day events.

The research findings obtained from the combination of the data collected and interpreted during field observation and from questionnaires & interviews are discussed below.

For this study, observations and interviews were conducted on the different parts of the square (See Fig.30). These include: the central part of the square .i.e. the semi-circle shaped asphalt arena where different activities are held (point “A” in Fig.30); the grass amphitheatre (point “B” in Fig.30), where: people sit or stand to watch the different activities that are taking place in the extensive tarmac area in front, and also many people used it as a running exercise area; and the southern edge of the square particularly near the tall stone wall adjacent to Addis Ababa museum, exhibition centre & St. Joseph school (point “C” in Fig.30) .



Fig.30. Observation Locations at Meskel Square

A. THE CENTRAL SEMI-CIRCLE SHAPED ASPHALT AREA.

This is the most important part of the square whereby different uses for different activities had been observed (point “A” in Fig.39). It acts as an open air stage for various city wide events and ceremonies, such as: Meskel celebration; the great Ethiopian run; political demonstrations; and different music festivals and socio-cultural events. Some of these major activities are discussed below:

A.1. SPECIAL EVENTS OR USES

MESKEL CELEBRATION

The square gets its name “Meskel”-, which means Cross in Amharic, from this religious ceremony. It is a city wide celebration which reveres the finding of the true cross by Empress Helena. Every year on 27 September this religious ceremony is held on Meskel square. For this colourful ceremony people from the different parts of the city and also tourists from the different parts of the world come to this square.

On its page *Selamta* (An Ethiopian airlines Magazine) states the historical background and the ceremony of Meskel celebration as follows:

“The word Maskal actually means “cross” and the feast commemorate the discovery of the Cross-upon which Jesus was crucified--by the Empress Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great. The original event took place on 19 March, AD 326, but the feast is now celebrated on 27 September.

Many of the rites observed throughout the festival are said to be directly connected to the legend of Empress Helena. On the eve of Maskal tall ranches are tied together and yellow daisies, popularly called Maskal flowers, are placed at the top. During the night these ranches are gathered together in front of the compound gates and ignited. This

symbolizes the actions of the Empress who, when no one would show her the Holy Sepulcher, lit incense and prayed for help. Where the smoke drifted she dug and found three crosses. One of the crosses, the True Cross, many miracles was attributed.

Maskal also signifies the physical presence of the True Cross at the remote mountain monastery of Gishen Mariam located in the Welo region. In this monastery is a massive volume called the Tefut, written during the reign of Zera Yacob (1434-1468), which records the story of how a fragment of the Cross was acquired?

In the middle Ages, it relates, the Christian monarchs of Ethiopia were called upon to protect the Coptic minorities and wage punitive war against their persecutors. Their reward was usually gold, but instead the Emperor Dawit asked for a fragment of the True Cross from the Patriarch of Alexandria. He received it at Maskal.

During this time of year flowers bloom on mountain and plain and the meadows are yellow with the brilliant Maskal daisy. Dancing, feasting, merrymaking, bonfires, and even gun salutes mark the occasion. The festival begins by planting a green tree on Maskal Eve in town squares and village marketplaces. Everyone bring a pole topped with maskal daisies to form the towering pyramid that will soon be a beacon of flame. Torches of eucalyptus twigs called chibo are used to light the bundle of branches called demera.”

In Addis Ababa celebrations start in the early afternoon, when a huge procession bearing flaming torches approaches Meskel Square from various directions. The marchers include priests in their brightly hued vestments, students, brass bands, contingents of the armed forces, and bedecked floats carrying huge lit crosses. They circle the demera and fling their torches upon it, while singing a special Maskal song. Thousands gather at the square to join in and welcome the season of flowers and golden sunshine called Tseday. As evening darkens the flames glow brighter. It is not until dawn that the burning pyramid consumes itself and the big tree at the center finally falls. Ethiopian festivals. Available: //http:// www.selamta.net.



Fig.31 (a). Meskel celebrations at Meskel square (day time)



Fig. 31(b). Meskel celebrations at Meskel square (night time)

THE GREAT ETHIOPIAN RUN

The other very important event that takes place at Meskel square is the great Ethiopian run, a world wide known road race. Since its foundation in 2001, each year thousands of participants from all over the world take part in this competition. When the running competition takes place, vehicular traffics around the square are closed and all the way the running takes place. The central part of the Square, which is a street for cars, serves as the starting and finishing area.

In the past few years, it had been seen that the great Ethiopian run became an event which: staged competitions for fun and fulfillment; brought together people and communities of different culture; race, social status, ethnic origin and religion. As a consequence it enhanced the popularity of the square across the country and worldwide. This could also be understood as one of the important uses of urban open public spaces in cities as

*“a space simply for mixing, for encountering others, thus for promoting both sociability and diversity in the urban environment.”*CABE (2004).

For example the web page of the Guardian, which is a well known news paper in the world, described the 2003 great Ethiopian run as:

“ On a gloriously uplifting, if slightly chaotic, morning under the blazing African sun, nearly 25,000 runners and a goat made the Great Ethiopian Run a memorable spectacle that again demonstrated the unique power of sport.

More than 18,000 runners, ranging from five-year-olds to septuagenarians and those who could afford the latest running shoes to those who ran barefoot, had registered to take part. They formed a colorful spectacle in Meskel Square in T-shirts of green, yellow and red that reflected the national flag. But several thousand other unregistered competitors had also turned up.” The Guardian, Monday, December 1, 2003

Today, though, the Great Ethiopian run is so popular worldwide. Many famous athletes all over the world come to take part in this occasion. Not only that, many embassy employees, ambassadors and often foreign dignitaries have seen participating.



Fig.32. The Great Ethiopian run at Meskel square

MUSIC CONCERTS

Each year Meskel square hosts one or two major music concerts. Even though there are no regular schedules for such kinds of programs, it has been observed that whenever there are free or paid concerts, a lot of people old, young and children from different parts of the city come to the square.

Among the different music concerts that had been held in this square, the most significant was the one that took place on February 6, 2004. It was an international memorial concert for the 60th birthday of the Reggae legend, Bob Marley.⁴²

Due to its high media coverage from various international agencies like BBC world and MTV, This event played an important role in introducing the square as well as the country to the world. Beyond that it had been also a reason for some upgrading works made on the physical attributes of the square. These include: Addition of a green strip which separates the grass amphitheatre and the semi circle shaped tarmac area where the event took place; paving of the pedestrian walkways with tiles and maintaining the asphalt on the semi circle shaped area: and also addition of new lighting fixtures at the different parts of the square.

⁴² . Under the theme “Africa Unite” this concert was celebrated in partnership with Addis Ababa City Administration, Ethiopian Tourism Commission, the African Union (AU), the United Nation Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Save the Children and the World Bank.

As the international literature review on the issue generally implies by engaging people in recreational activities urban open public spaces encourage a sense of community in towns and cities. Similarly during this study an informal interview made with spectators, who had been participating on a reggae concert at Meskel square, revealed that people enjoyed such kind of activities as both sources of engagement and recreation. However, such big events like this one hadn't been seen happening frequently.



Fig.33 (a) Audiences gathered at Meskel square for the 60th Bob Marley's birthday Music concert.



Fig.33 (b). Burundi drummers performing at Meskel square on the 60th Bob Marley's birthday Music concert.

POLITICAL DEMONSTRATIONS

Under different regimes for decades Meskel square has been used as a place where political demonstrations have been held.⁴³ As the history of the square indicates, its function as a political arena is directly related with the decision made by the socialist government, which came to power following the 1974 Ethiopian revolution. It was a decision aimed to change the major use of the square from a festival ground to a site for regular political gatherings like that of the revolution day 12, September, or May Day 1, may. It was also this change in use that gave the square its contemporary form.

Even after the down fall of the socialist government in 1991, the square continued to serve as a venue for political demonstration. On this line, the demonstrations held eight days before the General Election of May 15, 2005 (Rallies made on May 7 and 8, in support of the ruling party and the opposition parties respectively) would be good examples.

*“On the morning of Saturday May 7, 2005, there was a mass rally at the famous Meskel Square, formerly baptized ‘Revolution Square’. This time the rally was meticulously organized by the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front, (EPRDF), and the party in power since 1991. Hence, the rally was made with the intention of not only harnessing support to it but also reasserting its superiority over all opposition forces, eight days before the General Election of May 15....”*Beyond the 7 and 8 rallies, Fitsum G. Available//http:// Beyond may 7 and 8 rallies.mht.

In the following day May 8 there was even bigger rally that asserted the importance of Meskel square as an urban space for such political activities. However the role of the square for such occasions did not lived long. The government following the end result of the rally passed a law that forbids any kinds of demonstration and informal gathering of people at Meskel Square. This further threatened the democratic atmosphere within this space and also directly reduces access to this public space.

Many literatures indicate squares as major public spaces. In this regard the occasion of these two rallies had also revitalized the sense of streets as public spaces. During these two rallies, all the major streets that lead to Meskel square were used as in real sense of public space. Streets that were used only by vehicles were used by people as public spaces for undertaking such political activities.

A.2. ORDINARY USES

This part presents an overview of the observation conducted on the selected case study area. It is not possible here to explore all the uses and activities taken place in this space, instead, it is tried to present the descriptive account of the main uses and activities. This is primarily based on the observation data. Notes taken during the observation are also presented alongside the descriptions to demonstrate how some of the issues discussed were empirically identified.

⁴³ . Infact it was for the political purpose that the square took the shape that is seen today.

Most users came from the near by areas, but there were also people who came from distant areas to use the square. Almost all people who had been using the square were male (95%) and women were often observed crossing the square on the way from the city center to their neighborhoods and vice versa.

It was seen that the use of the square by people is affected by seasonality, time of day and the prevailing weather and light condition. For instance by observing over the course of the day, it became possible to watch the changes in the uses and activities.

'A large number of athletes who are around 50 are doing running exercises in two groups at the staircase which links the square with the exhibition centre. They are composed of both men and women. There are also two people who give instructions for these people. It seems that these people are from one sport club. Near this area there is also another group of athletes which is composed seven young man and three young women. This group is mainly doing their exercise on the stone stools located at the central part of the square.' (Meskel square: 6pm-7pm, May 19, 2007).

'Near the screen there is one woman who sale fast foods like biscuits, bread and tea. Around her nine young children are dinning their breakfast, they are not dressed well and looks street children. Another six young people between 18-34 years of age are sitting on the grass amphitheatre enjoying the morning sun, watching the activities taken place in the square but all are sitting alone and do not talk to each other. In the western end of the square there are around twelve people who wait for a taxi. On the square's adjacent wall to St. Joseph school four people who ages around 35 are sleeping.'

'Four children in the age 7-18 are riding bicycles in the central asphalt area of the square. At this area there are also four groups of young people playing football. Each group is composed of teams with six to eight people and there are also other group of young people around who are waiting for their turn. This area is very active and full of loud shouting. Two groups of little children playing football are also in this area. Unlike the older groups the number of people in this group is small, like three to four children in a team.'

'There are around twenty cars parked on the square, this are parents car that come to the square to reach their children to St. Joseph school. This movement of cars within the centre of the square disturb the sport activities taken place there.'

'On the pedestrian adjacent to the main road a lot of people are walking in both directions. They seem people who are in their way to work. As usual the major road is full of heavy and fast traffic.' (Meskel square: 7:30 – 8.30pm, May 29, 2007).

In Ethiopia schools are closed during the rainy season of June, July and August. At this time of the year, Meskel square would be filled up with small children and young people. Unless there is a rain, these age groups use the square almost the whole day and often stay until the evening. However, observations show that, whenever there is a rain the square becomes empty and devoid of activities. This is because there are no public amenities provisions such as shelters whereby children can be sheltered till the rain passes. The ones available in the proximity are telephone booths that can accommodate two or three people. The near by taxi stops also do not have any shades that protects people from the rain and sun.

On different occasion observations were made regarding the use of the square on sunny day and during the afternoon. What was observed was that:

There are some people sitting near the newly installed screen. The semi circled tarmac area which is often busy with different activities during morning hours is now empty and devoid of activities. There are people who use the square as a short cut route between their home and the city centre; However, it is observed that young people in small groups of two to three who are sitting, talking and chewing chat under the shade of the square's wall on the southern side.

According to literature review, the number of evening activities and their locations are important factors for the vitality of the city and the perception of safety. If there are few activities or no activities the visitors get the impression of deserted space and avoid going there in the evenings. On this line, observations at Meskel square during evening hours from 7 o'clock to 9 o'clock indicated that the square is devoid of activities to the extent that nothing is seen except very few people.

'It is dark and cold in the square. Unlike day times the area is quite. Tonight the only people in Meskel square are the people who are crossing the area in their way to their home. The parking lot on the northern side of the square is full. In the cars there are lot of young people who are sitting with friends talking, laughing, and drinking coffee and so on. Waiters from the near by cafes are serving these people. On the other side of the square the newly assembled screen transmits commercial advertisements. The lights of the square are on but a considerable number of them do not function. The grass amphitheatre is darker than the other parts and it doesn't invite to get closer. In general the square is dead. The only activity going on is the movement of people who are crossing the square and the movement of cars.' (Meskel square: 7:30 –8.30am, July 2, 2007).

Generally, there are no official regulations with regard to the use of the square. Regulations that determine: the key activities that could take place on this square; and the age groups that could make use of the square. That means there is no Zoning of the whole square spaces for different and specific activities or uses. Observations during the study showed that the square was not designed for the kind of use. One sees today small children and young people used the central semi circled shaped tarmac area for various sport activities throughout the year. Other people used this part of the square as a place where: they meet their friends; young ones use the area to play soccer; small children use the same area to ride bicycles and middle aged people use the sport activities such as running exercises.

In addition, beyond its role as a destination area, people used it as a short cut route between their neighborhoods and the city center. After class hour's students from the adjacent St .Joseph school also used it as a waiting area until their parents came and pick them up.

Presently one common activity that is observed on this part of Meskel square is watching sport tournaments that are transmitted on the new 48sq.m.big sonic screen. The screen is erected by Sonic Screen Advertising Plc to show moving advertisements using the fiber optic line that connects the screen to computer. The computer controlling offices for this big screen are located in the building of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, which is adjacent to Meskel square.

Besides moving advertisements, the Advertising Company additionally transmits big sport events like football matches, and athletics competitions for free.

As observations on the case study area demonstrate the erection of the screen is playing a big role in revitalizing Meskel square, especially when there are important sporting tournaments a lot of people come to the square from different parts of the city. For instance one of the city's weekly gazettes "the fortune" describes the situation that had been during the 2006 world cup as follows:

"Addis Ababa seems to have been getting wild with football fervour and quiet on everything else. The majority of city residents are glued to TV screens, following the World Cup matches. But nowhere is as fair in treating fans as Meskel Square, with both the haves, sitting in their cars, and the have-nots, lined up on the floor, all sharing a 48sqm colour screen. When the matches started two weeks ago, there were only a few people scattered around the huge tract at the square. Now, more cars and pedestrians are drawn to the screen, like on this photo taken Saturday afternoon when Germany played against Sweden. The host country won the game Friday June 9, 2006 saw the assembly of hundreds of football fans that were eagerly anticipating the opening ceremony of the 18th World Cup at Addis Ababa Meskel Square. They were drawn to the area by the 48sqm screen that was erected in the square which was expected to show the opening ceremony." Fortune, 21 June, 2006.



Fig.34 .People watching football matches on the sonic screen at Meskel square.

The placement and location of this sonic screen at Meskel square is appropriate to its main purpose as a media for transmitting moving advertisements and allow the screen to be seen to an advantage. However, whenever there is a transmission of an important event, problems related to the location of the screen are observed: First, the entire crowd gathered to watch the scene blocks the vehicular traffic on the adjacent street; second, since there are no seats around this area, some people park their cars on the space in front of the screen and sit on top of the cars. This situation in turn observed creating visual problems for other spectators.

Despite its location problem, the introduction of the screen at Meskel square has been observed to be a successful step in bringing a considerable change in the vitality of the square.



1. Football playing, Watching sport tournaments on the screen
2. Bicycle renting,
3. Car parking, Watching sport tournaments on the screen
4. Students waiting area,
5. Sitting and watching,
6. Running and other physical exercise,
7. Sitting and watching, sleeping and chat chewing.

Fig.35. Major Activities and their respective locations at Meskel Square.

(B). THE GRASS AMPHITHEATRE

Another important part of Meskel square where different uses and activities take place is the grass amphitheatre (point “B” in Fig.30). This specific area was designed in response to the natural topography of the site and in such a way that to accommodate a large number of people who needed clear, uninterrupted view of the activities that takes place on the semi circle shaped area below.

The primary use of this space was to serve as a venue for a large number of spectators, who come to the square whenever there are big events. Apart from this, currently it was observed that during the different hours of a day (both on weekdays and weekends) the space was used by different groups of users for various activities.

The major ones were: running exercises; sitting and watching; sleeping; and sheep grazing.

During this study it has been seen that every day in the morning (from 6pm to 9pm), the area is highly used for sport activities specially running exercises. Besides on weekends the numbers of such users were higher.

The interview made with these users also indicated that the area is highly used for such kind of sport activities:

- (45%) of users replied that they used to come to the area everyday,
- (35%) said they used to make running exercises twice or three times a week, while
- (20%) responded that they come once or twice a month.

It was also observed that the spaces that used to be covered by grass are worn out because of the running activities that take place. During the rainy seasons the whole stepped area become muddy and full of water. Consequently the space becomes difficult for use.(see Fig.37)



Fig.36. Running activity on the grass amphitheatre of Meskel square (early morning)

The other most commonly seen activity in this part of the square during good weather is sitting and watching the various formal and informal activities that take place in the surrounding. Except harsh climatic conditions and night times, people usually young ones (18-35) use this space as sitting place to watch activities. As interviews conducted among these people revealed that:

- (11%) said they used to come everyday to watch different sport activities;
- (45%) responded that they came to the area twice or three times a week to watch the different programs on the screen; while
- (43%) replied that they used to come occasionally and they came for the sake of leisure and spending time.



Fig.37. Negative impacts of different activities on the grass amphitheatre of Meskel square



Fig.38. People watching activities at Meskel square

The other observation that was made during the survey was that, there are people who brought their herds of sheep to the grass amphitheatre for grazing. It has been seen that usually this type of activity took place in the time between 9 and 11 pm. The informal interviews with the sheep owners indicate that most of these people bring their animals from the near by sheep market.

It is unarguable that such activities have got their own negative impact on the soft landscape elements of Meskel square, particularly on its grass amphitheatre. This

situation indicates that whether there is lack or absence of management which will take care or make protections for the different parts or elements of the square.



Fig. 39. Sheep grazing at Meskel square

(C). THE EDGE (NEAR THE BACK WALL)

At Meskel square, one of the major built architectural parts is its tall stone and concrete wall in the south side. Group of young people most of them a group of two or three and homeless people congregated there. Its elevated position gave a good view of the square as well as the city; the advertisement boards hanged near by and the trees in St. Joseph school provide shelter from the harsh afternoon sun. From here people could see everything that is going on the square and though in a very distance space, they could nevertheless be relatively private. These people used the space to smoke and chew chat.

This wall has a thickness of approximately 1.2 meters and on top of it there are recessed spaces which are provided as planters. During the survey, it was observed that Homeless people use these planters as sleeping areas at night times. They are also seen when used as a space for sitting and spending time during daytimes.

During the afternoons they were often the only people using the square other than the people passing through it. The area shows signs of mismanagement: young people leave litters after chewing chat; spilling of food from homeless people and also some people excrete in this area.



Fig.40. Good view towards Meskel square from its back wall area



Fig.41. Homeless people sleeping at the back wall of Meskel Square.

From interviews with different groups of users in this specific part and also with users from other parts of the square, it appeared that there is opinion differences about the problems related to the area. From the total of 60 people who were using the square during the survey:

- (50%) replied as: it is full of dirt; it smells bad; and it is full of litters and spilling of food.
- (31.6%) responded that the level of cleanliness in this place is much better than other areas in the city and they commented as it is better to leave it as it is.
- (18.4%) do not respond.

Users, who responded as there is a problem of cleanliness in the square, indicate the addition of fees to use the available toilet and absence of management as major reasons. For example one old man who was sitting and watching activities taken place in the square during the survey said:

“Before in the socialist regime time the square was kept by guards and the space was clean and the grass was beautiful, but now look at it! It is full of dirt!”



Fig.42. Area left on top of the wall for plantation. Today there are no plants rather the space is used for chewing chat and sleeping.

In general, it is observed that people of different ages and social groups use Meskel square for different purposes. Interviews and surveys conducted at the case study area also assert this fact. For instance interview results with a total of 60 respondents, who were using the square, reveals:

- (38.3%) come to the square for the purpose of doing various sport activities. These activities mainly include: football, running, riding a bicycle and doing gymnastics.
- (47.7%) responded as they come to the place to spent time because they have nothing to do. While the rest,
- (15%) replied they use the square as their work place (this group is mainly composed of young boys with street vendors, ladies who sell biscuits and tea shoeshine boys and young people who rent bicycles).(see fig 43)

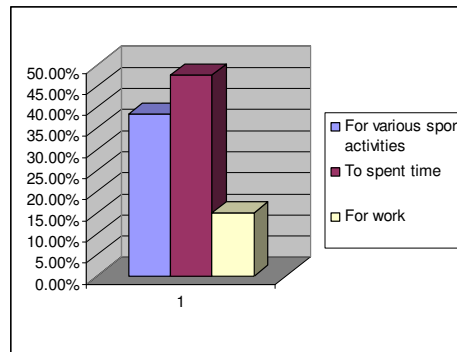


Fig.43. a bar chart showing respondents, who were using Meskel square during the survey, purposes of coming to the square.

Also a survey result with these user groups regarding their employment status indicates: there is some kind of relation between their employment status and their purpose of coming to the square. For instance a considerable amount of users from this group who used to come to the square to spent time and do various sport activities are jobless people and students. The survey made on their employment status also supports this fact, out of this group

- (38.3%) were unemployed.
- (30%) were students.
- (11.7%) were self employed.
- (16.7%) were employed. while,
- (3.3 %) were retired.

On the other hand from a questioner filled by 90 people, who were working in the vicinity of this case study area, it is found out that:

- (3.3%) come to the square for the purpose of doing various sport activities. These activities mainly include: football, running, riding a bicycle and doing gymnastics.
- (44.4%) responded as they come to the place when there is a bazaar or other activities at the exhibition centre.
- (6.7%) replied as they use to come to the square when there is a religious ceremony.
- (2.2%) said they come to the case study area when they have appointments with their friends.
- (15.5%) replied as they come to the area just on the way to their work.
- (1.1%) responded as they come to the square to spent time.
- (2.2%) said they come to the square accidentally.
- (18.8%) responded as they come to the square for recreational purposes.
- While the remaining, (5.8%) answered that they come to the square when there is an exhibition, a religious ceremony or a sporting event. (see fig 44)

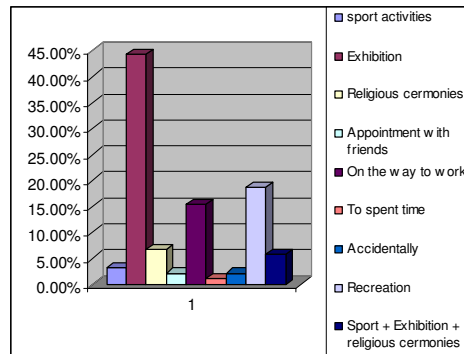


Fig.44. a bar chart showing respondents, who work in the vicinity of the case study area, purposes of coming to the square.

The above result indicates that people use Meskel Square for various purposes. In addition it shows that most users, who used to come to the square occasionally, come for exhibition, religious ceremonies or for recreation purposes.

In an effort to find out weather there are some kinds of relation between people's use of this square and their perception about the place, for this study respondents were asked about their memories attached to the space. Accordingly from a total of 60 people who were using the square during the survey:

- (41.7%) said when they think of Meskel square they remember Meskel celebrations;
- (53.3%) responded as, when they think of this square they remember the various sport activities take place there;
- (21.7%) replied as, when they think of this space they remember the different events take place there. This include: sport activities like the great Ethiopian run; Car rallies; Music festivals and so on. while,
- (1.7%) said they remember the revolution day that used to be celebrated on 12 September.

For the same question, responses collected from 90 people, who were working in the vicinity of the case study area, are indicated in the table below:

Respondents memories attached to the square	percentages
Meskel Celebration	26.7%
Revolution day	10%
Political demonstrations	5.6%
The physical characteristics of the space	15.5%
The sport activities	5.6%
Music festivals and recreational facilities	7.7%
Meskel celebration and revolution day	3.3%
Meskel celebration; revolution day and political demonstrations	4.4%
Meskel celebration; revolution day and sport activities	1.1%
Meskel celebration; and political demonstrations	1.1%
Meskel celebration; and physical characteristics of the space	1.1%
Meskel celebration; and sport activities	3.3%
Meskel celebration; sport activities and Music festivals	1.1%

Meskel celebration; and Music festivals	1.1%
Revolution day; and Political demonstrations	3.3%
Revolution day; and sport activities	1.1%
The sport activities; Music festivals and recreational facilities	2.2%
No response	5.8%

In general from the survey results explained above, it is possible to conclude that the various uses or activities taken place in the square have more importance for the identity of the space than its physical condition.

5.1.2.3. ACCESS AND LINKAGES.

Meskel square is located at the heart of Addis Ababa where major streets make their connections. These include the streets to: the Bole international airport; the Ethio-Djibouti railway station; the palace; the piazza area; the Megenagna area and debrezeit. Its location makes it a focal point or one important node of Addis Ababa and a place which is visually accessible from different directions.

The square is open to most of the major arterial streets in the city as a result one can easily access it from different parts of the city. In addition the presence of taxi stops, bus stations and parking at this area further enhances its accessibility for people who use different modes of transport.

From the interview conducted with 60 people, who were using the square, it appeared that, (see fig.45 below)

- (85 %) users mostly arrive to the square on foot,
- (6.7 %) responded as they use bus to come to the square, and other
- (8.3 %) take a taxi

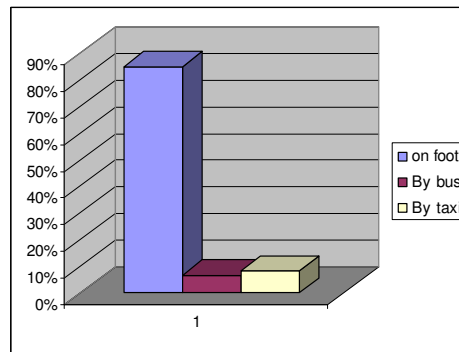


Fig.45. a bar chart showing modes of transport those respondents, who were using the square during the survey, use to come to the area.

The reason for this could be most users who often found in the square come from the near by neighborhoods and sub cities.

On the other hand from a questioner filled by 90 people, who were working in the vicinity of the case area, it is found out that (see fig.46 below):

- (6.7 %) users mostly arrive to the square on foot,
- (6.7 %) responded as they use bus to come to the square,
- (75.6 %) take a taxi and the rest
- (11 %) use their private cars.

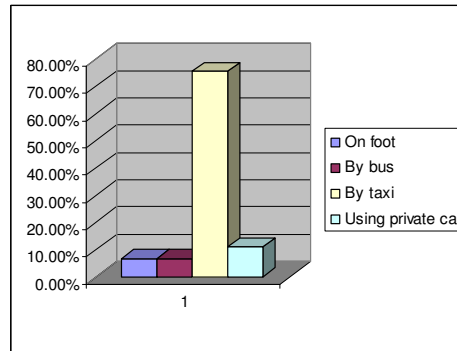


Fig.46. a bar chart showing modes of transport those respondents, who work in the vicinity, use to come to the area.

In general the survey results indicate different user groups can access Meskel square using different modes of transport.

Regarding access and linkage, perhaps the major problem of the square is the wideness of its vehicular road. The road was designed to be used as a vehicular street when there are no ceremonial occasions and for a military parade when there is one. It was widened during the socialist regime. Various literatures on public spaces indicate that easy, free and safe pedestrian's movement as one prerequisite of successful urban public spaces. For instance the project for public space explains the significance of pedestrians' movement in public spaces as:

“To be successful, a square needs to be easy to get to. The best squares are always easily accessible by foot: Surrounding streets are narrow; crosswalks are well marked; lights are timed for pedestrians, not vehicles; traffic moves slowly; and transit stops are located nearby. A square surrounded by lanes of fast-moving traffic will be cut off from pedestrians and deprived of its most essential element: people.” (PPS, 2005, p.25)

However during this study it was observed that the wide street at Meskel square became a linear barrier between the square and the adjacent buildings along its entire length on the north side. It was also seen that the design of this wide street favors automobile movement at the expense of pedestrians. As a result it was almost impossible for people, particularly for pedestrians who came to the square from its northern side, to cross these sixteen lanes of heavy and fast vehicular traffic.

The other important point which worth mentioning regarding the accessibility of Meskel square is the democratic rights of people in the city to use this space (I.e. to see the accessibility of this space from politics point of view).

Throughout history, Public open spaces in urban areas are often seen as a key locus for the interaction that makes up a democracy. The classical model is, of course, the Greek Agora. However in a country like Ethiopia, where democratic culture has shallow roots, how democratic this space is a disputing question. For instance, on the last few decades it has been seen that Meskel square was mostly used as a forum for political demonstrations organized and initiated by motives of the leading parties rather than the free will and expressions of the society.

In this regard, Meskel Square seems to have lost the essence of public space as “democratic place” where people can access the square freely and conduct any kind of demonstrations without doing any harm to others. The true nature of Meskel square serving as a “democratic public space” was manifested during on may 7 and 8, 2005 political rallies. The square was seen as major influence for the success of those demonstrations. However, the declaration of the government following the rally forbidding any kind of demonstration and informal gathering of people had made a stop to the use of the public spaces, especially that of Meskel square as a democratic space for public activities.

5.1.2.4. COMFORT AND IMAGE.

The planning, design or maintenance of public facilities in public open spaces are key factors for the comfort and image of these places. Even sometimes minor elements of the physical environment when taken together can define a place as comfortable for the users or the opposite, if the elements are dysfunctional or inappropriately designed and put in place. As Dober puts it-

“of equal importance are the design elements that fill the space and modulate it: Lighting, landscaping, signs and signals, and street furniture which comprises utilitarian objects such as mail boxes, trash bins, bollards, and benches.” (Dober, 1969, p.268.)

Similarly CABE states the importance of public facilities in public open spaces as:

“Public spaces are not just empty voids. Typically, they are filled with both soft and hard landscape elements to help shape their character. What we put into our public spaces is just as important as the space itself.” (CABE, 2004).

In respect of the above argument, observations were made regarding the physical elements that exist and affect the comfort and image of the square as a whole.

MAIN ENTERANCES

Various researchers on public spaces argued that: an entrance or a gate as an important physical and functional attribute of a successful urban square. At Meskel square however, this is not the case. As observations revealed, the square does not have defined entrances. As a result first it is difficult to identify or differentiate the spatial boundaries of the square from its surrounding space. Second, since it is accessed from every direction this creates confusion to people- when they are

orienting themselves to others or friends. In this regard the square lacks specific entrances that invites and leads people to the specific areas of the space.

EDGES

In discussing the development of Meskel square, one important point that needs investigating is the design of its edge (i.e. relation of the square with its adjacent land uses). As literature review on public spaces dictates the design of the edge is one physical factor that influences the uses of urban public spaces and also the activities to occur there. For instance Alexander et. al (1977.p.60) indicate the life of a public square naturally forms around its edge to which people gravitates rather than linger out in the open. They also argued that if the edge fails then the space becomes a place to walk through not a place to stop and use.

On this study observations demonstrated that the edge of Meskel square is composed of land uses which do not conform to each other. Additionally along a considerable length of its periphery, these land uses are separated from the square by blind stone walls and heavy traffic arterial street .As a result the potential for a close relationship between buildings and exterior space, a necessity for various activities and uses to occur is missed.

RELATION TO TOPOGRAPHY

“One of the factors which determine the shape of a square is topography of its environmental setting.” (Zucker, 1959, p1-18)

Similarly this study demonstrated that the urban form of Meskel Square is developed in response to its natural topography and the design of its stepped grass amphitheatre reflects its steep topography. The grass amphitheatre was designed in such a way that: to accommodate a large number of people, who needed a clear, uninterrupted view of activities that take place on the semi circle shaped area below; and in response to the natural topography of site.

The naturally stepped amphitheatre is made out of two elements; natural stones of 20cm high by 20cm wide that form the edge of the steps and that are also used as seats, while grass was planted to cover the remaining part of each step. The steps and gates were designed to be broad so that they provide easy access and exit for users.

In addition, it had been seen that during large public gatherings, the presence of the three gates which directly link this area, one from east, south and one from west direction and another two stairs that connect this area with the semi circled area in front .It could be said that the provision of such accesses where most activities takes place made the assembly and dispatch of the crowd easier.



Fig.47. The Grass amphitheatre of Meskel Square

RELATION TO PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

It has been observed that both the size and placement of Meskel square fits for its major role in the city as: a venue for city wide recreational, political and socio cultural activities. However, it was also seen that the design of its hard surface do not comply with the different sport activities often takes place there. In addition the design of the square is not responding to climatic changes. It doesn't have any amenities which provide shelter and shade as a consequence during harsh climatic conditions the square was seen to be empty and devoid of activities.

TOILETS

Users of Meskel square have identified the design and locations of toilets as a major problem. Currently there are three toilets in the square - one proper toilet and two other temporary toilets which are movable and furnished with only one urinal.

The toilet at the southern side of the square is one of the two toilets provided in Polony's design of Meskel square .Recently it is clean and in a good condition However; one would be asked for fees or paid tickets to use this toilet .Several people who often used the square commented that the fees asked to access these toilets in the square (0.25 cents per person) discouraged them from using these facilities. Furthermore, with the development of the area the other toilets on the eastern part of the square have been demolished. Particularly for people who use the square for different activities and for those who spent most of their time in the square, lack of sufficient toilets and the general conditions of the existing ones create a considerable problem.



Fig.48. The Public toilet at Meskel Square which is part of Polony`s design of the square.

There are two movable toilets at the end of the square. They are placed at the very active part of the square. Their doors are facing the area where people usually gather and pass by. Their location and their facing have made many people to feel uncomfortable using them. In addition each of them can give service for only one person at a time and have to be emptied.



Fig.49. Recently provided poor quality movable toilet at Meskel square.

In general, the provision of accessible toilets in public spaces is important in encouraging people to use public places. However, at Meskel square it has been

observed that the available toilet facilities are too far away, especially for very young children and people with mobility problems. In addition the ones which are accessible were not as such comfortable to use. As a consequence many people had been seen using the dead zones of the square as an open air toilets.

SEATS

Seats in public spaces provide opportunities for people to rest and watch the different activities taking place there. According to Carmona (2003) the usefulness of seats depends on their location and design. Views, comfort and shade are important attributes which affect the usability of seats.

At Meskel square mainly two types of seats that are provided: The tribune on the northern side of the square where dignitaries' seat during big events; and the small natural stones used as stools that are provided in the stepped grass amphitheatre which is centrally located. It has been seen that the tribune which is physically separated from the square is used once or twice a year, all the time it is empty and unused space.



Fig.50. The tribune at Meskel square where dignitaries sit during special occasions.

The small natural stone stools have no amenities like shades or refreshment outlets that could create comfort and image to the area. As a result it is observed that most of the time very few people use them as a sitting. Rather it was seen that, People particularly athletes were using these stone stools for different sport activities. During the rainy seasons the spaces between the seats become full of mud because of the physical exercises that takes place in the area. During the rainy season it could be said that the function of the stones as “seats” is not feasible.

It might be due to the placement and design of seats that create the problem; so many people use the part that is covered by grass as a sitting place. Some others make their

own stone seats near the blind walls where there is: shade during the afternoons; and also a good view of the square and close view of the city.



Fig. 51. Designed seats at the grass amphitheatre of Meskel Square



Fig.52. Natural stone seats which people use near the back wall of the square where there is shade during the afternoons.

LIGHTING

Good lighting makes public spaces and paths visible and inviting at night. Even day time the structural elements of the lights give image to public open spaces. It also encourages their use and asserts in natural surveillance.

“The more people who use public spaces at night, the safer and less threatening they become. “(Safer design guidelines, victory, 2004)

Observations at Meskel square showed that during evening times, most people don't want to stay in the square and the space became deserted. Meskel Square for the international memorial concert on the 60th birthday of the Reggae legend, Bob Marley, attractive lightings were installed. The step taken had been well received by different groups of people. Recently however, a considerable number of these lights do not work. Additionally, some of these lightings, particularly those which are fitted on the ground near the semi circled tarmac area were broken down by young people who played foot ball.



Fig.53.New lighting fittings at Meskel square

Generally, now-a-days at night time, the square is not well lighted and only few people were seen on the walkway of the adjacent street to the square where there is street lightings.

In general Meskel Square has a lot of problems related with its physical development which affect its comfort and image. Surveys and interviews conducted with different group of users also reveal this fact. Results of the survey in relation to this argument are discussed below:

In an effort to identify those essential users' needs from Meskel square as a public space, people were asked about: their ideas or opinions regarding the current physical condition of the square; and also their wishes regarding the future development of this space. As interviews made with 60 people who were using the square during the survey indicate:

- 50% replied as the square needs maintenance and cleaning. They commented also on the need for free toilets.
- 3.3% said the square will be much better if recreational facilities are provided.
- 31.7% answered that the current condition of the square is good as it is. While
- 15% do not respond.

On the other hand replies for the same question by 90 respondents who were working in the vicinity imply:

- 47% replied as, it will be good if public recreational facilities like café's, museums, and hotels are added to the site.
- 13.3% commented as, it will be good if greeneries and recreational facilities are added.
- 3.3% suggested that in order to revitalize the square street vendors and Sunday markets have to be introduced to the square.
- 5.5% answered that the current condition of the square is good as it is.
- Other 3.3% responded as, it will be good if the traffic problem in the area is improved.
- 2.2% suggested that the square has to be re-designed.
- 5.6% replied as the square needs maintenance and cleaning.
- Other 2.2% responded as, it will be nice if video screens, which sometimes transmit films for free, are added.
- The rest 16.7% do not respond.

The comparisons of response results collected from the two respondents group (above) indicate that there are significant differences. One reason for this could be from the fear that people from the first group have on their rights of using this space as they do now, if some improvements are made to the current condition of the square.

On the other hand, responses collected from both groups of respondents imply that Meskel square has problems related with its current physical condition and also user's dissatisfaction with the current function of its physical environment.

In relation to the physical development of the space, for this study people were also asked about their feelings about Meskel square. Given four options: I like it very much, I like it, or I don't like it and no comments. Accordingly from a total of 60 people who were using the square during the survey:

- 78.3% responded as they like the place very much.
- 20% said they like the square. while
- Only 1.7% responded as they do not like the space.

On the other hand a result of a questioner filled by 90 people, who were working in the vicinity, indicates

- 6.7% responded that they like the square very much.
- 77.8% responded as they like the square.
- 10% do not respond, while
- 5.5% answered as they don't like the square.

MANAGEMENT AND SECURITY

In discussing the comfort and image of public spaces, one important point that has to be raised is the management and security of these spaces. Various researchers

indicated that management of public spaces as: an important factor for their success or failure; and also as a complicated process which involves different stakeholders' .For instance

“How well the urban environment is managed depends on the attitude, knowledge and financial resources of its various owners.” (Dober, 1969, p.326.)

Observations at Meskel square indicated that the level of management in this place was very poor. For instance the standards of cleanliness and maintenance in the square found out to be real problems. There were evidences of littering and food spilling all over the place; some parts of the square were seen to be used as a toilet; and its grass amphitheatre was not kept or maintained for a very long time. This implicated how cleaning facilitates and maintenance standards in this area were poor and also gave the impression that this space is either neglected or uncared for.

The responses gathered from field interviews; however, indicated that different groups of users have different opinions, needs and interests about the management of Meskel square. It was found that:

- (31%) of users who often come to the square everyday said the area is clean and does not need any kind of improvement; while
- (50%) replied as it needs cleaning and maintenance of the lighting fixtures;

On the other hand almost (95%) respondents which used to go to the square whenever there are special events responded as the area needs proper management and additional facilities.

Regarding security it has been seen that at least there were two policemen who make a patrol in the square everyday. In addition one police car and one soldier were often seen on the eastern edge of the square. An interview made with a sub city official also indicated that there were not as such recorded security problems in the square.

5.1.3. CONCLUSSION

Since its establishment for the last several decades Meskel square has been seen used as a venue for a range of activities in Addis Ababa, activities which vary from small children play to world wide notified big events. Though, the role of this square in the city is undeniable, it has been found out that, currently Meskel Square has a lot of problems related with both its physical and operational attributes. There might be several reasons for this; however, the main reasons that were found out of this study are summarized as follows:

- The major problem of the square that has been affecting both the functional and aesthetical values of the square is the management of the place. The study indicates that it is difficult to say there is any kind of management in this square. As a consequence litter was seen all around the square; some people use parts of the square as an open toilet; while others bring their herds of

sheep to graze on the grass amphitheatre, destroying both the functional and visual qualities of the amphitheatre. Additionally in relation to management there is no regulation which determines the activities that have to take place in different parts of the square. As a result different user groups were often seen using parts of the square for activities which they are not designed or meant to be. This misuse or wrong use of the square has two problematic consequences. First the negative impact on the physical environment and functional qualities of the square. Second it has created problems of security and safety for users. On this line young people and small children who often playing football on the asphalt area of Meskel square could be good example. They usually hurt themselves, as well as other users while playing.

- Another finding which needs to be mentioned here is that the problem of the square regarding the movement of pedestrians. The presence of very big and Wide Street with heavy and fast traffic is creating a real problem in the accessibility of the square. As observations indicated this street beyond being a barrier for free and easy movement of pedestrians it was also seen affecting the visual quality of the square.
- Even though the setting and design of Meskel square was in response to the natural site topography; its purpose and the size of its users; it has been observed that the square has a lot of problems regarding physical and environmental design. Some of these problems include issues related with: climate; service giving amenities and facilities such as public toilets; and also with the design of its surroundings .i.e. the surrounding land uses of the square do not conform and even sometimes contradict to each other. As a consequence they failed to create activities that could attract a lot of people to the square. Additionally lack of conformity between the architectural character of buildings in this land uses with the size and setting of Meskel square results in poor visual qualities of the square.
- Almost all interviewed people who live and work in the area have related their memories to the square remembering that of Meskel celebration, and the sport events that take place in the square. Although these are activities that take place once in a year, they indicate how important the activities are for the image of the square. One can also conclude that, the non-existence of major other activities that could take place often and that could also attract the public at large has made the square less effective to play the role of “the major and active public space” in the city. This argument is further supported by the replies of interviews that were conducted with people who were found in the area during the survey. That is they see the space as a place where they spent time watching the world by pass.
- The other important observation was for people, particularly those parts of the society who don't have job and unable to spend their time in other parts of the city, this square serves as a democratic place where they meet their friends and make social interactions. Even though, other users see the presence of such

people at Meskel square as a real problem, it enhances the publicness of the square as a democratic place.

As a conclusion, due to various factors that are mentioned above, both the physical and operational attributes of this square are highly threatened. Therefore; in order to change this square into a successful urban space; revitalization policies and programs should be carried out according to urban design principles and guidelines.

5.2. CASE STUDY II: LEGHAR PARK

5.2.1. INTRODUCTION

Leghar park is one of the most historical and significant parks of Addis Ababa. It is located at the heart of the city, just in front of Ethio-Djibouti rail way station. The park is a small urban square covering approximately 2000m², with an elliptical shape plan. Except on rainy days and night times, the space is usually crowded with different user groups: old people, young people, shoe shine boys, homeless people, etc...

Though its size is small, this park has been playing various significant roles in the city: it marks the foot of the city's main avenue- the Churchill road, which has the Addis Ababa municipality building at its other end; it served as a foreground setting for one of the most historical and beautiful buildings in Addis, the Ethio-Djibouti rail way station; and it also contains the lion of Judah monument, which is among the 17 monuments that have been currently identified by ORAAMP as historical heritages of Addis Ababa that has to be conserved.

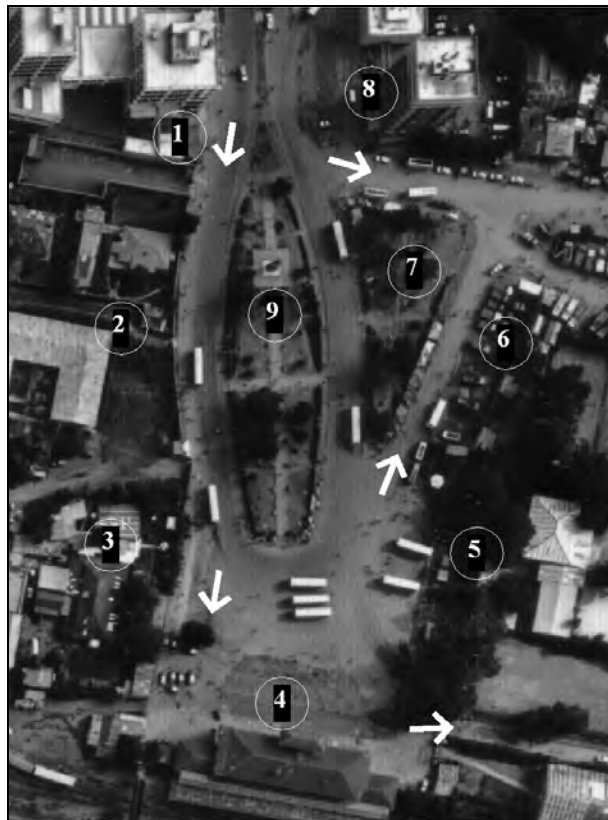


Fig.54. Leghar Park and its surrounding structures: 1-office building; 2&3 residential buildings; 4- Ethio-Djibouti railway station;5-Ethio-Djibouti railway sport club;6-sand selling area;7- small green traffic island;8-an apartment building; and 9- the lion of Judah monument.

The historical development of Leghar Park is directly related with the establishment of the Ethio-Djibouti rail way station in Addis Ababa. It was originally designed to serve as a setting for the newly built rail way station building, which was designed by the French Architect Paul Barrias and opened on the 1930's coronation day of Emperor Haile Selisse I. In addition during this time the gilded statue of the lion of Judah was placed in this park.

The most important element of this park is the lion of Judah monument which has a very interesting history. For instance in one article in the web page of Selamta (an Ethiopian airlines magazine) the historical background of the lion of Judah monument is stated as:

“The lion of Judah monument is composed of a golden coloured statue of the lion of Judah that stands on a black granite pedestal which is decorated with relief portraits of emperor Menelik II, Haile selissie I, empress Zeweditu and Ras Mekonen. During the short period of the Italian occupation (1936-1941), the monument was looted by the colonizers and taken to Rome and it stayed there for some years. However in the 1960's after a long negotiation with the Italian government it was returned home and erected on the park. Following the revolution in 1974, the Dergue regime which came to power, decided to remove the statue once more as it was a monarchist symbol. However, the elderly war veterans association appealed to the Dergue to consider the patriotism behind and this save the statue to stood through the Dergue era and continues to stand today.” Addis Ababa.available://http://wwwselamta.net



Fig.55. The lion of Judah Monument at Leghar Park.

In addition to the lion of Judah statue, this park contains other hard and soft landscape elements which shape its character and use. It has: different species of trees and shrubs; concrete benches to sit; paved stone walkways to walk on; notice boards to display vacancy announcements for job seekers. In the park one finds very small new monument of a wheel of a ship, to symbolize the Ethiopian shipping lines authority

which has its head office building adjacent to the park. For protection reasons a short metal rail around the statue of lion is seen.

Due to the presence of the railway station, there are so many transportation routes that converge to this area from the different parts of the city. And this park is situated next to one of the busiest transportation node of the city that makes the park a pedestrian island surrounded by heavy traffic. All the space around it is currently used as bus station.

5.2.2. ANALYSIS AND STUDY FINDINGS

5.2.2.1. SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

As mentioned earlier, Leghar Park is one of the most common meeting places for different people of age groups. It is also the point where most of public buses route in Addis Ababa converge, so it is convenient to use as a meeting place. The fact that many citizens of Addis Ababa use bus transportation system, most of the time the area is crowded with people. However, the majority of the people are en route to other destinations.

This park is a place where the city's most important avenue –“Churchill Road”, terminates. In addition at this point the lion of Judah monument has been axially placed as a termination landmark. According to literature review on landscape design a landmark is explained as: an accent; terminal feature; or focal point or turning point in the landscape; and it has to be identified by its contrast in size, form, color, texture, detail, function, or content of symbolism. Similarly in discussing the importance of landmarks in landscaped design, Dober (1969) argued as –

“People orient themselves in the physical world much more similarly and naturally by relations to landmarks than by such intellectual abstraction as verbal direction, signs or maps.” (Dober,1969, p.321)

In contrast to this, what was observed at Leghar Park is that the design and setting of the monument in relation to other landscape elements in the park was poor; the basic landscape design principles which include unity, balance, sequence, proportion, rhythm, accent, repetition, and variety to create the composition of the design were missed.

Observations and interviews at Leghar Park revealed that many users of the park do not give attention or appreciate the lion of Judah monument as an accent. As a result the social interactions expected around the monument are missed.

Seats around trees and beneath shades allowed people to seat side by sides. These benches were also used to rest for a while or to wait their friends. There was no sign of self selection among people's use of the seating provided in the park. Users of different groups: students, workers, young people and so many others were seen sitting side by side. However; there were often claims among the shoeshine boys on their customers based on the location of the seats.

Counting made on June 25 and 26, 2007 indicates most of the people regularly seen using the park are young people and old people, (42%) and (43%) respectively. There were no differences on the way of using these spaces.

In general, unlike Meskel square Leghar Park appeared to be a more inclusive place where all sections of the community; from small children to old people; and people of different income groups were often around at the same time.



Fig.56 and 57. Users in the park sharing the concrete seats.

5.2.2.2. USE AND ACTIVITIES

This part presents an overview of the observation conducted and interviews made on Leghar Park regarding its present time use and activities that are taken place in it.

As its history indicates, the primary use of Leghar park was to serve as a setting for the Ethio-Djibouti railway station (i.e. to provide the station building with a setting that will permit its Architecture to be seen). Furthermore the lion of Judah monument was added to it, to enhance the purpose of the park.

Although the railway line is not giving passenger service at present time, for almost a century the Ethio-Djibouti railway line used to be one of the greater traffic generators in Addis Ababa city. As a consequence the space around it has been used as a station and waiting area for city busses and taxis. As literature review on the issue dictates the location of these transit lines next to the railway station is convenient and appropriate; however, such kinds of transit activities need provision of proper station. For instance safer design guidelines for Victoria describe the situation as:

“Safety at transport interchanges and stops is essential .Transit stops should be well maintained, well lit at night and provide good shelter and seating. They should also be clearly visible from the street; have a high proportion of glazed walls, offer legible passenger information, provide public telephones, rubbish bins and toilets within closed proximity to the public transport system.” Safer design guidelines (2004).

Despite this fact, the study revealed that there is no properly provided space or designed transit station for the public transport system around the case area. Eventually all the space around the Park and spaces in front of the railway station are seen to be used as a transport interchange and transit stop. Furthermore, it was observed that the public transport activity around the area changes and affects both operational and physical attributes of the park.



Fig.58. people using Leghar park as a bus waiting area



1. Bus station area
2. Sitting; bus waiting; and shoe shinning,
3. Homeless people sleeping area
4. Street vendors selling area,
5. Job Vacancy reading area.

Fig.59. Major Use and activities and their respective locations at Leghar Park.

In this study, it was found out that the park was mainly used or serving as a transit station. The following scripts which were referred from notes taken during observations could give a general idea about uses and activities in this area at the

different times and hours of the day. The first note explains the general impression of the park during observations, while the second one is a summary of six observations made in one day at the case area.

'As a transfer station for buses and taxis to the other parts of the city and to the near by towns, most people use the park as waiting area to catch their buses. It was common to see a large number of people coming out of different bus lines and going in all directions to catch their next bus. Today Leghar Park is packed with people like any other days.' Leghar park, June 21, 2007.

'Early in the morning a lot of people, most of them seem workers and students, appeared to the area. During this time the park was crowded with people. One had to wait quite some time to get a seat within the park. Almost all the shoe shine boys were busy of shinning shoes. By 9 am the activities in the park were slowdown. By lunch time the park was once again busy of accommodating people. By mid-afternoon the number of users was less than at lunch time, the concrete seats especially those which were not under shade were empty however those near the trees were occupied. At this time, under the trees there were also people standing and waiting for buses. From 5 pm – 6 pm the park was once again filled with people who were coming from work and school to catch their next bus on their way to home; After 7 pm, the park was completely dark and deserted, the only people in the park was the homeless people who live there.' Leghar park, July 15, 2007

Another striking finding regarding use and activities in this case area is that the park had a significant impact on the economic life of many young people whose age falls between (7-18). During the survey, it was observed that within this small area, there were nearly fifty shoe shine children and around ten young boys and girls with street vendors. Replies of informal interviews with these young shoe shine children indicated that excluding their expense to daily meals, they earn 10-15 birr each day. The earnings get better during the rainy seasons.



Fig.60. Shoe shinning activity at Leghar Park.

In addition, during the course of this study five people, who had been recognized as homeless or jobless, were seen using the park differently. One of them has constructed his plastic shelter at the center of the park; while the other four were usually seen sleeping or sitting under the shades of the trees in the park.



Fig.61. Homeless people using Leghar Park as sleeping area.

Evening events in public spaces are important factors for the vitality of cities during night times. To create a safer environment during evening hours, lighting needs to be incorporated in the design of urban public open spaces. There has to be also sufficient lighting for the perception of safety in the different parts of the park spaces. Lighting can also be used to highlight landscape features and promote pedestrians movement during evening hours.



Fig.62. Leghar Park at night time. These girls were on the way to their home.

Despite this fact; observations at Leghar Park revealed that there was not any kind of lighting provision in this area .As a result during evening hours the Place is completely dark and deserted. The only person in the park at this time was the homeless guy who lived in the park.

In general, from observations made during this study it was found out that in this park the kind of activities taken place were more of utilitarian behavior rather than relaxation or recreation I.e. almost all users were using the park as: a shelter from extreme climatic conditions; a bus waiting area and also a place where they got their shoe shined. As a consequence even though the park was designed to show off the rail way station building (to create an interesting and inviting approach to the railway station),presently it is serving as a bus transit stop where a lot of people seat and wait buses, sheltered against harsh climatic conditions. It is also used as a place of work for so many young people particularly shoe shine boys and street vendors; while some others were seen using it as their living area.

As interviews and surveys conducted at Leghar Park indicate, different groups of users use this park for various purposes. For instance interview results with a total of 60 respondents, who were using the square, reveals:

- (55%) come to catch city buses.
- (8.4%) said they come to the park to read vacancy announcements.
- (31.7%) said they used the park as their working place.
- (1.1%) replied as they used to come to this case area accidentally. while,
- The rest (3.3%) responded as they come to the park to spent time.

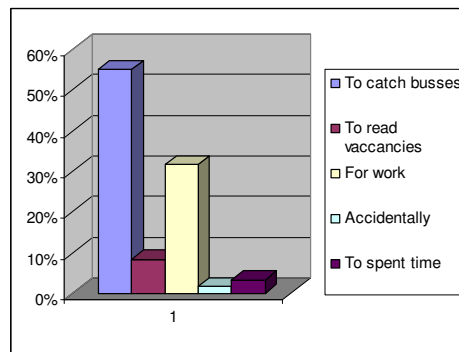


Fig.63. a bar chart showing respondents, who were using Leghar Park during the survey, purposes of coming to the square.

This survey result also indicates that people who often come to the square use Leghar Park for more utilitarian purposes rather than recreation. Besides it implies that the park is highly used as a transit station. On the other hand from a questioner filled by 90 people, who were working in the vicinity of this case study area, it is found out that:

- (6.6%) come to catch city buses.
- (33.3%) said they come to the park for the purpose of recreation.
- (4.4%) said they used to come to the park for appointments.
- (36.8%) replied as they used to come to this case area accidentally.

- (3.3%) replied as they used to come to this case area on the way to work. while,
- The rest (15.6%) do not respond.

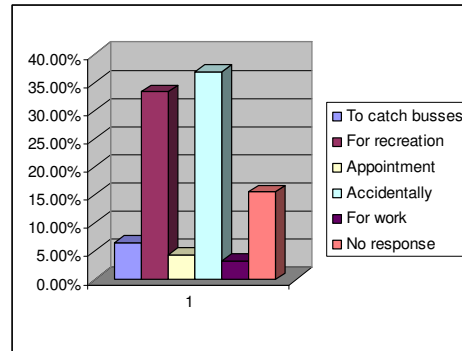


Fig.64. a bar chart showing respondents, who work in the vicinity of the case study area, purposes of coming to Leghar Park.

The survey result from this group indicates that people specially those who do not use public transportation, come to the case study area occasionally. In addition survey results of this group regarding their feeling about the space indicates the majority of them do not like it. This situation indirectly reflects that there are some problems related with the activities taken place there. For instance most users from this group stated the crowdedness of people and the theft in this case area as a major reasons to dislike this space.

As Meskel square here also, in an effort to find out weather there are some kinds of relation between people's use of Leghar Park and their perception about the place, respondents were asked about their memories attached to the park. Accordingly from a total of 60 people who were using the square during the survey:

- (16.6%) said when they think of Leghar park they remember the lion of Judah monument;
- (40%) responded as, when they think of this square they remember the bus station ,the city busses, the seats and the shoeshine boys;
- (28.4%) replied as, when they think of this space they remember the number of people and their work; while
- (15%) do not respond

For the same question, responses collected from 90 people, who were working in the vicinity of the case study area, are indicates:

- (16.6%) said when they think of Leghar park they remember the lion of Judah monument;
- (38.8%) responded as, when they think of this square they remember the bus station ,and the crowdedness of the space;
- (15.5%) replied as, when they think of this space they remember the railway station and emperor Menilik; while
- (19.1%) do not respond

5.2.2.3. ACCESS AND LINKAGES

Leghar Park is located at the center of Addis Ababa. It is also part of the area identified by ORAAMP as a central transport node of the central business district .As a result it is a very busy place everyday visited by thousands of people who come to the area to take busses to the different directions and parts of the city and also to the near by cities and towns.

One can access this place from the different parts of Addis Ababa and obviously one can generally conclude that the park is a starting point for many of the red and yellow city busses that connect Leghar Park to the major sub-cities of the city. There are around twenty city bus routes which come from the different parts of the city and make the area around Leghar Park their destination point.

As interview made during the survey with 60 people who were using the square indicates (see also fig.65 below):

- (43.3 %) users mostly arrive to the park on foot,
- (51.7 %) responded as they use bus to come to the square, and the remaining
- (5 %) take a taxi

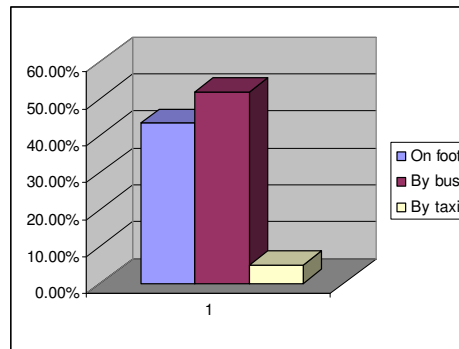


Fig.65. A bar chart showing modes of transport those respondents, who were using Leghar Park during the survey, use to come to the area.

From this study it is found out that a lot of users who often come to the area use bus transportation and also a considerable amount of respondents (43.3 %) specially those who use the square as their work place (particularly small shoe shine boys and young people with street vendors) come from the near by areas on foot.

From a questioner filled by 90 people, who were working in the vicinity of this case study area, it is found out that (see also fig.66 below):

- (10 %) users mostly arrive to the square on foot,
- (20%) responded as they use bus to come to the square,
- (46.6 %) take a taxi and the rest
- (13.4%) use their private cars.

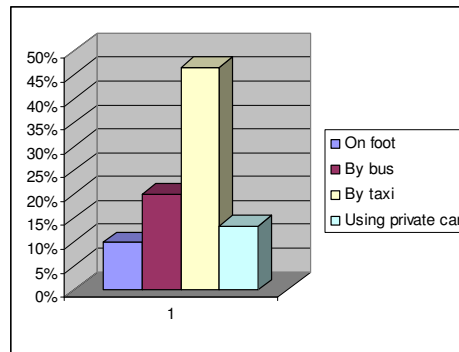


Fig.66. A bar chart showing modes of transport those respondents, who work in the vicinity, use to come to the case study area.

Leghar Park has got also a direct visual and physical access to the Addis Ababa city municipal office via Churchill Avenue. The Ethio-Djibouti railway station is located next to the park on its southern side. It has minimized both the visual and physical accessibility of the park particularly from the southern parts of the city.

In this case study area, another major problem that was observed in relation to access and linkage was access to the park for pedestrians that come from the different parts of the surrounding areas was not convenient. Due to the presence of heavy traffic users were seen having difficulties to move freely from one part to another, and reach the park.

5.2.2.4. COMFORT AND IMAGES

The comfort level of public open space is crucial for their use. On this line of argument Carmona et. al (2003) make important distinctions about comfort in public open spaces as: Environmental comfort; physical comfort and; social and psychological comfort.

According to Carmona (2003) the degree of environmental comfort is one of the factors that affect the uses of urban public spaces and depends on environmental factors such as the effects of climate.

Similarly Dober (1969) described the effect of climate in urban spaces as –

“Level of sunlight; shade; temperature; humidity; rain; snow wind and noise have an impact up on our experience and uses of urban environments.” (Dober, 1969, p.295)

Similarly observations in this case area revealed that - in the sunny season due to the presence of trees, the microclimate within this park is relatively much better than its surrounding bus stop area, an area which was characterized by a wide treeless, asphalt parking lot. As a consequence during the harsh afternoon sun people were seen using the shades of the trees in the park as a waiting area. Even in the rainy seasons also unless the rain is very strong, people used to use these trees as shelters.

The physical comfort of public open spaces is also another important factor for the success or failure of these areas and usually it depends on their physical design. For instance Safety design guidelines for Victoria indicates -

“Well placed seating; public furniture, lighting; drinking fountain; public information; public toilets and play equipment encourage the physical comfort of a space and support its use”. (Safety design guidelines for Victoria, 2004.)

In this study therefore; the following important factors related with the physical design of the case area were observed.

RELATION TO PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

As mentioned above the original purpose of Leghar Park was to serve as a setting for the Ethio-Djibouti railway station Building in Addis Ababa. In this context the size and placement of the park fits its purpose. It provides the railway station building with a setting which permits its Architecture to be seen. However, the design, placement and management of both hard and soft landscape elements of the park do not support its function of adornment. For instance currently the various species of trees found in the park hide the building from being seen from closer range.



Fig.67. Trees at Leghar Park completely obscures the view of the railway station building from the base of Churchill Avenue.

SEATS

From all hard landscape design elements found in Leghar Park, its concrete seats were the most used ones. These seats are made out of concrete and arranged linearly on the sides of the paved walkway of the park which is laid along the parks main axis. Eventhough their design is not as such a comfortable one, it has been observed that, except harsh climatic conditions and few hours of the day (i.e. when activities in this area all reduced), they are very much used. During the survey it was counted that there were around twenty six concrete seats in this park. Out of these four were broken. Yet; some people were seen even using the broken ones for sitting. Normally

these concrete benches are designed to accommodate three people however during busy hours it was common to see four people seating crowded.



Fig.68. Seats at Leghar Park are highly used elements of the park.



Fig.69. People using broken concrete seats at Leghar Park.

SIGNAGE

Signage in transit connection areas is very important. It can help people to identify the route to their destination. The public signs observed around Leghar Park were informational signs about; the starting and destination points of several city busses and also at the location of each station. The signages in this case area were not clear and many people were observed asking other people help in finding their way.

TOILETS

As literature review on the issue dictates, public toilets accessible to the general public are important elements of successful urban open public spaces. It is also indicated that public toilets may or may not cost money to use. They can also be fixed or be portable ones. In contrast to this, it was observed that around Leghar Park, a place that has been used by tens and thousands of people everyday, there is no provision of public rest rooms. As a result, some parts of the park and spaces near the fences of the adjacent land uses were used as an open air urinals. On some of the fences, it is common to see writings which indicate as –“Peeing in this area is forbidden”.

In general; the absence of adequate and comfortable toilets in one of the major problems of this case area. It has been observed that, this problem forced users to use some parts of the park and its surroundings as a toilet. This in turn affected the image of the park.



Fig.70. Part of Leghar Park which is used as toilet

SOFT LANDSCAPING

Soft landscaping in urban areas can be selected and designed according to a special theme for each area. It provides a sense of place in addition to its other amenities. Therefore, planting in public open spaces should be carried out taking account of themes; the climate of the locality; and also soft landscaping of a type and size appropriate to the area should be used.

In this regard observations in Leghar Park indicated that most of the trees were forgotten and not maintained well for a long period of time. As a result some of these trees were dead, while many others were failed to grow to their full sizes. In addition the sizes & species of these trees and their arrangement in the park don't conform to:

the setting & context of the park; and the design and layout of other landscape elements in the Park. Consequently, in this park the sense of order, continuity and indication of the relative importance of the accent (I.e. the lion of Judah monument) is missed.

Additionally all around the periphery of this park, various species of hedges were also planted to serve as a green fence. However, during the survey, it was seen that this hedge fence was discontinued and interrupted by informal pedestrian paths which were used as shortcuts to move from one part to another. Moreover, it was also observed that there was lack of conformity among the various species of hedges planted together. At some parts of this park, these hedges were grown too high and separated the visual link between the park and the surrounding activities. As a result near these areas some people were seen doing in appropriate activities such as peeing.



Fig.71. Poor soft landscaping design at Leghar Park.

PEDESTRIAN WALKWAYS

The primary function of any paved area is to provide a hard, dry, non-slip surface to carry the traffic load. As Dober puts it –

“The quality of paving material in the pedestrian precincts can establish design structure. Hard surfaces occur where people gather, walk and carry on activities on concentrated numbers.” (Dober ,1969, p.275.)

At Leghar Park, there is a pavement laid out in a cross shape along the major and minor axis’s of the park. This pavement is made out of natural stone and cement mortar. It is around four meters wide and near the lion of Judah monument it widens out and makes small square shaped plaza. It has been observed that, even though this pavement was in a good physical condition, the movement of people in the park was not following this path. One of the reasons for this was unorganized and unplanned movement of people from one part of the bus stop area to the other through this park.



Fig.72. Pedestrians walk way at Leghar Park

TRASH BINS

During the survey, very few trash bins were observed around this park. However within the park there were not any kinds of trash bins. Consequently there was a lot of litter in the park and its surrounding.

MANAGEMENT

Similar to Meskel square, Leghar Park has problems related with its management. During the survey it was observed that both the hard and soft landscape elements of the park do not get proper maintenance. As a consequence some of the trees in the park are dead; the grass in the park is totally destroyed due to the heavy traffic of people in the park , a considerable amount of the concrete seats in the park are broken. Even there are also people who construct their house in the park.



Fig.73. A plastic house constructed at Leghar Park (on the right side of the picture)

In addition, the cleanliness level of Leghar Park is observed to be very poor, even to the extent that some parts of the park used as open toilets. There were also evidences of littering and food spilling all over the park.

In general the standard of cleanliness and maintenance at Leghar Park is very poor. The physical condition of the park shows that there is no or proper management in the area. This condition gives the impression that this space is either neglected or uncared for.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

As mentioned above the other important point regarding comfort in public open spaces is their social and psychological comfort and according to Carmona (2003) it is mainly related with safety and security.

Similarly CABE (2004) argue that People use urban open public spaces when they feel safe and comfortable. –

“Lack of security, perception of danger and fear of victimization threaten both the use of the public realm and the creation of successful urban environments.” (CABE, 2004).

In the case study area it has been seen that there were patrolling police men and soldiers who keep the railway station. However interviews made with users regarding safety and security revealed that in this area is there was a petty crime like robbing of pockets, which often encountered during the rush to take busses.

In general, though this park still provides different amenities, its present state does not reflect its historic and symbolic importance. Besides, heavy pedestrian traffic and lack of maintenance ruins both the perception of the space and its important role as an identifiable public space of the city. The following users opinions collected from the survey also support this idea.

During the survey, in an effort to identify those essential users’ needs from Leghar Park as a public space, people were asked about: their ideas or opinions regarding the current physical condition of the park; and also their wishes regarding the future development of this space. As interviews made with 60 people who were using the square during the survey indicate:

- 60% replied as the park needs maintenance and cleaning. They commented also on the need for toilets.
- 1.7% said Leghar Park will be much better public space if recreational facilities are provided.
- 13.3% answered that the current condition of the square is good as it is. While
- 25% do not respond.

On the other hand replies for the same question by 90 respondents who were working in the vicinity imply:

- 72.2% replied as the park needs maintenance and cleaning. They commented also on the need for toilets. While
- 27.8% do not respond.

Similar to Meskel square, the above responses collected from both groups of respondents imply that Leghar Park has problems related with its current physical condition and also user's dissatisfaction with the current function of its physical environment.

In this study respondents were asked to describe their feelings about this park; given four options: I like it very much, I like it, or I don't like it and no comments. From the total of 60 people who were using Leghar Park during the survey:

- (23.4%) of respondents responded that they liked the park very much;
- (75%) as they like it; while
- (1.6 %) as they don't like it.

Similarly 90 respondents, who work in the vicinity, were also asked about their feelings regarding Leghar Park. Accordingly:

- (37.7%) as they like it; while
- (42.1 %) as they don't like it. While
- (18%) do not respond.

Here, a considerable amount of users (42.1 %), who work in the vicinity, responded as they don't like the park and most of this respondents give the congestion and theft near and around the park as a reason. This opinion of respondents could also be taken as evidence that this park has problems in its current operation.

5.2.3. CONCLUSSION

From observations made at Leghar Park during the course of this study, it has been possible to draw a number of conclusions that could implicate; how urban public open spaces in Addis Ababa in general and this park in particular is operating. These include:

- Observations have shown that in the absence of proper management, how people could use urban public open spaces in the city for other purposes which they are not designed and meant to be and also how this misuse or wrong use of these spaces in the city can affect or reduce both their aesthetical and functional qualities. Indirectly this situation implicates the size and placement of such spaces in the city should relate to their purpose and context.
- Various literature reviews on the issue and real world practices of urban open public spaces in different western countries implicate the importance of these spaces in enhancing the urban qualities of cities. In contrast to this however the study demonstrated that unless they are well planned, designed, maintained and managed these spaces could also reduce or further aggravate the poor urban image of an area or a locality.

- Another important finding here is that; people's attachments or memories about urban open public spaces were more related with the activities that are taking place there, rather than the physical environment. This situation implies two important points. On one hand it indicates how activities that are taking place in these spaces are important for the identity and image of the places. On the other hand it also indicates that because of the poor quality of the physical environment of the urban space. It has failed to provide symbolic meaning to the area.
- Despite all the problems mentioned above, one undeniable fact or lesson is that these spaces of the city are still playing important roles in the city. For instance Leghar Park has been seen offering different amenities for the general public which come to the area to catch their busses.

In conclusion, similar to Meskel square, the Leghar park physical and operational attributes are also threatened by problems related to the management; the physical design and environmental design. Therefore; based on urban design principles and guidelines, revitalization policies and programs should be carried out in this park, which is losing its symbolic and historic characteristics and fading away day by day.

CHAPTER 6

6. DISSCUSSION

This research is concentrated on two case study areas in Addis Ababa. The issues that have been studied are likely to have similarities with other urban open public spaces in the city. The issues discussed here might have also some implications on the formulation of policies which go beyond the city of Addis Ababa.

The study suggests that while social interactions in urban public open spaces can appeared to be limited, they involve an underlying orderliness by which people avoid conflict and sometimes feel a sense of community. Many people have become afraid of using these spaces of the city after dark. However, to make Addis Ababa a livable city, people need to be encouraged to come and use its urban open public spaces. Therefore, this chapter considers observable problems related to the provision and management of urban public open spaces in Addis Ababa.

6.1. THE PROVISION AND MANAGEMENT OF URBAN OPEN PUBLIC SPACES

Through various public communication medias, the Addis Ababa city government has been expressing its commitment to change the current poor urban image of the city so as to make Addis a beautiful African capital and a safe and livable city for her citizens. Within this line, the recently revised master plan of the city indicated the absence of adequate public facilities and services of international standards such as urban public open spaces. Public open spaces are one of the major current problems of the city. It is suggested to improve their current conditions and promote their provisions in the future. However what has been observed during this study was completely different from the promised commitments of the city Administration.

If this is the case then, here, it is essential to make at least a general overview of the current interactions between the city's urban development trend and its urban open public spaces. This is because currently various developments at a macro level have been seen imposing their negative impacts on both provision and management of urban open public spaces in Addis Ababa. Some of these include: demographic; economic; political developments and urban planning approaches.

DEMOGRAPHICS:-

Addis Ababa is one of the fastest growing cities in the world and recently constitutes about 60% of the total urban population of Ethiopia. As the 1994 census indicated its population size was about thirteen times bigger than Dire Dawa which is the second largest urban centre.

This rapid and often uncontrolled population growth of the city, which is not coupled with an economic development, seems to impose additional and non conforming activities to takes place in the city's urban public open spaces,

pressures which makes management in these spaces difficult and results in the deterioration and destruction of these places. For instance, one common current practice that often observed in the main city centre of Addis Ababa is that – in an effort to overcome the shortage of housing induced by rapid population growth, many small neighbourhoods’ open spaces and playgrounds are declining and becoming sites for the constructions of new condominium apartments. This trend has been seen resulting in misuse or exerting additional pressures on the nearby urban public spaces, a situation which sometimes contradicts to the purpose, context and setting of these spaces. Consequently these unintended uses resulted in the deteriorations and destructions on both the physical and operational attributes of the city’s urban open public spaces.

ECONOMY:-

As a capital city of the world’s poorest country, Addis Ababa faced with serious economic problems. ORAAMP (office for the revision of the Addis Ababa master plan) indicated that recently the city is facing the challenges of imbalances between its revenue generating and mobilizing capacity on the one hand, and the growing need for public expenditure in the production and provisions of adequate facilities and infrastructures on the other.

In this regard therefore, the present city Administration with its limited financial base seems to have failed to allocate adequate financing necessary for effective management of urban public open spaces in the city. In addition, the presence of other acute problems in the city like housing, which gets priorities in public funding, further worsen the level of management in urban public open spaces.

POLITICS:-

As literature reviews indicate the political environment is made up of attitudes & actions of citizenry; and the attitude and actions (and reactions) of elected city officials. On this line, the policy environment is the product of these and as such is the foundations upon which programs are built. If this is the case then, it would be useful to discuss the following issues regarding urban public open spaces: what kinds of policy frameworks are there in Addis Ababa? Who is responsible for the provision and managements of these spaces in the city? And what kinds of measures have been taken to overcome problems related to the issue?

Up to now in Addis Ababa there is no policy frameworks regarding the provisions, uses, activities and management of its urban open public spaces. Presently the legal institution for the management and provision of urban open public spaces is the Addis Ababa city cleaning, beautification and greening agency. This agency is established in January 2003 with a vision –

“Addis Ababa will be a liveable city where it is clean, green and naturally balanced favourable environment suited to living and working of its people and visitors.”

This institution is directly related with the Addis Ababa city Administration, particularly to the city manager. Even though, this institution is currently in charge

of the management of the city's urban public spaces, due to financial problems and pressures from other severe problems of the city, its current operation is not satisfactory.

In Addis Ababa, for a long time, the city government was the only actor in charge of both the provision and management services of urban open public spaces. According to ORRAMP, however due to weak financial bases, this trend reaches a point where the city government can hardly cope with the city's urbanization rate and its induced consequences. In response to this, recently a new trend of approach is being applied by the city government, i.e. privatising the management of the city's urban public spaces. Consequently, at present time many of the city's parks were privatised and one has to pay to use these spaces. Some of the major ones include Africa Park, Ethio-Cuba Park and Ambassador Park. However this current trend contradicts with the core essence of urban open public spaces as places where anyone has a right to come without being excluded because of economic or social conditions. Also it reduces their important roles in the city as arenas of social interactions and social mixing. In addition, following their privatisation the fencing of these places also result with problems in their accessibility and their publicness in general.

URBAN PLANNING APPROACHES:-

As discussed in the previous chapters, urban planning in Addis Ababa had a history of only six decades. Moreover the planning approaches that have been practiced were focused on the functional zoning of the different land uses. As a result the development of urban open public spaces in Addis Ababa has been taking place in the absence of urban design policies and guidelines. The figure-ground diagram of the city's main centre, which shows weak patterns of urban spaces and weak linkage between them, witness this problem of the city.

Recently; however, there is a paradigm shift in the system of planning from conventional land use zoning to a structure planning approach which has brought a new type of implementation tools and institutional arrangement. In this context the major actions taken are the preparation of Local development plans. Due to the absence of general policy guidelines during their preparation coupled with capacity and financial limitations during their implementation; currently they failed also to bring the necessary urban quality they intended to bring.

The other problem related with planning and affecting the operational attributes of public open spaces in Addis Ababa's urban environment is the rising of motor car traffic. As this study demonstrated, presently the vehicular movement in the city is highly dominating the pedestrian movement. In addition, planning measures taken as an ultimate solution to the current traffic problems, such as, the provision of wider streets have encourage more vehicular (traffic) flow to the area and make the problem for pedestrians worse.

For instance, the road network component of the revised master plan stated its main aim as "Efficient Street and efficient city". However from what is practically

observed in the city, its focus seem more about vehicular traffic and fast automobile links rather than free and comfortable movement of pedestrians which is a prerequisite for good and liveable city. Consequently; this problem of managing pedestrians' movement in and around urban public open spaces has been seen affecting the vitality and both the operational and physical qualities of these public places. Moreover, this planning approach which encourages more traffic flows, is also affecting the image of the city's urban environment. Recently highways, thoroughfares and big arterial roads are becoming the predominant types of urban open public spaces in Addis Ababa.

In conclusion therefore, the following points drawn from the analysis of the study are presented below. Besides to draw some lessons, the results from the case study areas are compared and discussed in light of the analytical framework.

SOCIABILITY

Observations and surveys at Meskel square showed that the square is a less sociable space whereby most people of the city come occasionally. Survey results also demonstrate that people usually come to the square when there are special events like exhibition, religious ceremonies or for other recreational purposes.

People who regularly come and use the square have been observed to be in small groups; however, these groups are socially segregated and rarely mix to one other. Further these groups define their own spots in the different parts of square. This co-existence of different user groups that rarely mix or interact to one another at Meskel square contradicts with the theories that explains public open spaces as free and open forums whereby people from all kinds of different backgrounds meet and change their ideas. Further as other theories on the issue imply, these loose or weak social interactions by different user groups in Meskel square have a negative impact on one of the major functions of the square as a media for social learning, development and information exchange.

Similarly, as surveys with people who work in the vicinity of Leghar Park indicate the park is a less sociable space. The majority of people come to the case study area accidentally. Further a considerable number of them responded as they do not like the area due to its crowdedness.

However; unlike Meskel square regular users of Leghar Park observed to be socially interacting though they are from different backgrounds. One reason for this could be the small size of the park in relation with its number of users. Observations on this case study area demonstrate that the park is a very busy space everyday used by thousands of people as a transit station. As a result it found out to be a more inclusive place where all sections of the community; from small children to old people; and people of different income groups are often around at the same time particularly around its concrete benches. This condition can be interpreted as Environmental probablism Carmona (2003, P.), a condition by which the built environment influences people to interact each other by influencing or determining their choice.

USE AND ACTIVITIES

Meskel square stages various city wide events and ceremonies, such as: Meskel celebration; the great Ethiopian run; political demonstrations; and different music festivals and socio-cultural events. During such events it was observed that the square will be filled with people of different ages, ethnicities and social status. Further observations at this case area revealed that both the size and placement of the square fits for its functions in the city as: a venue for city wide recreational, political and socio-cultural activities.

As informal interviews made with spectators during such city wide big events indicate

People enjoyed such kind of activities as both sources of engagement and recreation. However, such big events hadn't been seen happening frequently. One reason for this is that events and activities taken place in Meskel square are not scheduled; besides there is no responsible body which takes care of such events.

Unlike Meskel square, there are no special events or activities that take place at Leghar Park. It might be due to this reason that a considerable number of respondents during the survey responded as they don't know the area at all.

On the other hand, Even though Meskel square seems a vacant space that is used only during public holidays and special socio-cultural events, observations during this study revealed that there are different user groups that use the square regularly. Usually these users groups are socially segregated small groups and observed to be mainly groups composed of: small children, young people, homeless and jobless people. Additionally, it is observed that these users group use the different parts of the square differently: homeless people who sleep at the square and young people who come to chew chat often used parts of the square near the dead walls; young and adult people who often come to watch the different activities use the grass amphitheatre; while Small kids and young people who come to this place for different sport activities use both the semi-circled asphalt area and the grass amphitheatre. In general the major activities that regularly take place at Meskel square are:

- Sport activities which include playing football, running exercises, doing gymnastics and riding bicycles.
- Sitting and watching the world pass by.
- Sleeping, and
- Chewing chat.

Some of these uses and activities; however, do not comply with the design of the square .As a consequence these activities have negative impact on the physical environment of the square as well on the safety of their users. On this line children and young people who observed playing football on the semi-circled asphalt area of Meskel square could be good examples.

Though the background history of Leghar Park indicates as the main purpose or use of this park is to serve as a setting for the railway station, it was observed that presently the park is used as a bus station area. As a consequence different sections of the society come and use the park. In this study the main uses and activities observed at Leghar Park are:

- Sitting and waiting for buses and friends.
- Shoe shinning.
- Selling of goods like cigarettes (street vendors).
- Reading vacancy announcements and
- Sleeping.

Similar to Meskel square, the regular uses and activities that are taking place at Leghar Park do not comply with the physical design of the park. As a consequence present time uses and activities are destroying both the physical environment and the symbolic meaning of the park.

In addition, observations at both case study areas revealed that there are no activities taking place during evening hours. One reason for this could be the absence or poor provision proper lighting in these spaces. Another reason for these, particularly for Leghar Park, could be the fact that the Addis Ababa city bus transport system stops its service early in the evening.

In conclusion, therefore, special city wide events and ceremonies that take place at Meskel square fits with the physical design of the square. Besides by engaging people in recreational activities, such city wide events and uses are playing important roles in Addis Ababa. However; regular uses and activities that are taking place on both case study areas do not comply with the overall design of these public spaces. As a consequence they are resulting deteriorations on the physical environment and images of these public spaces. Additionally in evening times both case study areas are devoid of activities.

ACCESS AND LINKAGES

As the study indicates Meskel square is a very accessible place where users from different parts of the city can easily come using different modes of transport. Further it is observed to be a place where many major streets of Addis Ababa city make their connections. This makes the square visually accessible urban space from different angles. Similarly Leghar Park is also a very accessible place where users can easily access it from the different parts of Addis Ababa and obviously the red and yellow city busses connect Leghar Park to the whole city. This park has got also a direct visual and physical access to the Addis Ababa city municipal office via Churchill Avenue.

However, it is observed that once entered into Meskel square, there are real problems related with the access and linkages between different parts of the space. The main reason for this found out to be the wide arterial road of heavy and fast traffic that pass through the square. Due to this reason Meskel square is not a

place where users particularly pedestrians could easily and safely walkthrough. Similarly observations at Leghar Park revealed that the design or layout of the space favours automobile movement at the expense of pedestrians. As a result most of the time pedestrians were seen having difficulties to move freely in this area. As theoretical background on the issue indicates such problem of accessibility as in the case study areas contradicts with the fundamental function of successful public open spaces as places which allow free movement of their users. Further other theories on the issue argue that public open spaces surrounded by lanes of fast-moving traffic, which is the case of Meskel square also, will be cut off from pedestrians and deprived of their most essential element: people.

Observations made at case study areas further indicated that these public open spaces are not easily accessible spaces for disabled people. There are no ramps, paths or specially designed facilities like toilets that can allow these people to use the different parts of the case study areas. This is a situation which contradicts with the international literature on the issue as exclusion from use of public open spaces of any group reduces their character and publicness.

On the other hand though one is not asked for fees to enter and use the case study areas, currently Meskel square has problems related with the democratic rights of people to use the square. Unless the government allows, it is impossible to make any kinds of big gatherings or demonstration. Various literatures on the issue imply such condition affect or diminish the major roles of public open spaces in cities as key locus for the interaction that makes up a democracy.

In conclusion, regarding access and linkage of the case study areas the following points are drawn:

- There are a variety of transportation options that provide access to both case study areas. These include –buss, taxi, foot and private cars. Besides due to their important locations in the city centre of Addis Ababa, they are visible from a distance.
- Both the case areas have problems related with vehicular traffic. As a result these public open spaces are not convenient for pedestrians to walk easily from one part to another.
- The available amenities in these public open spaces are not designed considering disabled people.
- The surrounding land uses of both the case study areas lack conformity so that the relation between their surrounding parts is very weak.
- In relation to access particularly Meskel square is not a democratic place where people can express their free feelings,

COMFORT AND IMAGE

Regarding the issue of comfort and image, from observations and surveys conducted in this study, it is possible to draw some conclusions. The following points in the study areas are drawn from the design of their amenities.

- **Toilets:** - As observations and survey responses at Meskel square indicates there is a shortage of public toilets. Further the ones available are not easily accessible and comfortable to use. Similarly, observations and surveys at Leghar Park revealed that there is no appropriate provision of public toilets in the area. In general; the absence of adequate and comfortable is one of the major problems of both case study areas. Additionally this problem of toilets forced people to use some parts of the case areas as a toilet. These situations reduce the comfort level and affect the imageability of both the case study areas.
- **Seats:** - Seats in Meskel square have problems related with their location and design. It has been observed that they are not places where people prefer to come and use. On the other hand, though their design is not as such comfortable, Seats at Leghar Park are the most important and highly used physical elements of the park.
- **Lighting:** - In both case study areas there are problems related with the provision of lighting. Especially, at Leghar Park it is observed that there is not any kind of lighting fixtures .As international literature reviews on the issue dictates such condition destroys both evening times imageability and level of comfort in public open spaces.
- **Soft landscaping:** - observations at Meskel square and Leghar Park indicate that these spaces have problems related with the design and maintenance of their soft landscape elements. Further this poor condition of their landscape design reduces their image and affects their level of comfort for their users.
- **Signage:** - At Meskel square there is no signage that gives information about the square. The ones available at Leghar Park have problems related with their design and location as a consequence they have weakness in giving information for their users.

On the other hand, one major factor that has been affecting the comfort level and imageability of the case study areas is their management. As the study indicates the management in both case study areas is very poor. Even it gives the feeling of neglect and the impression that public open spaces are uncared places in Addis Ababa city. For instance the standard of cleanliness in both case study areas is found out to be very poor. Evidence of littering is all over the spaces, and even some people use parts of these spaces as toilets. Further standards of maintenance for both hard and soft landscape elements in the case areas are very low .Consequently these conditions add their own contribution for the poor first impression of these spaces. Therefore, here it is appropriate to ask who is in

charge of the management of these spaces in the city and what kinds of management services are provided.

As mentioned above the responsible body for the management of public open spaces in the city is the Addis Ababa city cleaning, beautification and greening agency. An interview made with people working in the agency indicates as: the agency has wide responsibility regarding the cleaning and beautifying of the city and it is presently operating in partnership with different stakeholders. Despite the efforts made by the agency, the standard level of cleanliness at the case study areas as well as in the other parts of Addis Ababa city is unsatisfactory. For instance, during the survey people who are cleaning these spaces are rarely seen.

The other important point that has to be discussed here is the issue of safety. As the study conducted in the case study areas indicates there is not as such recorded crime at Meskel square, whereas at Leghar Park users explained that there is petty crime. However; the real problem of safety in both case study areas is the conflict between vehicular movement and pedestrians' use of these spaces.

In conclusion, therefore, both Meskel square and Leghar Park have problems related with the design of their amenities, their management and safety. These problems in turn are affecting both the comfort level and image of these public open spaces in Addis Ababa city.

CHAPTER 7

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Beyond investigating the current operation of urban open public spaces in Addis Ababa, the aim of this study is also to make suggestions in order to improve their weaknesses and to protect or enhance their positive attributes. Within the framework of the study carried out at Meskel square and Leghar park issues regarding their sociability; comfort image; use & activities; and linkage have been investigated. According to the results these spaces have serious problems related with both their physical and operational attributes. Therefore; in order to improve these public spaces of the city, public open space policies must be formulated and implemented with contemporary planning approaches. In this regard, the Author of this study believes, the following recommendations need to be considered:

- The users' characteristics and purpose of these spaces should be taken into consideration as guiding factors during the planning period. Various uses should also be provided in accordance with the expectations and requirements of users groups. In addition these spaces should be provided with functions that can be used at different times of the day and also in different seasons.
- Considering the fact that, the accessibility of these spaces is one factor which increases their use, the number of motor traffic driving through these spaces need to be minimised.
- The physical design of these spaces should satisfy their purpose and context. It should enable people to spend time safely and comfortable during convenient seasons and evening times. For instance, street furniture in these spaces should be sufficient and comfortable to meet the needs of their users, for night time uses the number of lightings should be increased. In addition special features of these spaces like fountains and monuments should be protected and well maintained.
- Aesthetical and functional soft landscaping materials should be used for the vegetation of these spaces; however, the plant selection should be based on their theme.
- Considering the fact that the management of these spaces as a decisive factor in maintaining and enhancing both their operational and physical qualities, the level of their management should be improved. On this line the public sector has to play a key role. This is because successful management of these spaces generally requires: positive political and policy management along with strong administration; effective legislations; efficient organization; sound planning and adequate funding.

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APPENDIX

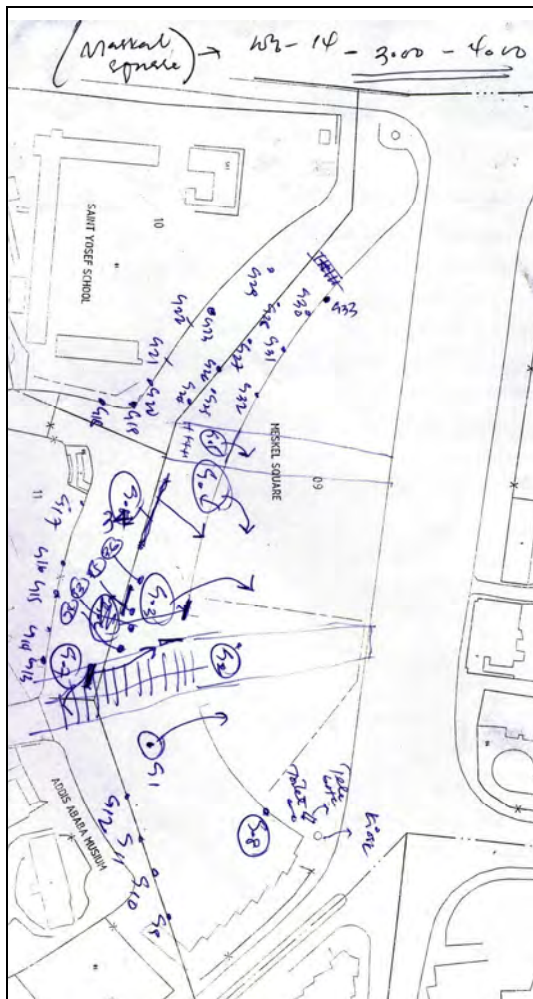
APPENDIX A

The behavioural mapping that would be used for this research focuses on studying people's activities on the selected case areas for a certain amount of time and mapping the physical setting of these spaces.

Using this technique, peoples activities on the selected case areas were studied by documenting both stationary activities such as sun bathing, sitting, talking, reading... and activities in motion like walking, playing. Further the physical settings where these activities were taking place were mapped.

For instance below two observation charts, which are related to one another, are presented.

Physical Mapping



Activity mapping

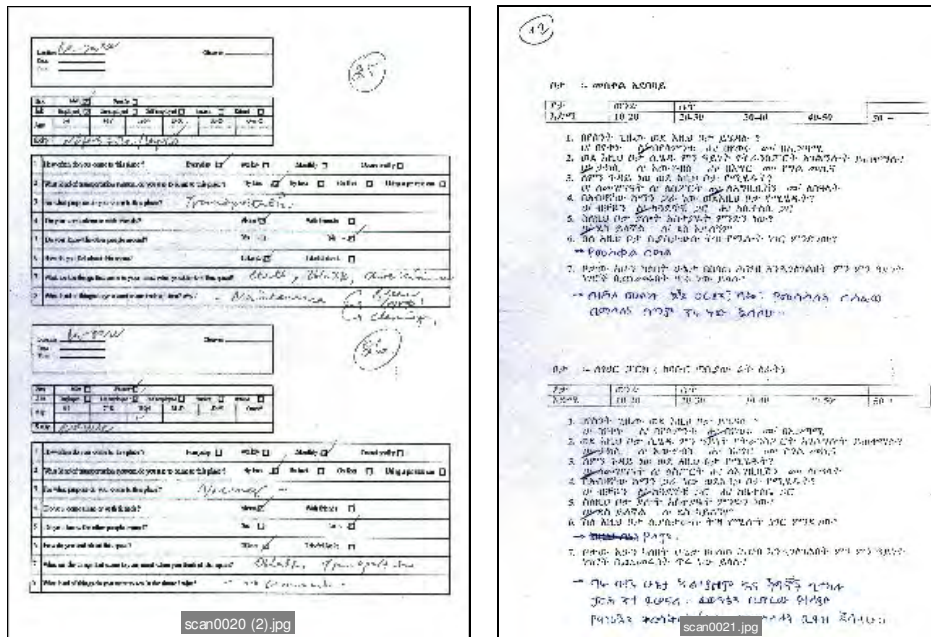
Group #	Sex	Age	Remarks
1	Female	0-4	
2	Female	5-14	
3	Female	15-24	
4	Female	25-34	
5	Female	35-44	
6	Female	45-54	
7	Female	55-64	
8	Female	65-74	
9	Female	75-84	
10	Female	85-94	
11	Female	95-104	
12	Female	105-114	
13	Female	115-124	
14	Female	125-134	
15	Female	135-144	
16	Female	145-154	
17	Female	155-164	
18	Female	165-174	
19	Female	175-184	
20	Female	185-194	
21	Female	195-204	
22	Female	205-214	
23	Female	215-224	
24	Female	225-234	
25	Female	235-244	
26	Female	245-254	
27	Female	255-264	
28	Female	265-274	
29	Female	275-284	
30	Female	285-294	
31	Female	295-304	
32	Female	305-314	
33	Female	315-324	
34	Female	325-334	
35	Female	335-344	
36	Female	345-354	
37	Female	355-364	
38	Female	365-374	
39	Female	375-384	
40	Female	385-394	

Observation notes: Sitting & eating, sitting (sun bath), sitting & watching, sitting & reading, playing football, playing cards, sitting on a bicycle, sitting and talking, standing & walking, shopping (postle).

APPENDIX B

For this Research, interviews and questioners were used to gather information that can not be obtained by observation. Therefore, these techniques help to measure the attitudes, perceptions and motivation of people about the selected case study areas.

Accordingly, in this Study out of the two forms presented below, the one on the left is used to conduct interviews with people who were using the case study areas during survey while the one on the right is filled by respondents working in the vicinity of the case study areas.



In addition, the data collected from the questionnaires & interviews; and also different ideas and opinions forwarded by some respondents during the survey were coded to certain categories and qualitatively analyzed. Further the results are presented using bar chart diagrams.

Category 1 (people interviewed on site) – (Meskel Square)

Code. 1. Respondent presence on the site

- 1.1. Everyday
- 1.2. Weekly
- 1.3. Monthly
- 1.4. Occasionally

Code.2. Respondent age group

- 2.1. 0-6
- 2.2. 7-18
- 2.3. 18-34
- 2.4. 35-50
- 2.5. 50-65
- 2.6. Over 65

Code.3. Respondent sex

- 3.1. Male
- 3.2. Female

Code.4. Respondent Occupation

- 4.1. Employed
- 4.2. Unemployed
- 4.3. Self employed
- 4.4. Student
- 4.5. Retired

Code.5. Respondent means of transport to come to the site.

- 5.1. Bus
- 5.2. Taxi
- 5.3. Foot
- 5.4. Private car

Code.6. Purpose of coming to the site

- 6.1. Sport
- 6.2. Exhibition
- 6.3. Religious ceremony
- 6.4. For work
- 6.5. Appointment (to meet) friends
- 6.6. To spent time
- 6.7. Accidentally
- 6.8. For Recreation

Code.7. Pattern of arrival

- 7.1. Single
- 7.2. with friends
- 7.3. with family
- 7.4. Other

Code.8. Feeling about the space

- 8.1. I like it very much
- 8.2. I like it
- 8.3. I don't like it
- 8.4. No opinion

Code.9. Memories attached to the place

- 9.1. Religious festival (Meskel)
- 9.2. Revolution day
- 9.3. Political demonstration
- 9.4. The physical characteristics of the space
- 9.5. The sport activities
- 9.6. Different music festivals and recreational activities

Code.10. Ideas, opinions and wishes about the place in the future.

- 10.1. Maintenance and cleaning
- 10.2. Provision of recreational facilities
- 10.3. As it is
- 10.4. No response

Code.11. Do you know the other people around?

- 11.1. Yes
- 11.2. No

Category 5
(1-10) = (Respondent's space (at site))

Respondent	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Question 5	Question 6	Question 7	Question 8	Question 9	Question 10	Question 11	Question 12
1												
2												
3												
4												
5												
6												
7												
8												
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