

**Infrastructure Planning and Management**  
**Guest Lecture by Kavitha Selvaraj**

Ok, so the last session, today we got to have a guest lecture by Kavitha, Kavitha Selvaraj, so I have known Kavitha for several years and by way of introduction Kavitha is an architect and an urban planner and is very interested therefore in urban spaces and urban architecture and a lot of projects that come under that ambit right and so she is done a lot of pedestrianisation related projects, projects essentially which tried to how shall I say this probably increase sort of citizen involvement in a in urban spaces right and some of them have taken off well some of them have had difficulties and challenges and these difficulties and challenges are very similar to the ones that we have seen in metro rail projects or in roads power plants etcetera.

So I have asked her to come and talk a little bit about projects that she is worked on, the good, the bad, the ugly all of that, so she will sort of take us through some of the things that she is worked on and we can hopefully relate back to the way things we have talked about in this class on how to manage infrastructure projects and see what we can reconcile or learn from what Kavitha is, ok.

Kavitha Selvaraj: All right, thank you very much Ashwin for inviting me to speak at your class this is maybe third or fourth year that I am doing this happy to be here. What I would like to talk about is as Ashwin said my professional background my day job is an architect, I work on various projects many of them are large projects which in itself might be interesting but since they are often single client projects it does not have the complexity of a project that is in public space which area wise may be much smaller, value wise definitely smaller.

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The slide is titled "Public Space Design - Issues and Challenges" and features the "CITYWORKS" logo on the left and the "NPTEL" logo on the right. The text on the slide is as follows:

**ISSUES**  
*Every major city in India is reeling under one crises or the other – poor air quality, urban flooding, mountains of garbage, lack of affordable housing, dwindling open spaces, polluted waterways etc.*

**CHALLENGES**  
**Lack of Urban Planning**  
*Institutional set up at ULB level – fragmented governance,  
Lack of accountability  
Capacity issues within system  
Citizen engagement*

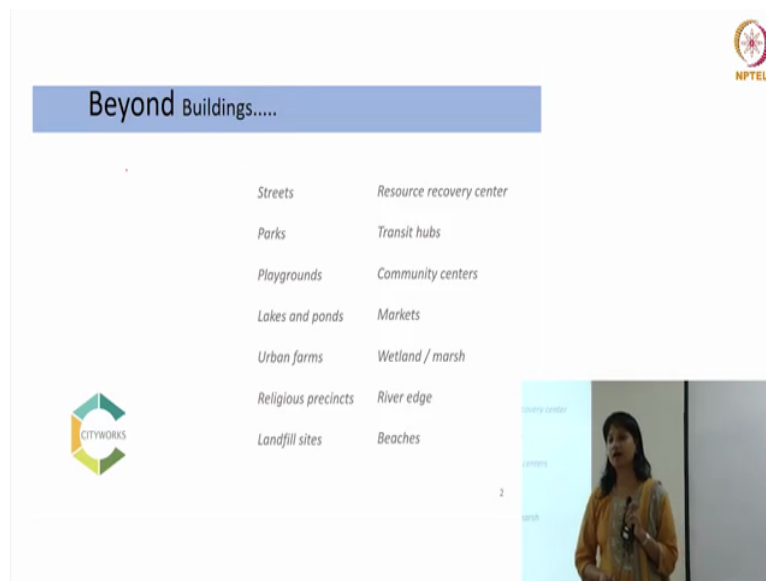
The slide includes two images: a large photograph of a congested urban street with many yellow taxis and other vehicles, and a smaller inset photograph of a woman in a yellow jacket standing in front of a screen displaying the same traffic jam image.

But in terms of challenges, in terms of impact it is much bigger, so I run two practices we do architecture IT buildings, housing projects etcetera but through city works which is a small studio that focuses only on public space projects, we try to see what can we do beyond buildings that can make our living in the city a better experience and that is gone kind of a very personal area of interest for me.

So in public space design of course I think all of you may have in the course of this class itself covered that there are many challenges that we face, a lot of it has to do with the way in which governance runs, the way in which our country is set up from an institutional point of view and also in no small amount because of the way we as citizens behave in the public domain, so often people will tell you the same set of people go to Singapore and they behave very differently and look this is what they do here.

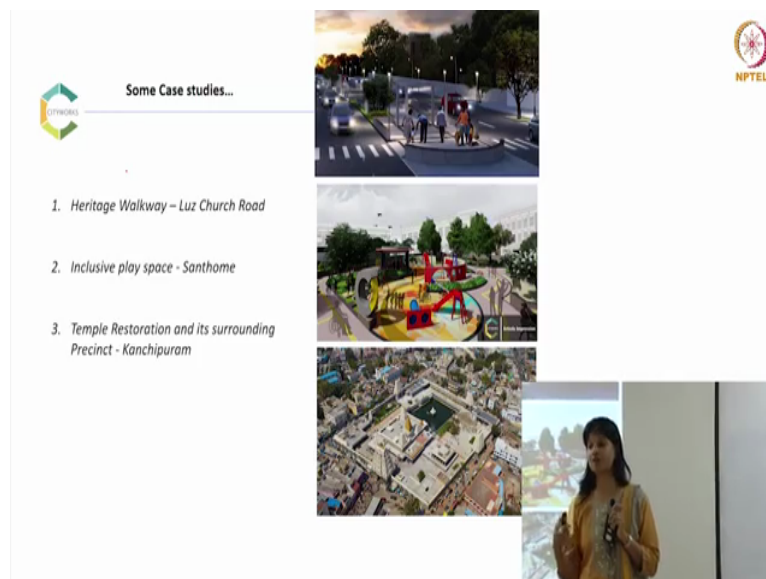
So I am very interested in these kinds of issues that look closely at why we are the way we are? Given climate change, given urbanization given the quality of our lives the role that cities play on our health, it is so important that we live in a good urban environment, it is just so important for our future, it is so important for the planet there is not enough people thinking and working closely in that space, so this is the reason why we are looking at these closely.

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And I will walk you through three cases today, through city works we are looking at streets, parks, playgrounds, lakes, ponds, urban horticulture, a lot on solid waste management, community centres, Government schools, primary health centres etcetera these are the kind of projects we are interested in. Today I will look at two, three cases and then perhaps we can have a short discussion at the end of it, so you can try and figure out what has worked what, has not worked and this is a kind of our personal journey as we try and implement some of these projects.

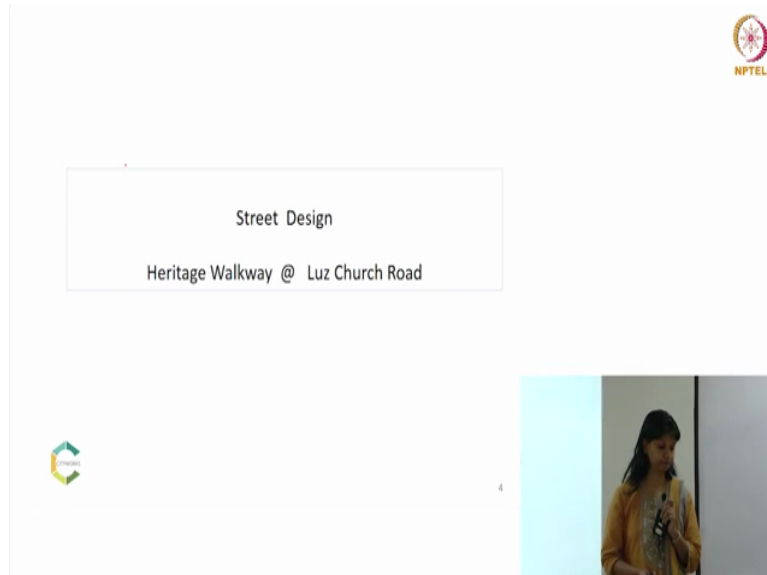
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I am going to look at the Heritage Walkway in Luz Church Road, a play a park in Santhome and the third one is a project that I have done but I made this for another class which was an

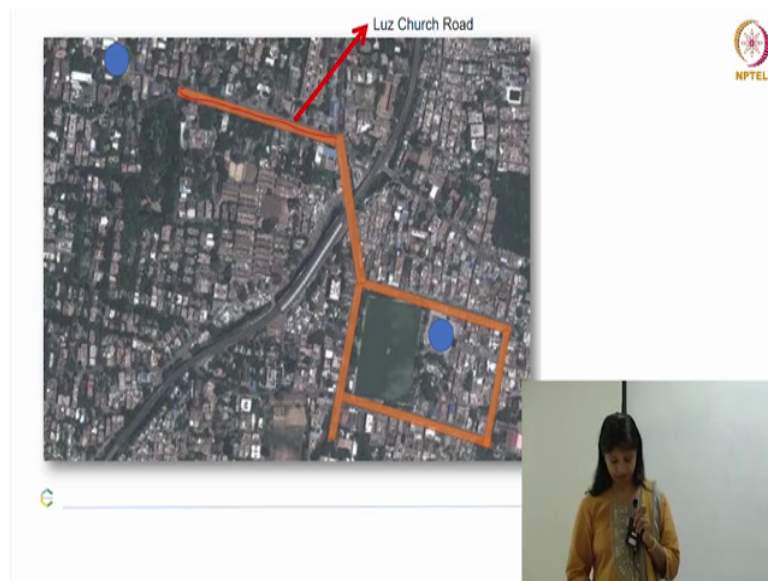
urban design class, so I am not going to talk about the Temple Restoration project even though it is very interesting but I want to talk to you about a new project we are going to start on, that is on another street called Calaveras street, that is a separate presentation, so I will talk to you about that.

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The first project is set in Mylapore, I do not know how many of you are familiar with Mylapore, it is a old part of the city and it has a lot of history and a lot of culture and one of the ideas that a my home and office is both in Mylapore and I think as is Ashwin is close enough to that one of our ideas was what could we do to celebrate the history of Mylapore through it is public space.

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And we had an opportunity in terms of a street, this is a Luz Church Road I can point out here, right?

Professor Ashwin:

Yeah.

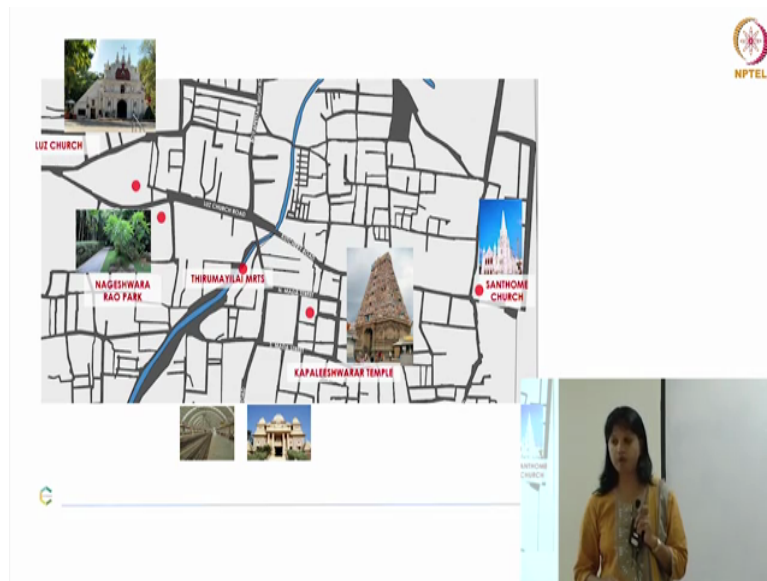
Yeah, the ok.

Person 1:

Point you just sort of more press anymore.

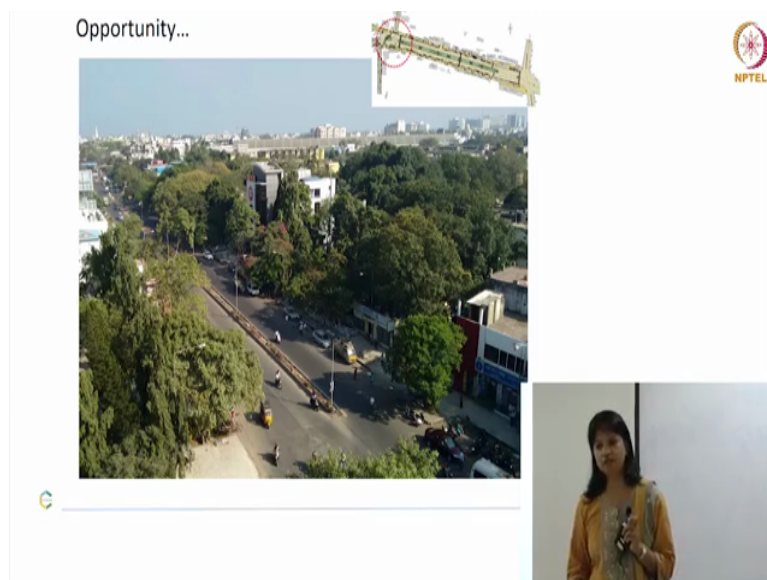
Yeah, alright, That is Luz Church Road, Luz Church Road is quite wide and it is just outside the heritage precinct, this is where the Kapaleeshwar temple is and the and the tank is.

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And it offered an opportunity to actually connect several important historic buildings, the Luz Church being one, the Kapaleeshwar temple up to Santhome church there is a very vibrant commercial area in and around this place and also some interesting places which are part of India is freedom struggle, there are other buildings that there that you know meetings happened, there is lots of stories to tell about this area because this is a very old part of the city.

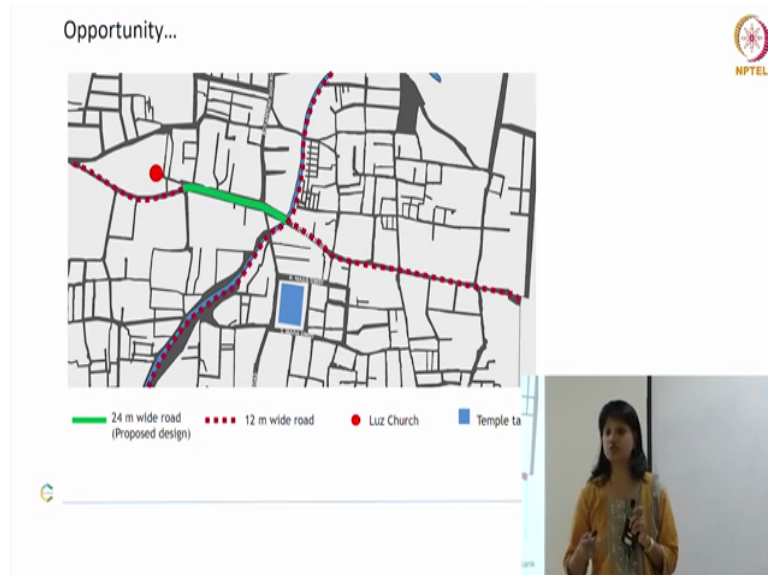
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And the specific physical opportunity there is not that Luz Church Road for whatever reason is very wide and the roads leading in and out of it are not as wide, so it gives an opportunity

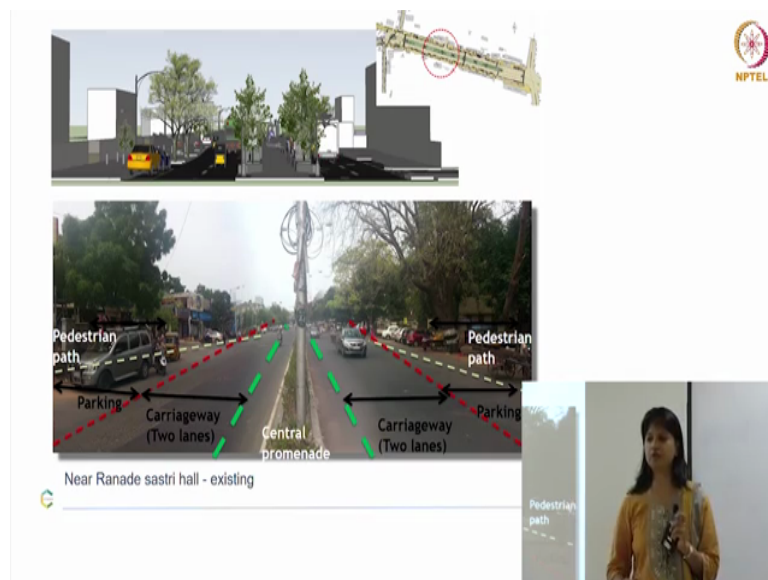
to actually use that extra space to make a public space that is more pedestrian oriented not so much dominated by vehicles.

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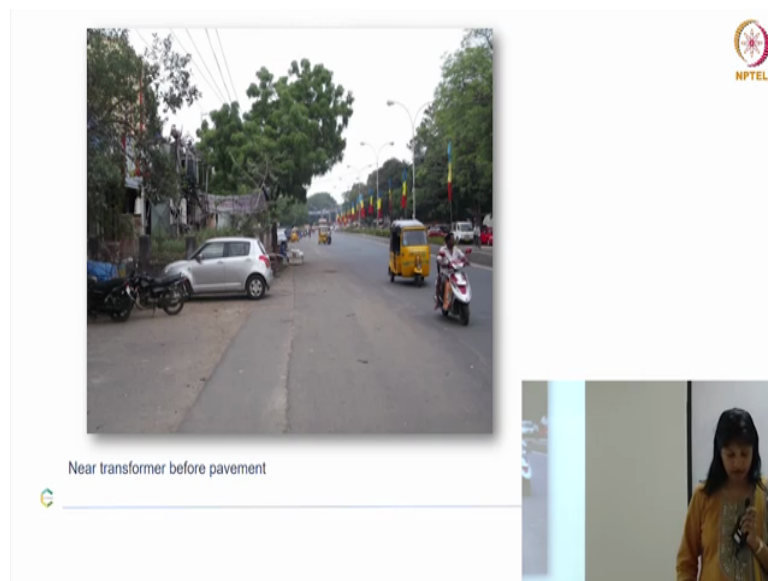
And this is what you are seeing in this graphic, it says the roads leading into Luz Church Road are only 12 metres but the street that itself is 24 metres wide.

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And we saw this as an opportunity to create a central promenade you know that can have some interesting panels that talk about the history of Mylapore, so someone is walking through that space they can actually see that.

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And what you are seeing the next few sets of pictures, I think maybe is it ok to switch off this light? If those pictures will be clearer or what if it is clear enough as it is we can even leave it? Just only maybe that one. So what you see is actually a condition that is very typical on many streets in India, it is just that this street section has not been designed, no one has actively thought about ok this is the footpath, this is where the services are, this is a where the trees are, this is the street light, dustbin, a parking area, the lane marking that is just not been done.

So it is just all of this general you know space that you can see on the left side right, this is how many of these spaces are.

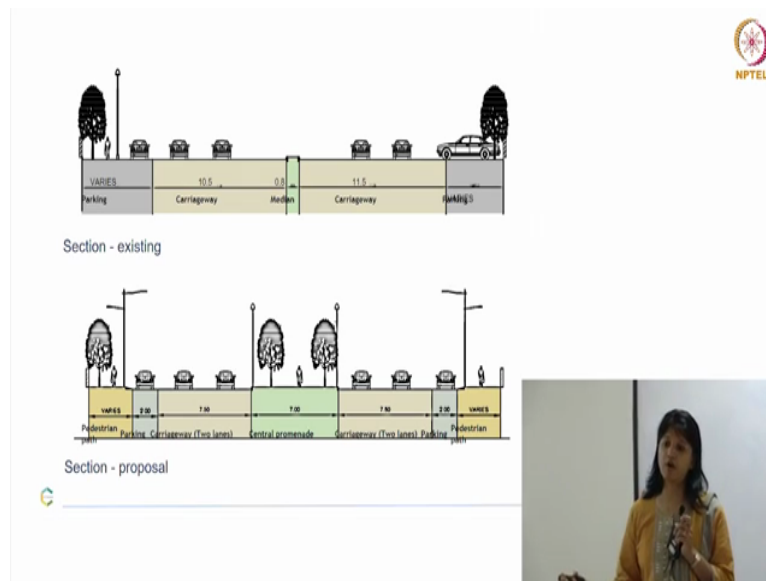
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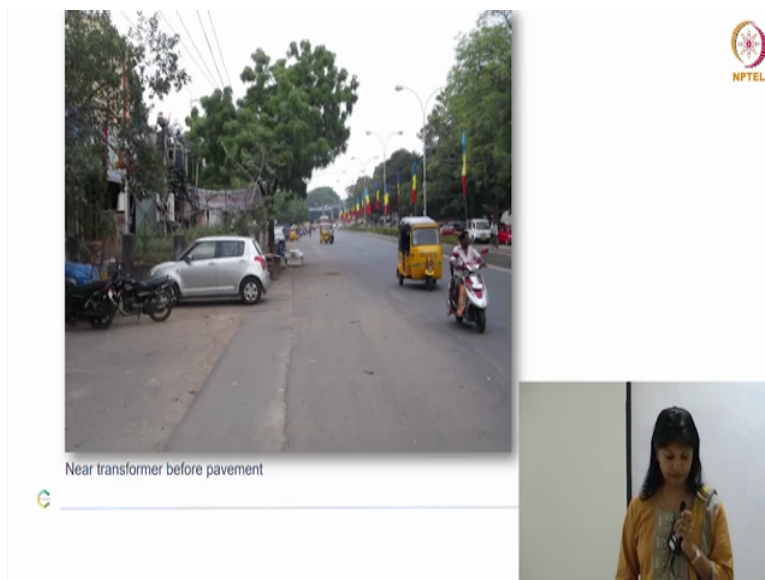
And this is a corner that just turns, so straight in front of us is Luz Church Road and as you turn this corner my office is right there, look at the amount of space that is there from this compound wall to this and you know just by studying the texture on the road you can make out where vehicles go and what is just residual urban space. So we found this as a great opportunity and just remember this image because I am going to come back and talk to you about some of the things that we have done here.

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So we use we saw this as opportunities to really do something about and the entire proposal was about re or not redoing the section but planning the section because no one had actually planned it before and creating a central promenade with carriageways on both sides and then a walkway which had all the utilities, a place for people to walk and then of course you had the building and the property line.

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And we had some illustrations that talked about I think in (09:08 but that is ok, so this is the central walkway and that is there in the middle which is how we imagined that space could be.

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Near transformer after bollard



The slide features a photograph of a street scene. On the left, there are buildings with scaffolding. In the center, a paved area is marked with a red 'X' and a bollard. The text 'Near transformer after bollard' is positioned below the photo. The NPTEL logo is in the top right corner, and a small video feed of a woman is in the bottom right corner.

Now as the project took shape we were actually able to do some amount of transformation just in terms of doing the footpath, I am just actually going to exit out of this presentation, sorry.

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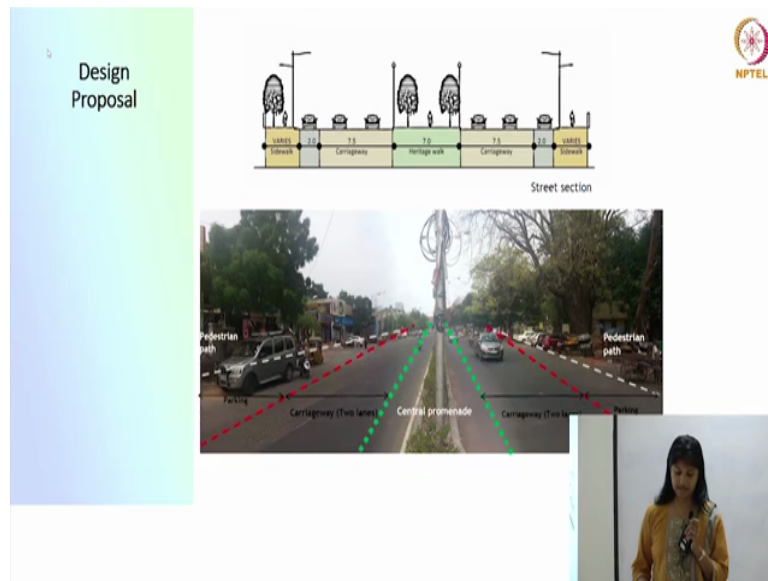
Underutilized side space



The slide features a photograph of a street scene. On the left, there is a green-painted area with a stack of concrete blocks. The text 'Underutilized side space' is positioned to the left of the photo. The NPTEL logo is in the top right corner, and a small video feed of a woman is in the bottom right corner.

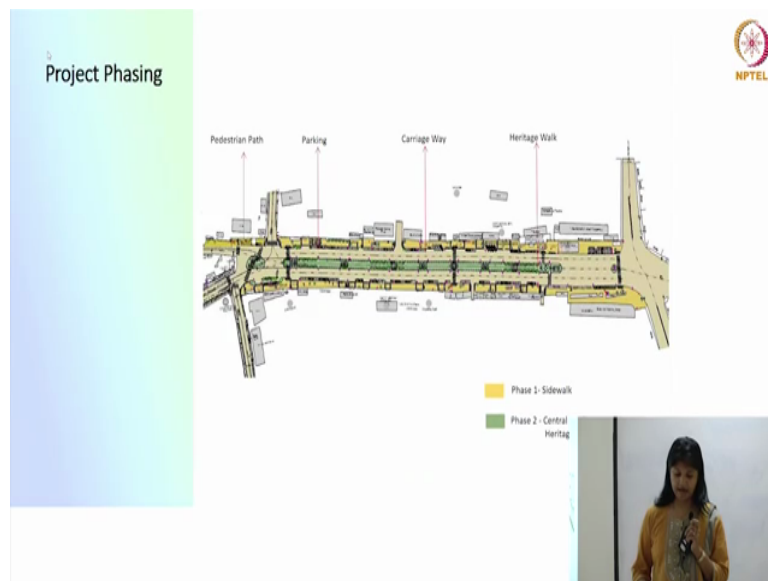
So yeah just to show you that that is the kind of residual spaces on the edge that we were able to utilize.

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So this was a design proposal with the central median and the carriageways on both sides.

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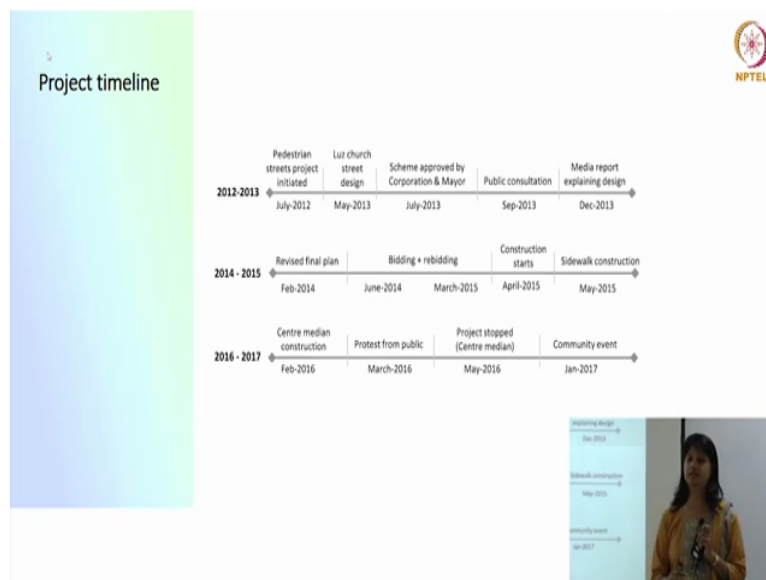
And we had thought about the project carefully such that we do the carriageway we leave the carriageway untouched and look at only the footpaths first.

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Now what actually happened eventually is that we managed to get this two sides built and we are intentionally plant it this way because whenever the public in India sees we are doing something in the middle of the road they think that you are going to affect the traffic flow in some way and then they are going to protest and that is exactly what happened, so fortunately at least we have got the two sides done.

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And there was some amount of protest at the middle of the project, so this kind of broadly talks about the timeline in terms of contract value it was not very large I think it was 6 crores was the overall project contract because it was promoted as a footpath project. The way in which this project started was that we initiated the project, so the consultant as in myself and

a few others actually suggested this to the government at that time we had a very good Commissioner Vikram Kapoor was the Commissioner he loved the idea, we ran it by the mayor he thought it was a great idea we said we will have a public consultation and we will talk to the citizens to see what it is that they feel about it.

So we had a kind of a town hall meeting, so it is in a hall in the corporation office and the only people that showed up there because everyone was given one day is notice was people who were hawkers and vendors who were little concerned that perhaps they might be evicted as a result of this project and so the local media covered it they said look there is a heritage walkway project and then some people said ok no one is being evicted, so it was fine, so the project kind of went through and got into construction.

So this is the timeline up to this point there was a media report that kind of explained the design, some suggestions were incorporated, it went into tender as you can see that this process took 1 year, I went into bid there were not enough bidders and it was rebid an all kinds of things like that but finally in 2015 April we started the project and it was going fine till the central median was in construction wherein there was a protest from the public and people said why do we need such a wide footpath right in the middle of the road and at that time we try to explain that look the roads that lead into this are only two lane the roads that lead out of this are only two lanes why do you need something that is got six lanes right in the middle it makes no sense, I am going to help your traffic flow in any case and if you do not use it probably it is just going to be extra carriage space with all this you know underutilized space.

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And to this there was actually no valid response except that people started using tactics to attack the project because there are easy ways in the Indian system to derail a project if you do not like it you can always say anything, so for example people said look you are doing this because this is a one way street and you do not want us to make it a two way street and this is benefiting some school that is around the corner, I mean things that in a one on one argument we could have actually handled but the way in which the public opposes projects it is very difficult to actually step up and who will you explain to and how will you explain it, it has its own challenges.

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So you can just see these are just some pictures of the project in the process.

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Year 2015

- March  
Bidding+ rebidding
- April  
Construction starts
- April  
Phase 1 Construction (Sidewalk)

• During execution of the sidewalks each 50 m had to be handled differently.

Labels in diagram: COCONUT SELLER, FRUIT SELLERS, RICE PANCAKE STALL, FOOD STALL, FLOWER SHOP, AZIZ CORNER, NAGESWARA RAO PARK, FLOWER SHOP, FRUIT SELLERS, FOOD STALL, FRUIT SELLERS, FOOD STALL, BOOK SHOP, SHOPPING STALLS, MADHAPUR TEMPLE.

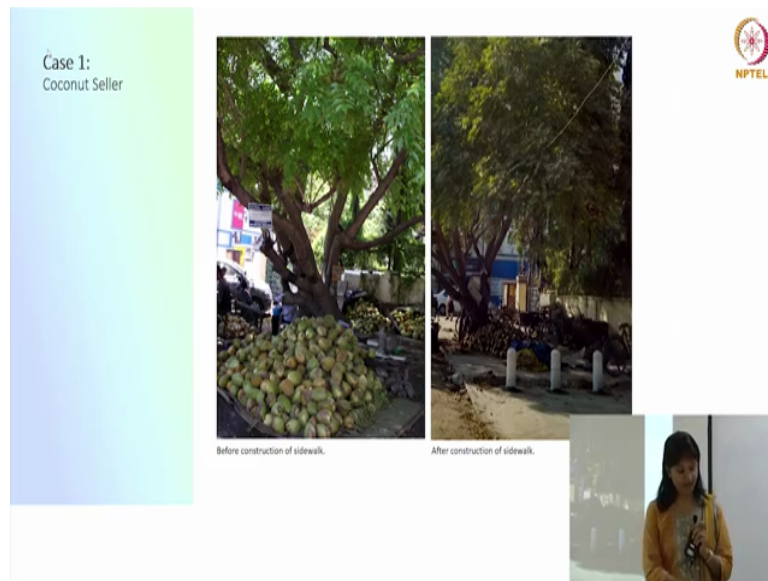
NPTEL

We are trying to get it kind of built on the ground and what I must mention here is that the smallest of things requires very careful handling in projects like this. So every 50 meters it was not something that you could sit in the office and make a drawing and then set it out and then the contractor is going to build it, these projects are not done like that, every 50 meters there will be somebody is entrance, somebody is gate, some electrical box, some transformer, someone always parks their car on that bit, there is a fruit seller, there was a bookseller who had been there for generations that everybody knew including all the you know the MLAs and MPs and had a lot of political support.

So there is an idli shop guy who you know if you remove the shop he would come the next day and you would get a phone call from some Minister saying you know you cannot do anything about this. So every 50 metres off a 400 metre project had so many challenges and what we looked at is really handling it as sensitively as possible for the two sides.

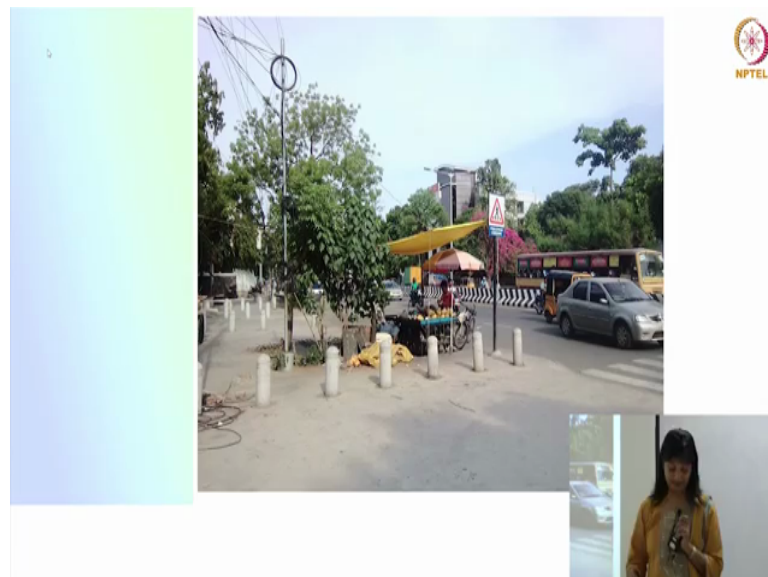


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So taking care of it, so I have just actually this we had done a little paper on this with your professor and another professor, adjunct professor here we have written a little case study about how it had to be done in such a sensitive manner. So like the coconut seller you have to convince him by saying that look we will put nice benches people can come and have the coconuts but also you know sit there and enjoy rather than you know sitting in the Sun.

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So we had all these bollard and convinced him to move it to one side, you can just see this is the same space this is what it looked like before and after the footpath you just took over the whole space and was still using it as such till we said that look shifted to one side so people

can at least walk by over there and unfortunately in the cyclone the tree fell but now he is planted another tree and it is growing great.

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So another case just further down the street was a you know a restaurant but kind of blocked the street with a sign and then, so this is all this is not their personal space this is all the public space and still if you want to get something done you need the sensitivity to handle the situation right. So he had to be coerced to remove the sign and say look we will you know revoke your license to run a restaurant here if you do not remove the sign which is anyway not in his face.

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So he eventually did it, so then that footpath looks nicer now.

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And this is how they were parking in that space before, there were some areas where we actually got it removed and then the shop was there two days later and now it is there it is got it is little thatched hut etcetera.

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So there were some areas which were very challenging and some areas we were able to actually make it work but the key to this story is really not so much the sides which with some difficulty for the most part we managed to get done but the key challenge was the central median which was the crux of the project.

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So we got it implemented to this level, so if you see in February of 2016 it was aligned the curbs were done, traffic was moving fine there was no problem, the two sides were done, there was absolutely we let it be like this for a few weeks, so there was actually no problem with traffic but still there was a group that actually came up and said that look this is a really dumb idea to have such a large walkway right in the middle of the road and nobody actually consulted us and we said look we had a public consultation they said no we were not there in that consultation, so we think this is a very bad idea and so you had this project which I reached this stage they actually got it dismantled.

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A slide with a light blue and green background. On the left, a vertical timeline shows 'Year 2016' with 'March' and 'May' marked. The March event is 'Protest starts against Central median project' and the May event is 'Phase 2- Project stopped'. In the center is a newspaper clipping titled 'CAN WE CREATE A SMART LUZ CHURCH ROAD?' with several photos and text columns. On the right, there are three quotes: 'these newly created footpaths will soon be home for a lot more vendors and we will be back to walking on the road', 'Who is going to walk in the middle of the road to look at history facts. Its dusty and so difficult to even get to', and 'hardly anybody walks on these pavements. Why should we reduce the width of the road to make space for something that no one uses?'. In the bottom right corner, there is a small inset video of a woman in a yellow jacket presenting.

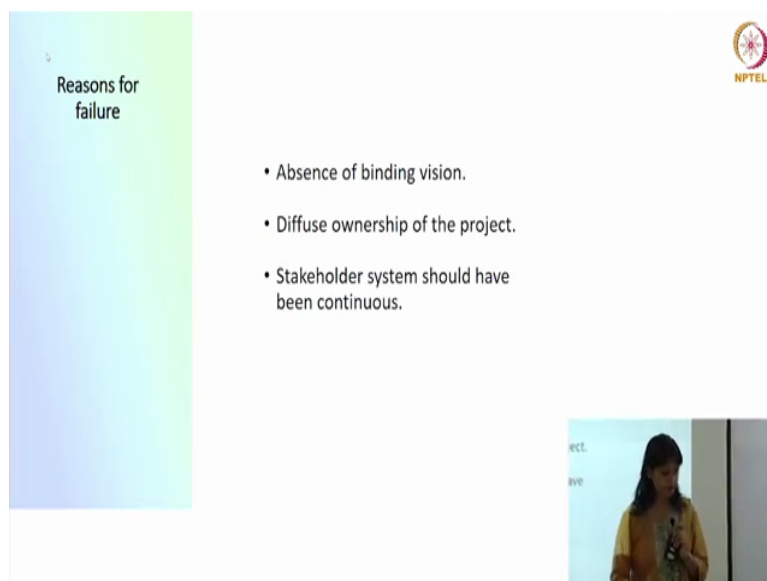
And the other the important thing to notice this was just a few months before the elections, so at that point there was no one to actually step up and speak on behalf and say that look there is nothing wrong with this project, this was all signed off and it is not there are no negative fall outs of this and people just said no, no one wanted to take a chance, so given you can see from the timing that between March to May elections were in May it was dropped.

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So it is covered in the local media saying that you know the promenade is dropped and respite for locals as if it was very difficult for them to have a wide footpath in the middle of the road.

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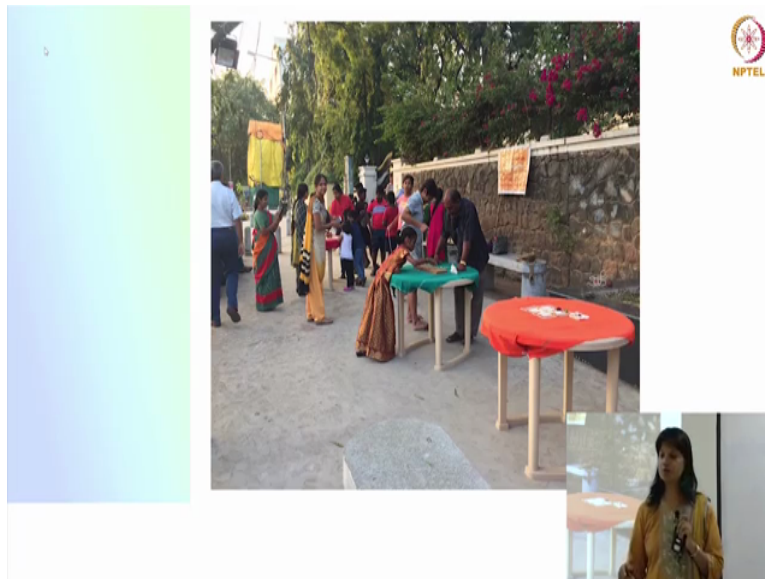
So some of the reasons why in hindsight we think that it failed is that, there was really no champion for the project and that and the project did not originate from the neighbourhood or from the residents itself and where we were involved with people it was a more a technical approach from our team itself and that is why some of it got done and then a lot of it did not get done.

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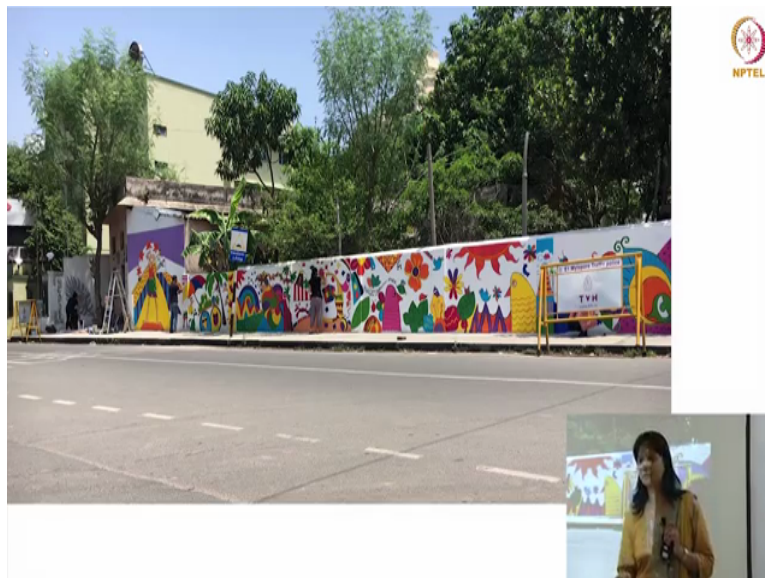
So since then we did a few things, we did an event around that corner that looked at we created a map this map is in the same corner you can see the vegetable the (( ))(18:38) guy then the coconut guys in that corner over there, we put up a big map that talked about all the historic buildings in Mylapore and essentially said people can use this as a starting point of a heritage walk.

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We did a small event around traditional games in that area and said people can use the space as a community space, I have to say that while this event was a success people have not done other events like this after that unfortunately but it is actively used by the people who come there to have the tender coconut, so at least someone is benefiting from that open space.

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As a continuation of that project we did one more such of community engagement project where we looked at a wall this is very close to the same place, so all our Luz Church Road to this wall is very much in Luz Church Road and we said look here is a wall which is to have all these posters would it not be interesting if we could bring people together to give them a

sense of ownership over the street and we hired an artist to actually make an artwork on the wall and we called it art for change.

And we everyone there the MLA came, the local police came, Ashwin was there, we were there, my kids were there, so lots of people who came together to actually paint this wall and it became a very nice well spent Sunday morning where we came together and actually created this very nice wall art and what was nice about this is about 300 people participated in putting this together and this wall remains almost exactly like this even today it is more than a year since we did this project.

So our approach also changed in terms of bringing change in creating a sense of ownership and seeing what can people do to feel that they are a part of this.

I want to talk about two other projects that happened after this only to share our experiences in trying to get work like this done, I have to search this PC, yeah there is two other projects I want to talk about I will speak very briefly about this, so we will have about 10 15 minutes for a discussion.

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This is a park that we are doing in Santhome, it is called an inclusive play space and it is specifically designed for children with disabilities to have a place that they can also be at and play with children who do not have disabilities and this project was initiated by this group called the Disability Rights Alliance where they are focusing on how can we make our city is inclusive.



So what they do is they petition say Metro Rail is building the project they will make sure they will try to get hold of the plans to see if it is wheelchair accessible, if the standards are being met, if the Braille signage is there, if it is comfortable for the visually impaired things like that. So this is a loose group there is no official organization as such but they approached us because they know that we are interested in creating positive public spaces and said can you can you help us to create this Park.

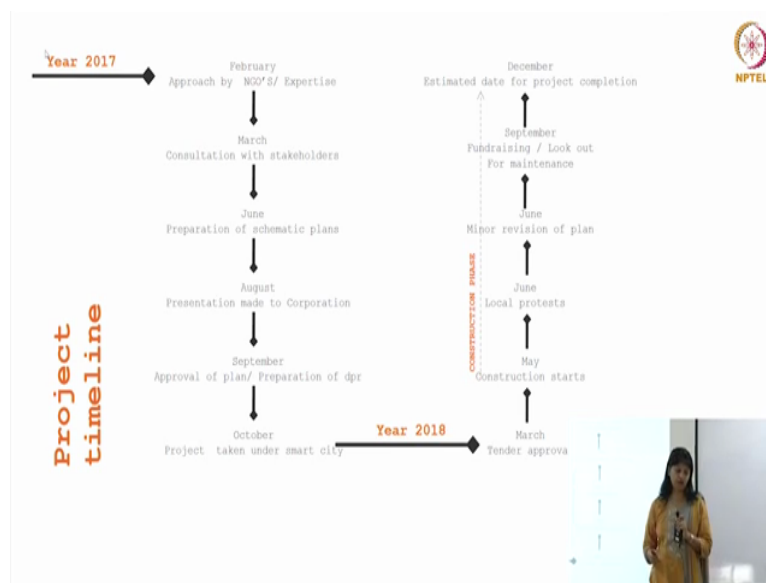
And with this group we brainstorm we had partners we another partner called Kilikili who was very interested to see how children learn through play and especially autistic children and how they can be engaged with others because they you know people with a spectrum disorder come with lot of social anxiety issues and sometimes a nice environment brings out positive experiences for them in the public.

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The image is a composite of two slides. The left slide, titled 'Opportunity', features a central diagram with three interconnected circles: 'Expertise /NGO Support' (green), 'Official/ Government support' (purple), and 'State Resource Centre school/ Parents support' (blue). The right slide, titled 'The Big 10', lists 'Essential Elements in an Inclusive Play Space' with a numbered list from 1 to 10. The list includes: 1. Barrier free pathway approach to play space from road, street; 2. Accessible entrance and parking; 3. Accessible inner pathways or pathways inside the play space; 4. Accessible play space and equipments; 5. Accessible and hygienic drinking water provisioning; 6. Accessible washrooms and toilets; 7. Accessible information and communication (Signage for information and direction, Tactile Map); 8. Accessible covered area for shelter (during hot and rainy season); 9. Accessible lighting and air circulation; 10. Accessible safety and evacuation. The NPTEL logo is visible in the top right corner of the right slide.

So the opportunity that we had is that we had a lot of expertise, we had people who are working with children with disabilities, we had official and government support because this was in a defined space it did not affect anyone in that sense and right adjacent to the site that we finally did this project and which was in Santhome there was a State Resource Centre which is meant for teachers to come and learn how to deal with children with disabilities.

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So this was the background and what we did is this project started in February of 2017 as an idea and we are going to open next month, so it has taken a long time but the challenges in this project have been lesser for very (re) for various reasons one is that we did not come up with the project, the project is initiated by people who are also an alliance and themselves and it is a very strong cause there is a lot of goodwill around creating such a kind of a space and there is I do not think there is any such Park anywhere in Chennai at least now.

So there is a interest in being the first of a kind that was one reason second is this was a playground and we did have protests from people who are using the playground before in the sense that they said look we play we have been playing in this playground for many years and now you are you know using it for something else and then we had to go and make a presentation to say that it is still a playground you can still play but of course we want to do all these other things for the children.

So the case for actually protesting was little less because the cause was what it was and the beneficiaries were children with disabilities, so the resistance even for such a project was there just to make that point and the third is the smart city took this under their wing and it became a smart city project literally smart city had nothing to do with it except that we came up with the project critical design made a presentation got an in principle approval and then the smart city team which was kind of just forming at that time said look this will come under the smart city budget because these are kind of projects that we are supporting.

So we used that opportunity and actually built it out under that, so it actually came under smart City last year in October went to tender and the construction started around May and in six months we have actually been able to put most of it together.

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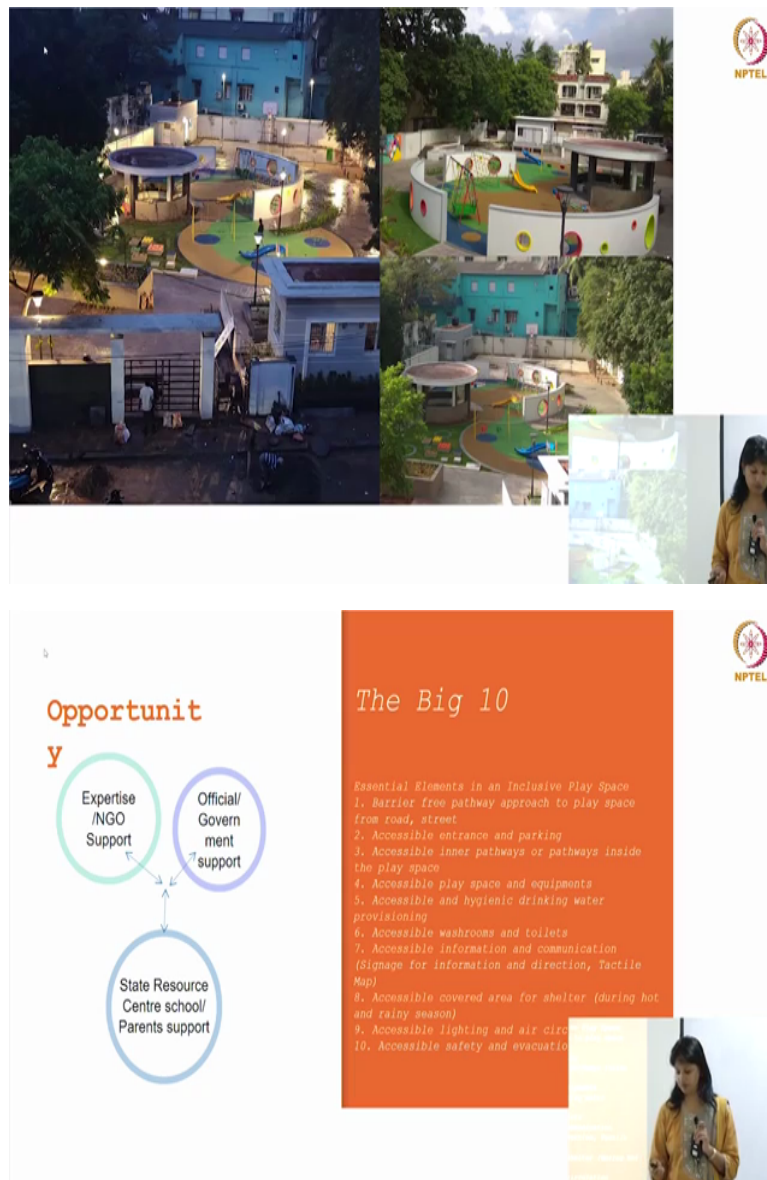
The image shows two slides from an NPTEL presentation. The top slide, titled "2. Design Concept", has a large orange rectangular area. The bottom slide, titled "Plan", shows a site plan for a park. On the left of the plan slide, there is a location map showing the "Proposed site" near "Santhome Church". The main site plan is a detailed layout of a park with various zones and features labeled:

- Care taker Room
- Table games
- Activity corner
- Stepping stones
- Herb garden
- Multi play Court
- Outdoor gym
- Kids play space
- Art wall
- Kids play space
- Sand play
- Infinity
- Security

The NPTEL logo is visible in the top right corner of both slides.

The concept itself is quite simple and straightforward it is essentially 15,000 square feet of space, so it is about the less than an acre no it is only half an acre and what it does is it actually makes a loop so people can go for a walk around but is also different kinds of play equipment in that space and what we have tried to do is create something for everyone.

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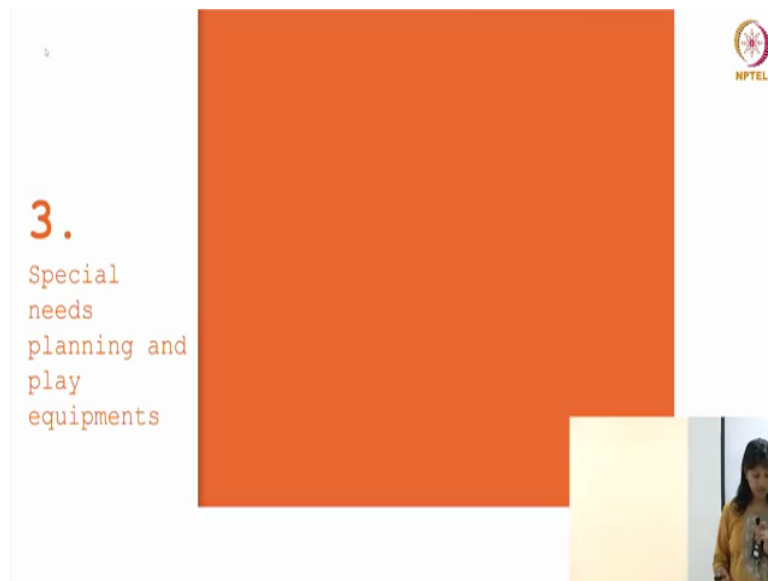
So that is the that is why it is called an inclusive Park, so here are some pictures I mean these are some views which we had prepared initially to kind of sell the idea. One of the lessons we learnt in the previous Luz Church Road project was that the imaging and the vision was not communicated graphically was not communicated visually to a lot of people, it was just attended document and they were drawings and they were not 3D views that actually told people this is what is going to look like and this is how it is going to be.

So this time we made a point from the first meeting itself to have 3d drawings that showed people what that space look like and we made elaborate explanations about the benefit of the project. So this presentation that you are seeing is a modification of what we had made too short to the dc works of that time that why is this see this whole presentation what you are

seeing was to explain to him what is a park? What is a park with a disability? What does that mean? And it was like a checklist you know you need to have you know barrier free toilets, you need to have everything should be accessible by wheelchair they need to be tactile signage; it should be comfortable for visit.

So literally we made the presentation to tell what is this concept and then did a lot of communication to share that idea with them so that was a lesson that was learned from the previous project.

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3.  
Special  
needs  
planning and  
play  
equipments

NPTEL

This slide features a large orange rectangular area on the right side. The text '3. Special needs planning and play equipments' is positioned on the left. The NPTEL logo is in the top right corner. A small video inset in the bottom right shows a woman speaking.



Children  
with  
disabilities

Children with sensory processing issues

Children with mobility impairments- may use crutches, wheelchair

Children with visual impairments

NPTEL

This slide features a large orange vertical bar on the left with the text 'Children with disabilities'. To the right, three overlapping circles contain the following text: 'Children with sensory processing issues' (yellow circle), 'Children with mobility impairments- may use crutches, wheelchair' (orange circle), and 'Children with visual impairments' (red circle). The NPTEL logo is in the top right corner. A small video inset in the bottom right shows a woman speaking.

The other thing was we had to once we made this slide may explain to them that, this is for children with sensory processing issues they basically on the spectrum autism child with

autism, children who cannot move freely so either they have crutches or they have or they are on wheelchair or children who are visually challenged.

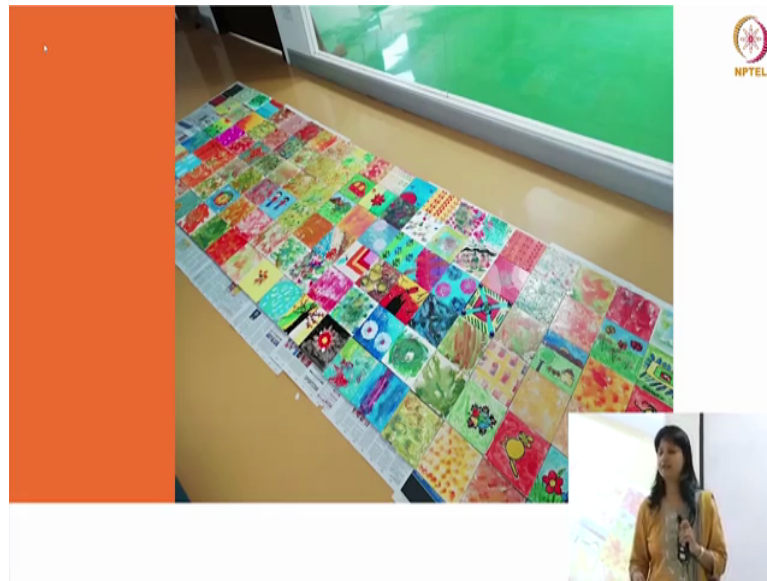
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And for each of these children there are small playthings that to you and me you just look like it is nothing specific but for a child to be able to balance on a curb itself is challenging, so there are specific things that we have done and how we did it is we actually involve the teachers and the parents of the children who come to the State Resource Centre for treatment. So we actually at the start of the project had a workshop with them and that has been very helpful because it is one it has helped the design secondly it has made it almost difficult for anyone to come up and say that there is something wrong with it because at every step of the way we call the people from the Disability Rights Alliance let us say come look at this, tell us if we have made anything wrong, tell us if there is something that we can do.

Not always it is possible to take the suggestions but the sense that they are part of the process or something that we learnt from our past project and then we felt it is really important that these are the people who are the activists this is the group that goes to places, audits and says this is all what is wrong with it. So it makes sense to carry them along through the process.

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And of course we were lucky that there is a the government selected a good contractor and he was also committed to working on this project and more than anything else in this project we became the owners. So we raised funds for this project for all the equipment that could not be done through the tendering process. Now this is above and beyond the scope of a normal consultant there is no consultant who would do this, we fund raised and made presentations to corporates to private citizens to say look we are doing a very interesting project can you, you know help us with (( ))(29:21) we bought a singing stone, we bought musical chimes, we have bought some special signage which through the tender process is not possible to procure.

Now this makes it difficult to replicate it is not easy for someone to create ten other parks like this because in each park then you need a champion to drive it and or maybe I am wrong and maybe we can make a book about this and then people will figure out how to make more of these. So you can actually see that a lot of things that we have done and this is going to open next month, so you can actually go have a look and we will see what the feedback is after it is open.

The challenge I imagine for this park is that while in implementation we have been able to surmount the difficulties, the challenge is going to come in maintenance because where do we have enough of infrastructure like this that it will just get overwhelmed by the number of people who come and peoples attitude towards public space and attitude towards public property that we are not sure if it is going to withstand that kind of usage and perhaps next year is batch we will hear the story of what happened to this park often gets inaugurated but we have managed to even find a company to take care of the maintenance.

And this is where you see the role of a person who owns the project and you are able to kind of carry it from end to end sort of pre concept to post a maintenance, so that is where we are hopefully this will work but again like I said in maintenance we will have to see what challenges we face then. So these are just some features of the park it is you know even some small something like a table is designed such that a wheelchair can access, swing is modified merry go round is modified, there is inclusive sandpit where you can see that child to in a wheelchair can come and then play with some child who is sitting on that platform.

So these are a lot of small design details and we have got an artist who is going to be doing a interactive wall where we are going to have wheels and pipes and tubes that you know you can touch and feel, so that is the that is the idea, tactile marking things like that, there is a herb garden, so there is a lot of excitement about the opening and we will see if this works out nicely.

One important thing I wanted to tell is, so one of the things that so there is a big wall that is going to come up this is in progress I mean today the artist is there he was working on this to finish it one of the things we did is we bought these tiles and we cut them into smaller pieces and send them to many different schools which have which work with children with disabilities, so each of those children have painted on that tile we have collected all those tiles back and we are going to do this big wall, so you can see this is in my office all the tiles are there and it is super exciting to see this is all going to go into one big mural.

So what it does is then you what we want to do is we want people who come there we want the residents of that area to feel that look at the time and the effort, the energy that has gone into creating this and let us see what we can do to keep it from getting spoiled and to build that sense of ownership is not easy and unless that sense of (owner) ownership is there I do not think we can actually transform our cities, it is not possible for government officials and it is not possible to police these things, we are ten million people how many cops, how many government officials is going to take to monitor? It has to be definitely led by citizens.

So this is our park project and the last project I will talk to you about before we go to discussion is a project that is going to start what am i doing here?

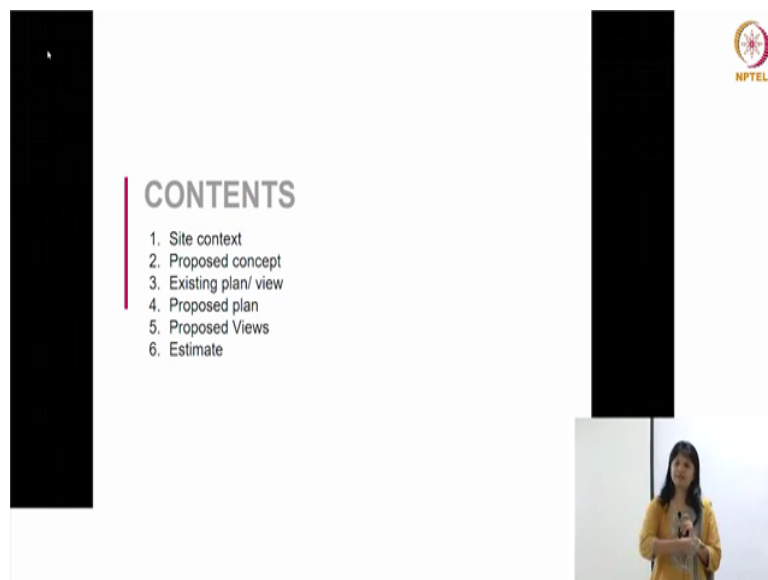


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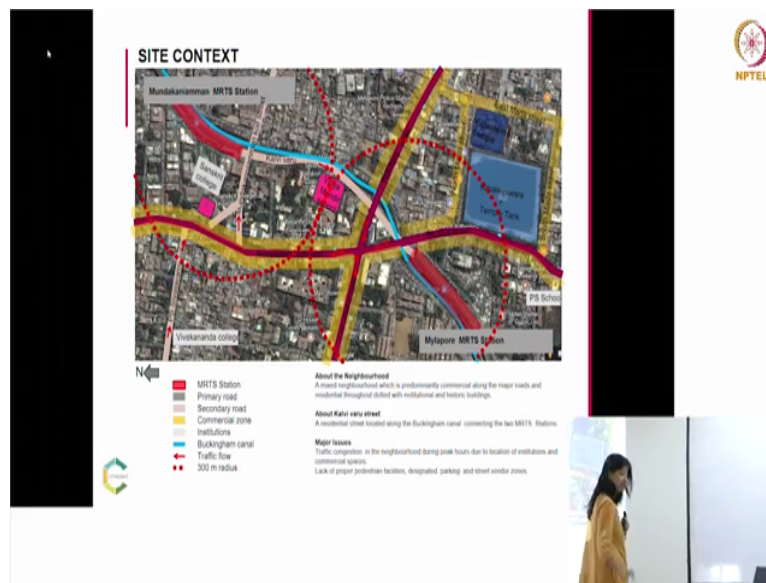
This is something that we have been thinking about Ashwin you have not seen this project, we this is right behind Vidya Mandir School, it is along the Buckingham canal and for the last four years I have been trying to see if we can do something for this street, it is a very small street it is not on the main road, it is not on the bus route it is just a little street that goes along Buckingham canal and it is a disaster.

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I mean if you actually see the place it is symptomatic of perhaps every all along Buckingham canal this is what it looks like.

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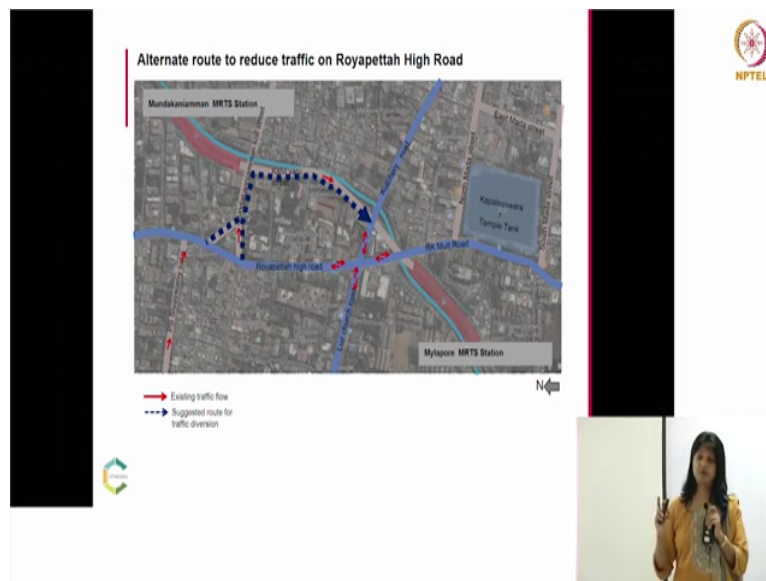


And in the initial years we try to sell it as a footpath project, as an urban environment project as a way of tackling the mosquitoes menace like a health hazard somehow nothing worked most recently that is as recently as few weeks ago we made this presentation to a few people this included the MLA, the Southern Railway, PWD, Chennai Corporation and a couple of donors we are thinking that they are going to be donors in the future potential donors and we have identified a person who can be the champion and anchor this project.

So at the start of the project itself we have tried to bring who all we think may be involved in this for a discussion under one roof. Now one way of handling this has been to sell it as a mobility project what the street does is it connects to MRTS stations Tirumala and Mundagakanniamman Koil street and there is a clear mandate to make that is part of Chennai corporations policy as also at a nationwide level we are looking at how to increase accessibility to public transport.

And you know everyone knows that we cannot build the city is infrastructure on private modes of transport that is just not going to sustainable in India. So we try to see sell it as that idea that how can we increase the access to public transportation by cleaning up the street and making it accessible.

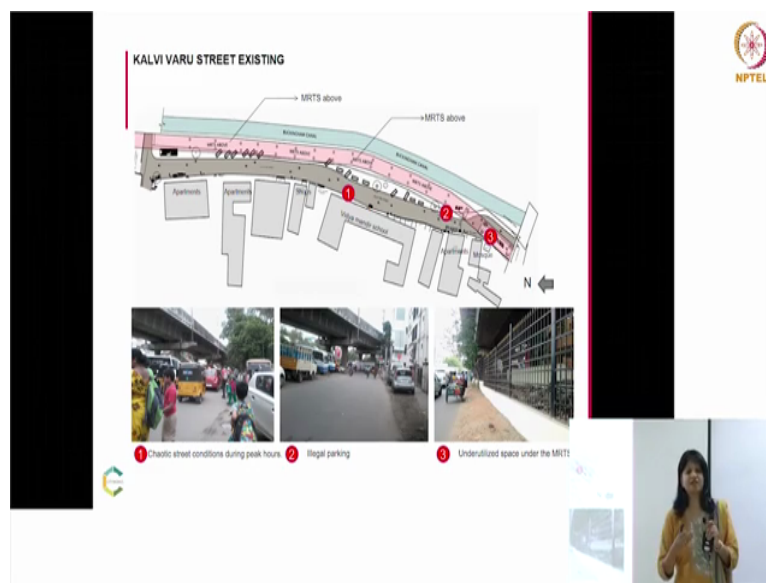
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So this street Kalvi varu street, so this is Kapaleeswarar temple I talked to you about Luz Church Road which is here and what this street this is Royapettah high road, so if you go this way it goes to RK Mutt I do not know how familiar you are with this area, I am pretty sure none of you would have ever gone to this street because it is not a main road at all, it is somewhere along the Buckingham canal kind of can get a glimpse of it as you are going on Kutchery road if for any reason any of you have had to go there.

But where it has some possible advantages that there is a lot of traffic on this RK Mutt road and Royapettah high road this is a important link interestingly this is an alignment of a future metro line, the future Metro is going to come through this I do not know when but this is recently I came to know that the Metro is going to run through this. The traffic on this road is enormous, so we are saying that by those who want to come here and turn left to Kutchery road can actually do this and go on Kutchery road so that it minimizes the impact of movement on that road, so there is a advantage from the traffic point of view.

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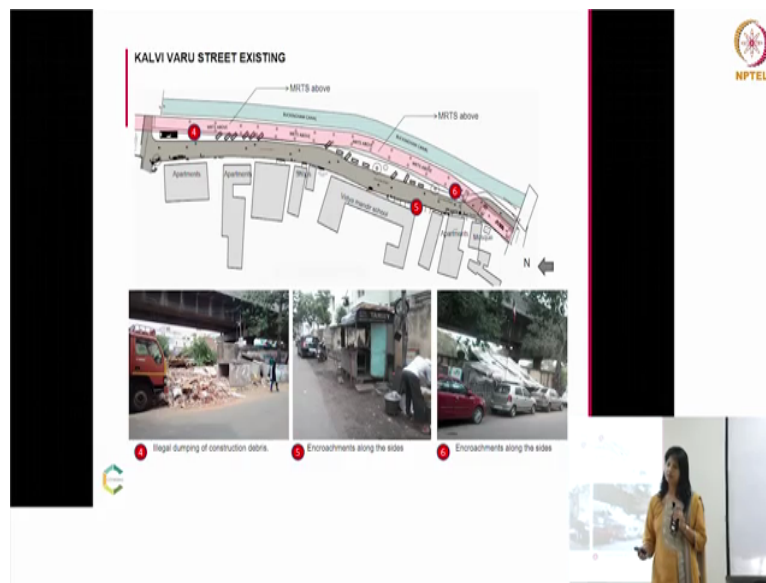


Now one of the things that we have learnt is to sell the project through multiple lenses because different things appeal to different peoples, so when you are in public domain not every advantage is going to appeal to you, so you can sell it from the traffic angle, you can sell it from the health angle, you can sell it from look it is going to be easier for you to drop your kids off at school because you are going to have a you know safe place for them to get on and a footpath for them to walk, there is a mosque in the on that street where it is very crowded on Fridays, so there is going to be designated parking space for them.

So how you actually position something and how you build a narrative around something that seems to appeal to a wide set of people is something that we are realizing is very important and unless you carry along all your as many of course there will still be some four people who will come and say this is a disaster and I am going to talk about where the challenges with regard to that are.

It helps to start the project with this big list of advantages four different types of stakeholders.

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And the big problems by not designing public space and this is a perfect example of that is in the middle of the night people come and dump construction debris over there and in infrastructure projects if this is what your class is looking at during the process of construction there is so much of concrete and jali and all kinds of waste material that gets generated by demolition, we do not have an enforcing mechanism that people are following.

So quietly they will come in the middle of the night and look to see which part of the city is underutilized when no one is looking with not enough lights and just dump the stuff over there and that is what is happening here, so you can see there is a illegal dumping of construction debris, there is rampant encroachment there are a couple of guys who are running full-fledged mechanic shops over there on the street.

So it is basically like free real estate, so if someone were to ask why are our public spaces the way they are you would actually see there is a huge thriving economy there it is like free land, so this project is going to face a lot of challenges going forward and we will have to figure out how to handle it but the crux of the matter is a lot of smaller streets in our country are entirely devoted to a lot of economy and we are not able to monetize that and we are not able to generate enough funds to actually run our projects or to create you know proper infrastructure for anything else, so I mean that is a bigger issue anyway.

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So what we are doing is we have made our drawing, so we have done a measure drawing we have created a plan that has a walkway, it has a (dr) there is a space for driving, the space for parking.

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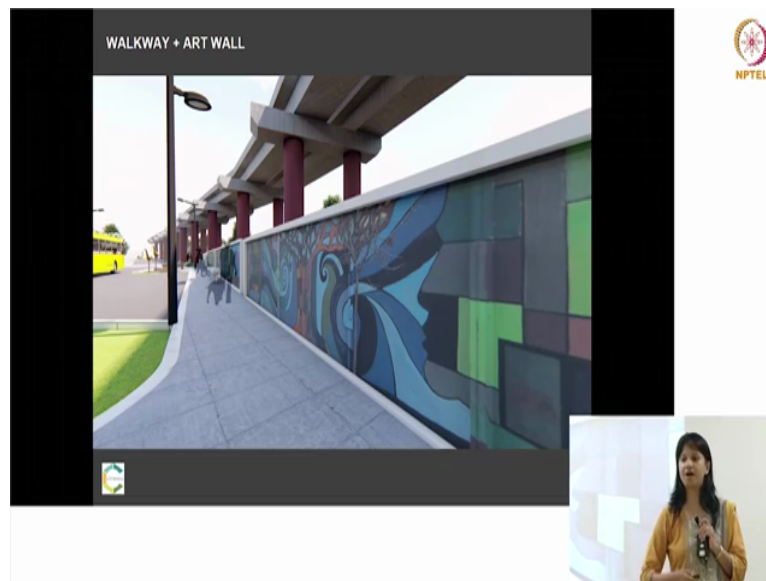


There is some amenities that are for the people on the other side of the Buckingham canal which are squatters where they are actually kind of built on the side of the canal itself, so there is lots of illegal settlements there and here the challenge we face is that difference of the source different social classes when they come together in one space you will talk to one they want something else and then you talk to the legal residents in the apartment buildings they are like we said we will build a public toilet here as well it will be helpful they said no do not

build a toilet who is going to maintain it, how is it going to run then we said we will do an outdoor gym at least people can from there can come and use it they said no we do not want those people and all coming to this side I mean this is public space.

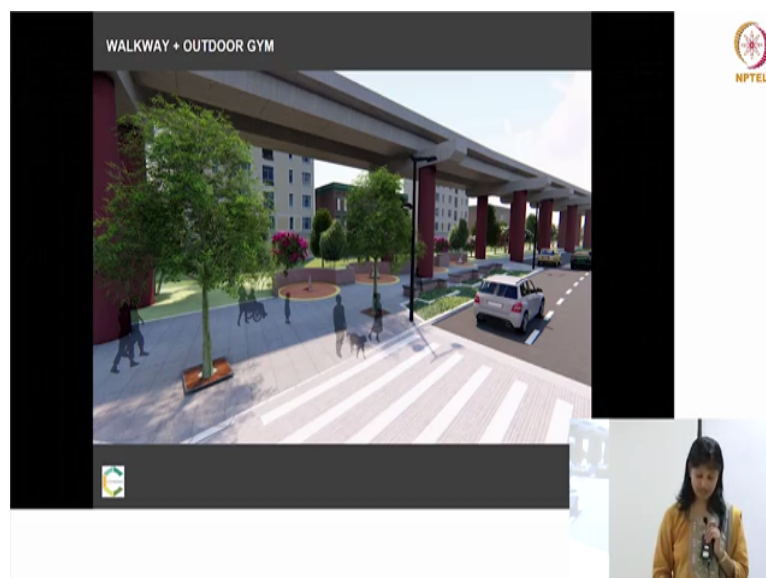
So just in order to come up with something that many people agree on it is very difficult it is very challenge.

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So again we have some common elements that we are now putting into the design itself where we feel that these are opportunities where people can come out and participate and be part of the process.

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So there is a walkway we are still going ahead with the outdoor gym, there is some resistance from the middle class families to create any facilities that brings people from the lower class families from the other side of the canal to this side but as of now at the design it remains.

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And here is the big challenge and of course we for those of you who know this area you will it is a very badly designed road where the MRTS alignment is ridiculous it just goes on the canal and then suddenly cuts across and goes and creates a blind spot, there is a big wall here that actually if someone is driving here they cannot see that side, so we are suggesting demolishing this wall and doing some landscaping I mean I do not want to get into the specifics of the design but just from a safety point of view there is a lot of advantages there.

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Where we see challenges in this project? Is that in that small stretch this whole stretch is only 350 metres, in that small stretch the PWD owns the canal has Jurisdiction over the canal, the Southern Railway has jurisdiction over the MRTs line and therefore the pylons and the land that comes below this because they have Jurisdiction over the safety of the pillars and the Chennai Corporation has Jurisdiction of the rest of space.

So literally in that little strip that I showed you there is already three major government departments that come into play and this is the reason why for the last four years when I have been trying to do something around this it is actually not worked at all till we figured out that we need to bring all of these people under one roof and then have a person to actually follow up with each of these departments because they will not talk to each other, there is no mechanism by which we can force one to talk to the other and these are all just the institutional challenges that we face.

I also talked briefly already about the different social classes that have access that this is the front of back for people and there is a difference of opinion on if we clean up the place what it should be? The tragedy is that right now it is used for dumping, it is used for illegal activities, it is used as a mechanic shop and it is so pathetic right now but still when you want to make a proposal of what it could be the view of what it should be is very different depending on who you talk to, so that is one challenge in terms of and as starts to take shape we will find that people will come up and oppose for various reasons because of this.

The third is this is such a secondary street it is really hardly in the it is not going to impact the rest of Chennai, so who should pay for it and why? So when you have the financial constraints of a state or a city the way it is why should any money be spent on some secondary street like this and like this they may be you know hundred thousand such places and lastly the constraint is on who owns it? Who drives it? And how does it get put in place?

So for the financial constraint we have a strategy I mean for each of these we have strategies that is all our learning is hopefully we should be able to overcome them we are selling this as a footpath project of Chennai corporation and say that look you build this footpath it gives access to this MRTS and nothing else, so you just do a footpath, we will raise funds for all the other elements, you do the road, you do the footpath that is enough.

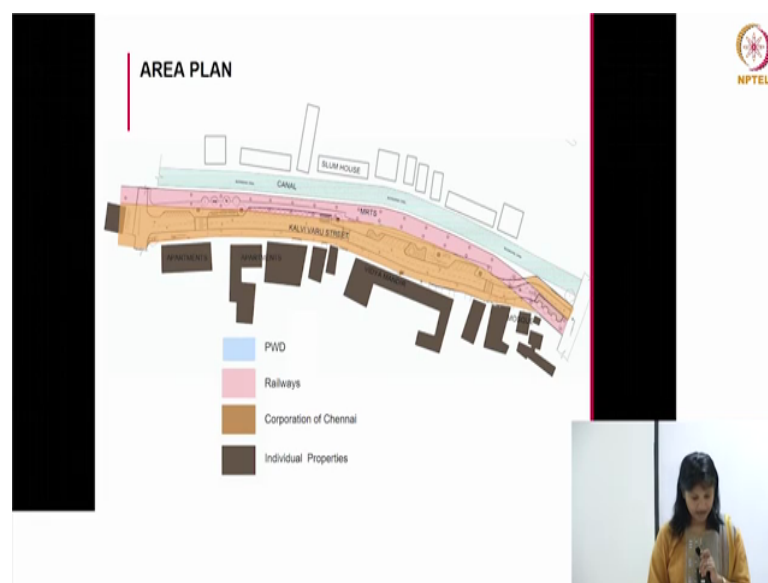
Now we would probably be able to raise funds for the whole project as of now because that is the kind of goodwill that is generated around this but we do not want to do that because if

you start to raise funds to build a road you will actually really annoyed those people who are road contractors, who are the vendors, who actually work on these projects, so we are careful not to mess with the system so much that it becomes a change right.

So there is still the road in the footpath on the right side is going to be sold as a footpath project the part on the left that comes under the MRTS along the canal will become a beautification project for which we will fundraise and figure out some donors who will be able to give all the extras and in terms of ownership thanks to technology now we have a WhatsApp group and we are doing a whole study on how WhatsApp is impacting a lot of the work that we are doing in and around this area it is really possible only because of WhatsApp really and so we have a WhatsApp group it has the MLA right now, it has this guy who is a coordinator for this project we are going to push this project through the Mylapore welfare Mylapore residents welfare association.

So it is going to appear as if this is driven by the resident association and there is a lot of attraction that they have around health and how you know mosquito breeding, illegal dumping is going to get stopped, so they are going to push for that angle. So we are trying to create a structure that will make it possible for it to be talked of and sort of overcome that.

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And I have already talked about this the multiple institutional ownerships.

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And this is some pictures to just show you what this area looks like there is actually a guy who lives here they managed to evict a whole bunch but then one or two houses they were not able to evict, this is the canal on the other side this is what it looks like, there is continuous dumping just look at this, this is what it looks like right now. So we are looking at the this is at the Kalvi varu side this Vidya Mandir schools to our left, this is Buckingham canal and these are the illegal squatter settlements on the other side.

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This is kids coming out of the school at 3 o'clock in the evening, it is absolute an utter chaos.

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There are vendors, there are just sitting over there this is a picture of that turning that I was talking about I showed in the drawing that there is a turning that is very unsafe, the street leads up to Kutchery road and initially there was a big wall over there we managed to get railways to actually break the wall and then they got very worried when the wall was broken and they said look people are going to damage our pylons, so they went ahead and built this grill which is better from a safety point of view but still it is not as per our design, so we have to now figure out how to convince them to even remove this grill which i think is possible we are going to have a sculpture garden below this.

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So at some point this is going to work, this is a meeting that we had last week and this is the Mylapore MLA with all the different departments that I was talking about they were there. So this is these are the three stories I wanted to share and perhaps if you want to have a structured or non-structured discussion I do not know how you want takes it. I am happy to take any questions but if you want to have a discussion around the Sun.

Professor Ashwin:

Yeah, we can take a few questions then I might have questions to other class.

Kavitha Selvaraj:

Yeah, one thing is that there are some people who work in public space in Chennai, who by association have some credibility. So I will I am luckily one of those people, so that is an unfair or fair advantage I do not know but if we go to the government and say look we think this is a good idea they will listen to it, at least they will allow us to enter the office and make a presentation for this whether it works or not we do not know.

Second is if it is not very complicated and it does not involve evicting so and so and you know it is not filled with that many challenges that they know they can see a project and they can know that this is ever going to happen or not going to happen they know that already right some areas are very complicated, so they will look at that definitely. The third is usually these projects there are two parts one when you say government there are two parts of the government right there is a bureaucracy and there is the political side.

So in some projects we have had the support of both still projects have failed which is like the Luz Church Road projects both the mayor and the Commissioner were they signed off and they were like this is great still the project has failed, so when you say it is just the giving the government support is not enough at least that is what I have learnt and sometimes one supports in the other does not support also it works or it may not, so in fact that is what is challenging.

So if they have money it is not too complicated and it is backed by some credible sources there is no reason for them to not consider it, it goes through the system whether there is a full-fledged system that is in place of course lot of people approach them with lot of projects, lot of possibilities and a lot of people do not also because how much time and effort it takes you have to come up with the full design before you even go to them, so (lo) it is not like

there are enough there are that many people who will take the time and effort to do that as well right.

Many projects that you are seeing, so for example if you look at the Marina Beach beautification project that is all come from the government side itself as far as I know I have lived here now for 15 years more than that 16, 17 years and they would have beautified the beach like four times, you know they have spent money again and again in those same places, it is a lack of ideas they actually would welcome people coming and giving them suggestions and ideas they will listen to it whether it moves forward or not depends on how you move it through the system, yeah.

Student is questioning:

(( ))(52:14) involvement of the NGO in such a project will be have positive effect as far as (( )) (52:19) in Bangalore there is a (( ))(52:21) urban space office, so they design roads specifically like for a different areas required different design so which so (( ))(52:32)?

Yeah, absolutely I mean so like Janaagraha there is there are parallel organizations in fact ITDP which is doing a lot of very similar work to Janaagraha in Chennai have managed to create a sort of a template or a document that has been adopted by corporation of Chennai as the street design guidelines, so all that exists in theory in annual and some projects have been implemented, a lot of what you are seeing right now is implemented through that.

What they are doing only now which I think Bangalore is little ahead of Chennai is that the complete services integration with the street design that is now happening in T Nagar as part of the Smart City project there is in Bangalore they successfully managed to do a few more streets like that like Church street and MG Road and all that has already been done like that Tendersure roads, the Tender Sure project, yeah.

So that way they are a little ahead in terms and I think a very strong and well-connected NGO like that has played a role but their big corporates have given a strong push and the government side also there has been good support to it, so elect things are fallen in place here in Chennai there have been some challenges but that is exactly what we also try to do but there have been many challenges, do you had a question?

Student is questioning:

So can you tell the village of corporation we might having the like having a footpath at the center of the road, you are then Jaipur we have this like the divider which is have pretty been but it is but it has been beautified with greenway and like all that and all about (54:14) but not the footpath?

Yeah, so actually this road is 80 feet wide, so in 80 feet 20, 20 feet on both sides for traffic is I mean for more than enough and we had wide footpaths on both sides also, so it is not like the footpath and the two corners are not existing they are also existing, so there are there are buildings, there is a walkway on both sides of the road which is also wide beyond this there is space available.

So in fact when we made the original presentation we had four schemes in one there was a service road concept, in one it was very wide on one side and the two way road was in the other side, so like that there were four schemes that were presented of which this one that you are seeing with the wider median in the center was selected and that went through a process. So we presented four schemes in which the mayor, the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, ITDP at that time Chennai city connect all of us were there in the room where we selected ok, let us go ahead with this scheme.

The thought process at that time was that the streets on both sides are for everyday accesses, for regularly moving if someone wanted to stop and sort of read little bit about what buildings on that side what building is on this side you could actually take that center path it is not as if it is only in the footpath and only in the center not on both sides, it was not like that it is there on both sides also in addition it was there in the center as a walkway but your question is valid and this was what a lot of people asked why are you putting this in the middle at one point I said I will give that whole thing up and we will plant only trees in the middle as we willing to do that as well they said no you are making the road too small, we need that wider road.