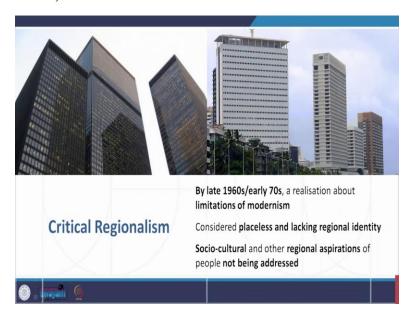
Modern Indian Architecture Professor P.S. Chani Department of Architecture and Planning Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee Lecture 26 Introduction to Critical Regionalism – Part 1

Hello students. We will continue our study of Modern Indian Architecture. And today we will start, which is probably one of the most important segments in the study of Modern Indian Architecture. And that is an introduction to what is called as Critical Regionalism?

I have mentioned it to you earlier in my previous lectures. Where I have said, we can also call it as Regional Modernism, that is modernism that is seen with the, from the eyes of Regional Architecture, or it is a fusion of regional aspects with modernism. And the term Critical Regionalism actually refers to that I believe the term abstract regionalism has also been used for it.

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By the late 1960s and early 70s, there was a realization that there are limitations with regard to modernism. Because modernism as it spread all over the globe, it tended to have a placeless and rootless identity, it did not have a regional context, so whether you are building in South America, or in Europe or Japan or in America, the regional context of the architecture was not there.

There is no doubt about it that modernism brought about revolution, your understanding of architecture, particularly in the industrial society, buildings that were needed this. Now, were buildings there are to be very functional there are to be built very quickly, there had to have a new aesthetic which was appropriate for an industrial society of machines and automobiles. So, there is no doubt that modernism was and continues to remain a vital foundation on which modern architecture has been built. But this gradually became a very apparent by the 60s and 70s, that this lacked regional identity.

Socio-cultural and other regional aspirations of people could not be addressed through the window of modernism. So, if you look at this slide again, this is some of the set of buildings done by Mies van der Rohe. And then these are tall buildings that came up on Marine Drive on Nariman Point in Mumbai, and they also represent the same modernist the context only thing is that there has been a climatic modification done in these buildings.

So, instead of being in sleek glass and steel, they have smaller fenestrations and the facade the curtain wall is having these small finishes the building is in RCC and glass, but it represents the same form based functional based model of modernism.

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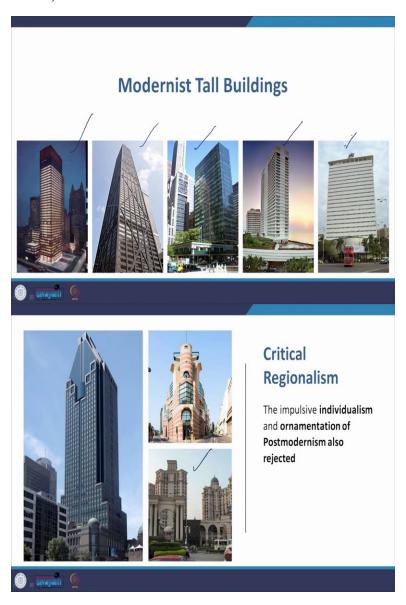


The International Style and Modernism spread throughout the world. So, if you have unite d'habitation, we have seen similar examples of brutalism, which was one of the subsets of modernism we find that in IIT Delhi, we find that in the work of Habib Rahman, in WHO

building we find it in the Bauhaus. In the Bauhaus context being brought into India, this is again, an international example of modernism.

So, it was all across the world. And as you look at these buildings, it is very difficult sometimes to look at the building and place it in a particular regional context. At best, at best, you can place the building in a context if you are able to see that there is a climatic response to that. So, but even then it becomes extremely difficult.

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So, these are some examples of Modernist Tall Buildings. This is the Seagram Building, the John Hancock Center, the Dliver House and this is the Trident Hotel and the Air India building in

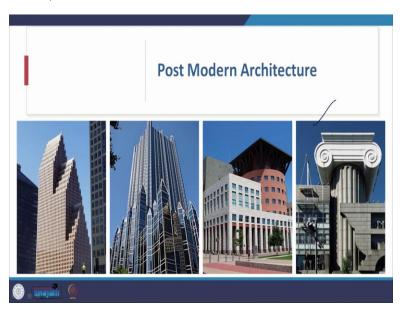
Mumbai, again, this is a very similar architectural language. On the other hand, the parallel movement that arose during that time was Postmodernism.

This perfuse ornamentation and this kind of playfulness that came in buildings, and an eclectic mix of styles that came back again, beginning with the foundational writings of Robert venturi and his design of the vana venturi house for his mother, that he wrote about that and Postmodernism brought out the kind of results are there in this slide.

This, for example is the hiranandani apartments by Hafeez contractor in Mumbai, it does not have a regional context, if you look at the elements that are there in this building, this is derived from Classical European Elements, it is not Indian identity.

So, Critical Regionalism was an anti reaction to the placelessness and the rootlessness of modernism. Whereas it was also against the impulsive or other an anti reaction against the impulsive ornamentation and individualism that was seen in Postmodernism. So, there is a reason why postmodernism in the most obtuse form that it came up during the time.

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Like for example, here in this example, these examples have died out. There is no doubt that post modernism did bring in a certain new architectural vocabulary in the 70s and 80s and has continued in a certain manner. But these extreme examples of interpretation of classical elements et cetera, is no more there. But the same can also be said for, what is called is Late Modernism?

Something called the high tech style you can read about it on internet or any books, particularly the works of Richard Rogers, Norman Foster, Renzo Piano, Michael Hopkins, and the works that they did in the initial years, centre Pompidou is an example.

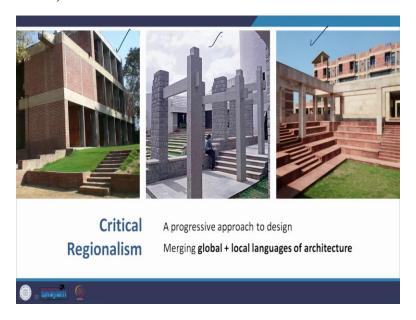
Then Lloyds of London is an example they were extreme examples of that kind of high tech identity. And those also do not exist anymore. In fact, Rogers worked on these two projects, that is the Centre Pompidou along with Piano and Richard Rogers partnership was responsible for the Lloyds of London.

But Richard Rogers himself never returned back to that kind of architectural vocabulary of displaying all the services on the outside the air conditioning pipes, the ventilation ducts, the electrical lines, et cetera. He never came back to that vocabulary. Of course, the derivations that he came up with through that study.

And the others who were of the same domain of high tech modernism, they did continue it forward and they are responsible, some of the most iconic buildings today. Shard, for example, is one of them, other buildings that, the New York Times Building in New York et cetera. There are many other projects that are very, very wonderfully done.

Similarly, postmodernism is also mellowed, and it is appearing in a certain context today. So, sorry for digressing, but I just wanted to give you this background so you can understand that there is this global movement also that happened parallely.

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So, regional modernism or critical regionalism is a progressive approach to design in the sense that it merges global and local language of architecture.

Therefore, wherever it comes up, or wherever it came up, people were more readily able to identify themselves to this architecture, while at the same time enjoying the functionalism enjoying the advantages that modernism brought in. So, these are some examples that you see here. This is a work of Raj Rewal, BV Doshi, and I believe this is by Shirish Berry.

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So, it is an architecture that is rooted in modernism, no doubt, but it is also tried the geographical and cultural context. So, we have the works of Tadao Ando in Japan, Alvar Aalto in Finland, we do not have a picture of Luis Barragan in Mexico. So, these architects have also responded to this critical regional response of merging modernism with the regional context.

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This term specifically was coined by Kenneth Frampton in 1983. And it seeks to balance local aspects with the progressive lessons of modernism. So, let us just look at this example and try to see how Raj Rewal in this project for British counsellor housing. How does he do that? If you see here, this is the work of GT Rietveld called the Schroder house in the 1930s.

And this is the plan of the Schroder house. Here is a Rajasthani Haveli and Raj Rewal has a very strong subtext of North Indian architecture, a traditional architecture in his buildings, and we will see more about and it about that in subsequent presentations. So, here is the plan of the Haveli. Now what he is done, if you look at the plan, it is a modern plan.

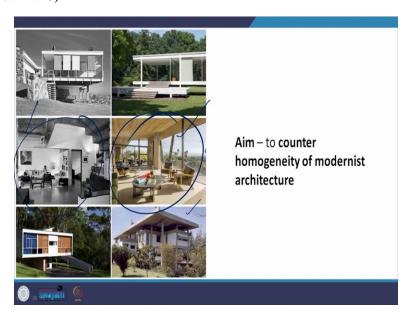
So, when you enter the building on the ground floor in the courtyard side here is the front this is the living room area, and you have the kitchen and you have the entrance lobby, and you climb up the staircase and then you have the three bedrooms and the toilets on the top but that is not all there is. So, the plan responds to a modern plan, like that of the Schroder house.

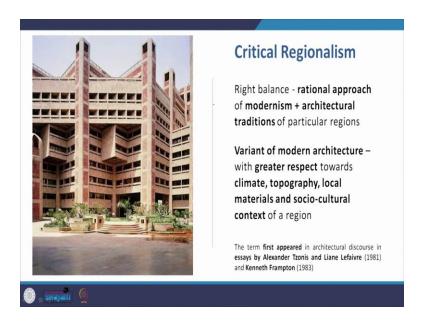
Of course, Schroder house is much more flexible, because the walls were movable partnerships that could all be opened up, and it become one large space, but be as it may, the same kind, a similar kind of planning with fixed walls is what we see in this kind of in this plan. So, it is a modernist plan. But when you talk of the terraces that he created like this terrace that you see here, if you can try to match it with the picture is the terrace that you see. See, here. This is the terrace that you see here.

This small terrace that you see here is somewhere here. And this Aangan that you see below is here. So, he is trying to create these outdoor indoor spaces and outdoor spaces because our climate is able to respond well to that. This is something derived from our traditional slash vernacular architecture.

And the Chhatri also appears in his work as an element. This is the modern derivation of the Chhatri in Rewals work. And we will see that in some other of his works also. So, this is a modern derivation of the Chhatri. So, what we find here is that Raj Rewal, who is one of the strongest promote proponents of critical regionalism in the world. I am not saying India, globally is recognized as one of the strongest proponents of critical regionalism, he brings that in his works repeatedly. So, the aim is to counter the homogeneity of modernist architecture. Look at these examples.

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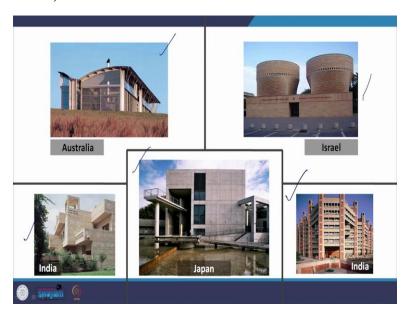




It is so difficult for you to place a particular house that you see here, in a particular region, the closest that I can come to is this work, because you have seen it already, the Harry Valabhdas house by AP Kanvinde and because it is much more closed up, it is not having that sheet glass that you find in the other spaces.

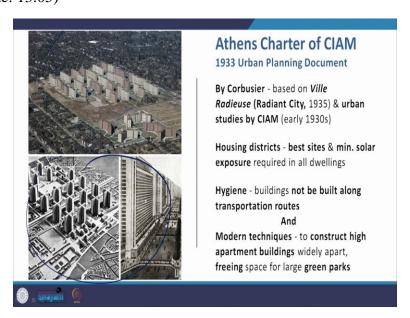
But if you look at the interior here, and you look at the interior here, the only it is both of free flowing spaces, this is India, this is somewhere in the West. So, the Right Balance between this rational approach of modernism, architecture traditions of a region, the variants of modern architecture, with greater respect towards the climate of a region, the topography of the region, its local materials, and its socio cultural context. All these play a role in moving in creating critical regionalism.

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These are some of the examples. This I believe is the work of Glenn MurKutt in Australia, who is also working with this context. Raj Rewal in India, Tadao Ando, Raj Rewal again, and this is a building in Israel.

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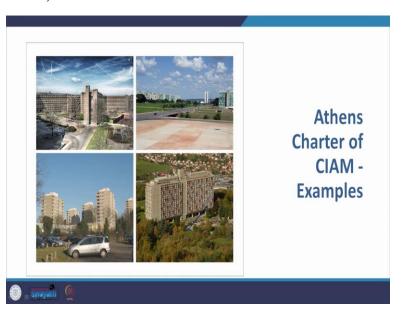


Now in 1933, Corbusier came up with the idea of , it was an urban planning document, the Athens Charter of the Council International Architecture Modern. Corbusier came up within this document based on the radiant city design in 1935 that he had come up with, and the urban studies that had been done by CIAM in, the early 1930s.

Housing districts were to be designed in a manner they were the best sites and there was minimum solar exposure that was required in all the dwellings. For hygiene the buildings were not to be built along transportation routes. And with regard to modern techniques, we had to construct them as high apartment buildings widely apart, freeing space for large green parks. In fact, there is a story that Corbusier when he visited New York.

He even suggested a similar kind of mechanism. When already new colony develops the skyscrapers already there, he was proposing vast green spaces with huge towers. And so there was maximum green space available like that, and they were planning of certain projects done like that, like this one that you see here, you see that these are tall blocks that are kept widely spaced apart green spaces concept which is similar to the radiant city of the Ville Radieuse concept of Le-Corbusier.

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But so these are some of the other examples, even his own project, unite d'habitation though a singular block continues to have the same idea of green spaces around it.

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But there was a criticism of this charter number 1. The, Emphasis on tall high density housing in green spaces is a very narrow view with regard to housing. Secondly, it effectively kills research in other areas of urban housing. So, the solution by itself is very simplistic, and is very restrictive to a certain solutions in a certain situation.

Many, many more solutions are needed. It is a very complex problem. Certain building patterns are universally appropriate. There is no doubt about that, at a generic level, but substantial adaptation is required at the local level with keeping in mind the local conditions of that place. There is also been an emergence of environmental behavior studies in architectural education with challenges, modernism's narrow definition of function.

So, today we have moved beyond that. So, therefore, there was a reason why Corbusier's idea of the radiant city never became a success that he intended it to be. Similarly, it could also be said that FL wrights idea of the broad acre city, where instead of tall buildings, he proposed these individual houses or individual dwellings placed in vast green spaces, because of the automobile they could easily be connected, and they would be commercial spaces, et cetera. Even that did not materialize as a viable city planning mechanism.

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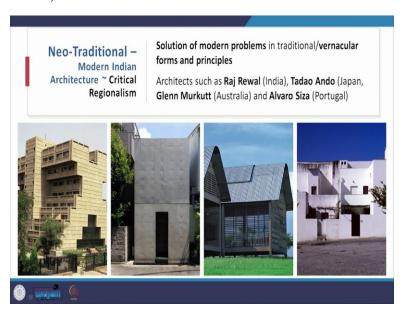


Now, let us now come to the beginning of an understanding of critical regionalism, I would like to take you to the background of, what is called as neo traditional architecture? Now the word neo basically means 'new'. It is a new way of looking at traditional architecture, a new approach to traditional architecture.

And in a sense, this really defined Modern Indian Architecture. Architects like Charles Correa, B.V. Doshi, Ashish Ganju, Ranjit Sabhiki, Revati Kamath, Raj Rewal, Minakshi Jain, all of them have been associated with it. So, it is a new form of traditional Indian architecture since 1970s. Many architects have looked at how patterns of traditional houses fit into the Indian way of life and architectural principles regarding patterns of light, shade, interior spaces, exterior masses, all of that has to respond to an Indian context.

Many strong modernists also began to lay emphasis on traditional architecture. And though it was not a unified effort, like the CIAM, but many of these architects sought inspiration from the vernacular traditions of India. Similarly, there was an Indian attempt rather, it was a universal return because we can count in Finland and Japan and Mexico and many other countries to have a unique architectural identity of that region or of that nation.

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So, modern Indian architecture, critical regionalism is a solution of modern problems using vernacular forms or traditional forms and principles. Architects like Raj Rewal in India, Tadao Ando in Japan, Glenn Murkutt in Australia and Alvaro Siza in Portugal, Rewal, Tadao Ando, Glenn Murkutt, Alvaro Siza.

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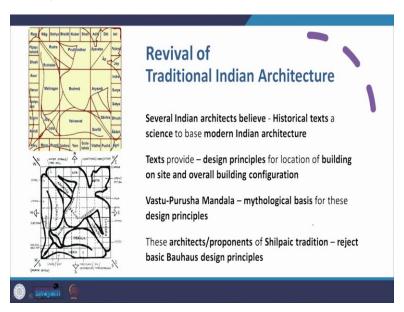


Now, the new traditional itself can be split into 5 parts please do not get confused. I will keep on explaining it 3, 4 times so that you can get a clearer understanding of this division. First is a direct Revival of Traditional Indian Architecture.

Second is what will be the focus of our study. It is a combination of Modern and Traditional Architecture and its Critical Regionalism. The third is a Vernacular Revival. The fourth is what came to be known as John Line coins that as modern Indian vernacular. And the fifth is Community Architecture.

Now, there will be overlaps a project that I will be bringing about say for example, in one of the above categories will also be connected for example, with the fifth one that is a community architecture.

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The Revival of Traditional Indian Architecture. Several Indian architects believed during that time, and continue to believe because today Vastu Shastra is an important subject being taught in many architectural colleges, that historical texts are science to base our modern Indian architecture, texts that provide design principles for the location of citing the building on the site, and the overall building configuration.

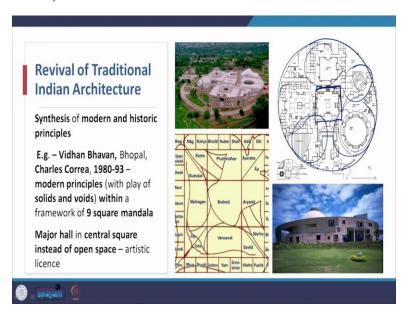
The Vastu-Purusha Mandala is a mythological basis of these design principles. And these architects and proponents of Shilpaic traditions reject the basic Bauhaus design principles of functionalism. So, it is not that they are rejecting modernism per se in totality, it is just that they are rejecting the direct derivations of Bauhaus. We have seen that in some of the works earlier. (Refer Slide Time: 20:23)



So, in this revival, there is a new look at India's historical roots, the Shastras and the Vastu-Purusha Mandala, for example, the K.T. Raghunath house, designed in Kerala by K.T. Ravindran. It has a central courtyard. I am so sorry that the plan itself is very small. So, this is a central courtyard here. And it is around a modern organic plan. It is not a functional cuboidal geometry.

And the courtyard itself is like the Shunya Bindu that is the intangible void which is also there in the Vastu Purusha Mandala which represents Brahma. So, that is where the Shunya Bindu is represented here in this dwelling. The orientation of this house is governed by local rituals, that is astronomy and that construction was connected with local traditions.

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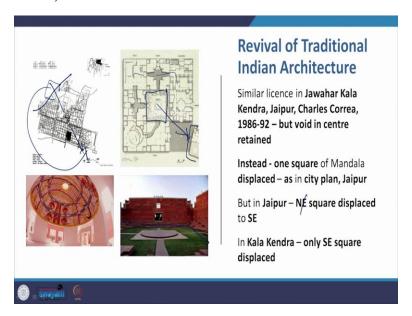
Similarly, the idea of this kind of derivation we see in the works of Charles Correa, now Charles Correa has not been, he is from totally imbibing into traditional model, because he has taken lessons from different strands. So, here in this case, he synthesizes modern and historic principles.

For example, in Vidhan Bhavan, which is a massive project vis-a-vie the K.T. Raghunath house. So, in Bhopal in the 1980 to 93 he uses modern principles with the play of solids and voids. So, what it does is? That is very interesting he does, he creates a number of spaces, number of spaces which are all the functional spaces of the Vidhan Bhavan of Bhopal.

But instead of keeping them like that scattered, put together solids and voids, he provides them a circular ring around it and kind of connects them all together as one. So, we can call it that this is in a sense the ordering principle of the Vidhan Bhavan. There is no doubt about it. When you look at the Vidhan Bhavan as a total form. It reminds you of the Sanchi Stupa. Even the dome at the top is representative of the Sanchi Stupa.

But within this framework is the 9 square mandala. The only difference is that he takes artistic or architectural license, that instead of keeping the Shunya Bindu, or the void in the middle of this Mandela, he actually creates the central hall, here and the major hall right in the middle of the Vidhan Bhavan.

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On the other hand, though, he does take a similar license in the Jawahar Kala Kendra, in Jaipur 1986-92. But there is a void that has been retained in the center, where we have this space that you see here in this photograph. So, this void is there as for the Vastu-Purusha Mandala, and instead of one square of Mandala displaced, as in the city plan of Jaipur.

Now, what Charles Correa is doing is, not only is he responding, not only is he trying to derive something from the traditional texts, he is also trying to relate the building to Jaipur as a city. What he does is he displaces one of the squares here on the southeast corner, I am sorry, on the, this will be the South East corner.

But in Jaipur, it was necessitated because of a reason. The topography of the city forced them or compare them, to take the square from here and bring it here. So, the square which is on the it should actually be the North West, I am sorry, this is been written wrongly, the North West square has been displaced and shifted to the South East here, but in the Kala Kendra, only the South east square has been displaced without displacing any other squares. So again, he does take that artistic liberty in order to be able to create the kind of space he wants within the idea of the regional context and the historical text context.

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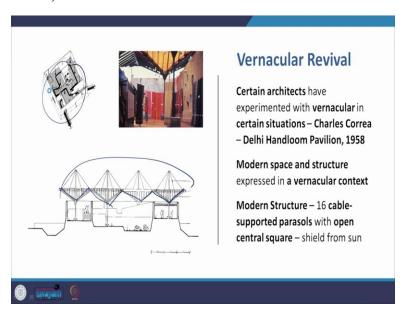
Now, let us come to Vernacular Architecture just want to one slide to actually just tell it to you in a very brief way. It is the use of local materials and knowledge, usually without the supervision of professional architects. These are buildings that have been derived empirically by hit and trial method over centuries by the local people of the region.

They responded to by building these dwellings or these buildings, directly in relation to their climate, the topography, the socio cultural value systems, the kind of building technology they had, the kinds of materials they had. And this was not designed by any specific designer or architect. Generally, these buildings are built by the local Mistris or Masons.

So, these are reasons specific, they are simple, and they are practical, and they have their own aesthetic value system, which is directly connected to this socio cultural value system. Now there is this vernacular revival, vis-a-vie vernacular architecture, which is an attempt to revive vernacular architecture in a modern context.

So, in this case, a professional architect does take over, but he uses a similar language. Focus is the provision of a low cost building using local labor, local materials, local construction techniques, and to come up with a building that responds to a vernacular tradition of the region. For example, the work of architects Vasant and Revathi Kamath and the works of Nari Gandhi, the works of K.T. Ravindran. And these are two examples of Vasant, this is Revathi Kamath work - the Laxman Sagar Resort in Rajasthan in 2010, and this is the Mud School in Bhopal by her in 2016.

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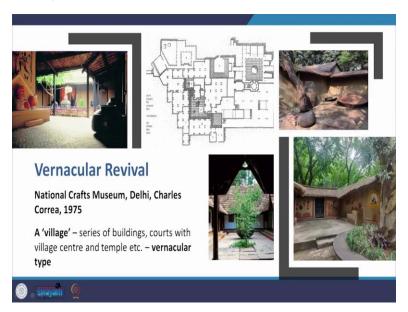


Charles Correa, again has done work with regard to vernacular revival. This is a very early project of 1958, in which, like other certain architects who have experimented with the vernacular in certain situations, Charles Correa has done that in the daily handloom pavilion, 1958. Modern space and structure has been expressed in a vernacular context.

Now how modern is it? It is a modern structure, having 16 cables supported parasols, as you can see here, these are completely modern structural system. And there is below a space which is

very vernacular, it is a central open square. It is a shield. These parasols are a shield from the sun. This is how the space has been created.

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And then again in the National Crafts Museum in 1975. He uses a same principle of a vernacular revival, where he creates a village, a series of buildings and courts with a village center and a temple et cetera is a vernacular type. So, what does he do?

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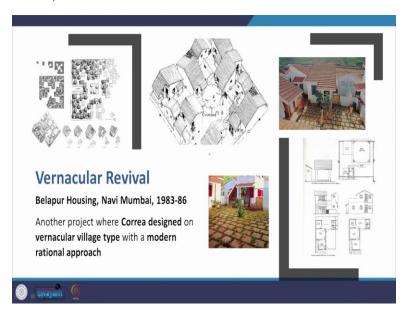


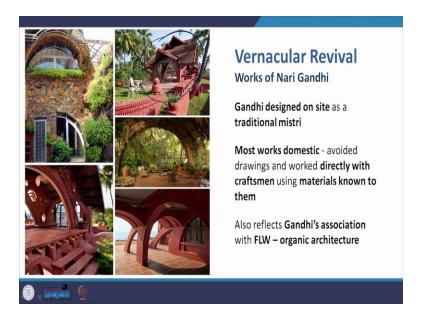
The other subtext here is, if you remember the study of Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, that was also a vernacular revival, in a sense in space planning because it was Gandhi's deep attachment to the Indian village that comes out in the Smarak Sangrahalaya, the way the spaces have been organized, the way the modules have been organized, way the open spaces in between meander across is a typical village with the water body at the center.

Now here is also response to how the great temples were structured earlier, around open to sky, ceremonial pathways, which is relevant to tropical architecture. So, what he did is that the museum is organized around a central pathway. It is not a very clear image. But if you see from here. Let us just go back to the earlier plan, you can see this is the plan here.

And the central pathway begins from somewhere here, and you meander across like this. And this is leading through the exhibits in a sequence you can go on following the sequence, or you can break at any time and go towards the exhibit. To look at it in detail the end of the sequence you exit via a roof garden to an amphitheater, the amphitheater for folk dances or open air displays.

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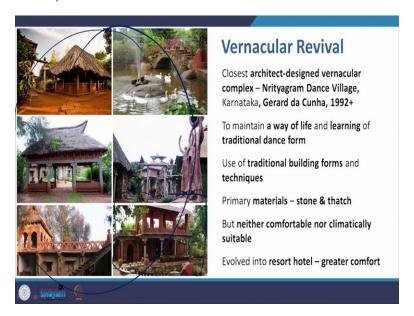




Then again, we find the vernacular revival in Belapur Housing in Navi Mumbai 1983 to 86. Another project by Charles Correa designed on the vernacular village type, but with a modern rational approach, it is definitely a village model, but it is designed in a manner that it clearly shows modern functional organization, the spaces have been put together like that.

Then we find it in the works of Nari Gandhi, where he designed it as a traditional mistri. Most of the works he did were houses domestic projects, which avoided any avoided drawings and worked directly with craftsman using materials known to them, and also reflects his association with FLW. Because these have a very clear reflection of organic architecture. The kind of species that he derives are clearly derived from there, I will just swing across quickly because we do not have time but please do read more about Nari Gandhi and understand deeply.

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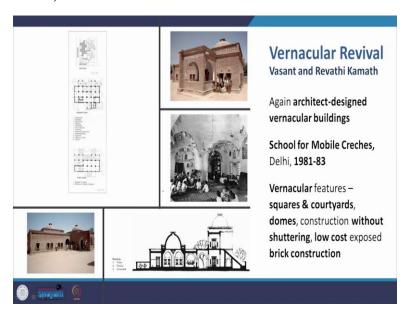


Then there is the example of Gerard da Cunha 1992. That is the closest that we have come to an architect designed vernacular complex to maintain a way of life and learning of a traditional dance form. Traditional building forms techniques have been used. Primary materials stone and thatch had been used.

But over time, they came to realize that though it does have that clear context, it does look like a traditional vernacular space as you can see in all these images, but it was neither comfortable nor climatically suitable or climatically comfortable. Therefore, it is evolved into a resort hotel which I believe is air conditioned.

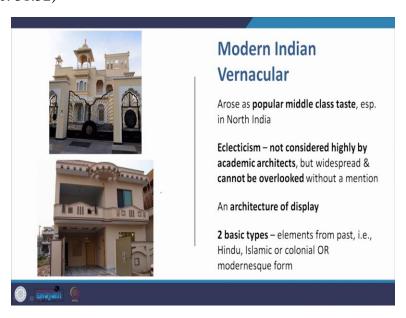
And therefore, this final image that you see is now the entrance to this resort hotel, this much greater comfort. So, sometimes, though the projects the heart is in the right place. The final results may not see us through.

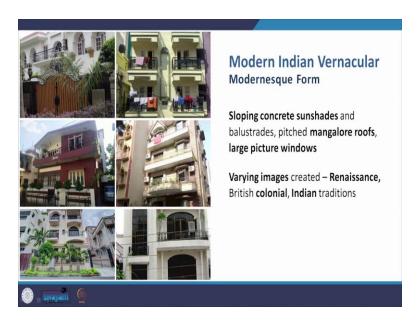
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Vernacular Revival in the works of Vasant and Revathi Kamath again, architect design vernacular buildings, the School for Mobile Creches 1981 to 83. Vernacular features like squares, courtyards, domes and construction without shuttering, low cost exposed brick construction, all of that responds to a vernacular revival.

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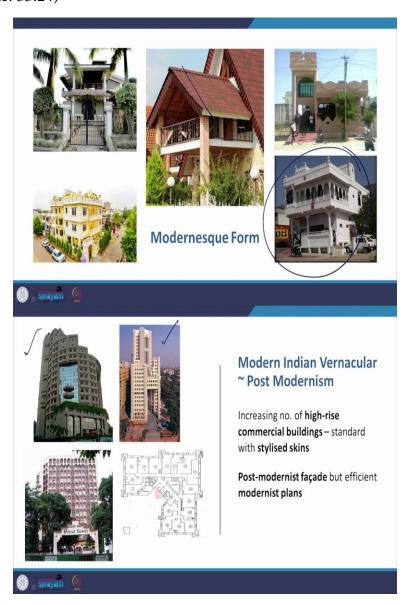
And then there is Modern Indian Vernacular, something that you see in your cities all across the country. This is not an architecture that is designed by prime architects it is designed by really iconic architects.

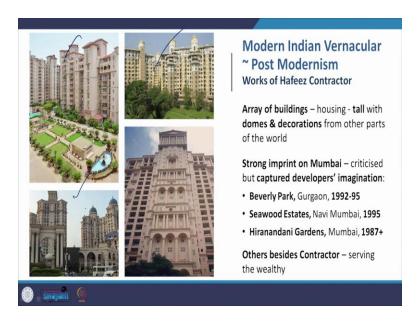
These are the kinds of houses or kinds of buildings that come up in our city because the local mistri or the local contractor has learned how to make these buildings and he puts together or even an architect puts together these buildings based on the taste buds of the client. It is arose as a popular middle class taste in India especially in North India, it is a collected, having a mixture of elements in it.

It is not considered highly by academically leaning architects, but it is widespread and cannot be overlooked without mentioning it. It is an architecture of display. There are two basic types either you take the elements derived from our past Hindu, Islamic or colonial or it can be modernist form derived from even classical elements, Renaissance and other classical elements.

These houses which are profusely there, all over the country, you would see them regularly around you, or even in the play in the colony or the place where you live. They have sloping concrete shades they have these sometimes classical order, balustrades, pitched mangalore roofs, large picture windows sometimes facing the west to bring in maximum heat from the west. Varying images of Renaissance colonial style Indian traditions.

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So, like the pitched roofs or like the Traditional Rajasthani Style, all of it appears in these, what is called as Modern Indian Vernacular? It is also akin to postmodernism. So, we have these tall buildings in Connaught place this is, for example, the Ambadeep Tower by CP Kukreja, which in fact, is a much more sublime, much more much better derivation closer to critical regionalism.

But still, the postmodernist facade is that, but it has an efficient modernist plan. Even the houses that I have shown you previously, they still have that free flowing spaces of open living dining spaces connected to open kitchens and lounges, et cetera. Those spaces continue to remain modern.

But this increasing number of high rise commercial buildings with these standard stylized skins. And one of the important proponents of this style is Hafeez contractor array of buildings, housing with tall domes and decorations from other parts of the world. Like his one of his most important saline projects, the Hiranandani Gardens in Mumbai, bringing in elements from classical architecture, a strong imprint on Mumbai, he has been heavily criticized.

But he captured the imagination of the developers and the ordinary public. He is probably one of the most well known architects of India today, like him reject him, he continues to remain a pop star of architecture, with buildings like the Beverly Park, the Seawood Estates, and of course, the Hiranandani Gardens in 1987. Other besides contractor, Hafeez Contractor are also building and they are generally serving the wealthy.

So, these are the five subsets that we have seen today. In the next class, rather, the four that we have seen today. In the next session, I will talk about community architecture, which is very important for you to understand, maybe it is not so prevalent today. And then we will come down to some of the basic context of critical regionalism. Thank you.