Research Paper

Importance of Postmodern Architecture on Culturally Sustainable Designs

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ABSTRACT
Needs as well as the desire for human improvement is always escalating, more especially during transition periods. Districts, cities, urban centers, megapolis as well as nations in general, began to experience failures and also bad development that leads to cultural issues. Sometimes this kind of failure resulted from unsustainable development programs, notably modern attitude of no acceptance to old design in contexts. Even though the arrival of post-modern architecture give rise to designs and yielded avenues for every settlement to regenerate/revive their diminishing cultural programs or any kind of development that will support the built environment and give back the original cultural meaning of the settings. Cultural issues are, and of course will always be a remarkable asset at all community development programs. Therefore, should be looked at as tangible factor from social to economic as well as political and environmental programs. To this end, this paper will discuss the general contributions of postmodern designs and their significances regarding cultural sustainability agenda of the built environment. The paper will theoretically discuss postmodern architecture as a program that supports built environment from social to cultural factors. To greater extent, the study will additionally explore the powerful influence of postmodernist designs in supporting cultural design programs at all the levels of community development.

I. INTRODUCTION

The development of built environment can be considered at large, as community in transition and it may elaborate series of actions, and sometimes can described the detailed actions of many programs associated with development. The process of change in "the built environment" of any community, city, district as well as village can be described as the interaction between the built structures of a given society, and the physical settlement values of the natives which usually attached to social, cultural, traditional, political, economic and educational process (Aliyu, 2015). However**,** Dingsdale, in 1999, acknowledged that the appropriate development in the built environment stand within the periphery of community's socio-cultural programs and the degree of the achievements. The organization of the buildings or infrastructures and their characters in particular define the manner at which sustainability is reached. Dingsdale, 1999, further pointed out that "transition involves the replacement of the norms and values of the communist system by those of the capitalist system, and in the process if care is not taken many cultural and traditional elements will disappeared" (Dingsdale, 1999).

However, postmodern architecture which is the cultural logic of the late capitalism titled by Fredrick Jameson seek to looked back on the culture/tradition and embark on changes that is meaningful to the users at the same time more sustainable to the context at large. This in-turn led Lillyman, Moriarty & Neuman, (1994) to express their perceptions on contemporary designs and said to talk about architecture, from within a particular scope and without the tradition, tells us something about the extent to which architecture satisfies or disappoints an array of cultural expectations. Accordingly, the diverse valuables of settlement or community and also

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organizations both the intangibles and the tangibles, are means in which cultural, social, political, and natural organized elements of a societies are incorporated. Sustainable progress related with cultural development is involved not just with maintaining the local products and available resources, but also with organizing so in an economic, environmental, and social beneficial manner (Herman & Cobb, 1994). However, the main key cultural elements and the major aim of postmodern architecture to every community is traditional regeneration and cultural sustainability can also be used as method and idea for planning concept and policy makers to ensure reasonable built environments (Herman & Cobb, 1994).

In generally, it is evident that so many settlements and their cultures have a symbiotic and good relationship which is also in connections with their contextual environments (Aliyu, 2015). As such, majority of the discussions of the researchers within the area of "sustainability in architecture" have generally laid emphasis on the physical structures of the built context and they also leaved the complex relationship between tradition, climate, place, culture, and modernity uninterrupted (Aliyu, 2013; 2015). Meanwhile, sustainable designs are principally Fixed with purpose by sociocultural determinant factors of the native societies, and then by pragmatic considerations of available materials, economic conditions, technology, climate, and other related programs (Gast, 2007). Similarly, Nguyen, (2007) in a statement on design and culture argues that "dialectic connection between modernism and local cultural/identity is of special issues, not just to architecture along but also to the huge survival of each community or country" (Nguyen, 2007).

Therefore, postmodern architecture is concerned with culture and traditional features, as well as the human comfort and the climatic factors of the built environments. Moreover, the characters and also the various function of urban programs yielded unmeasurable possibilities of incorporating modern needs without setting any threat or weakening the long-established traditions, functions, and cultural material of a place. Therefore, this paper will discuss the general contributions of postmodern models and their significances regarding cultural sustainability agenda of the built environment. The paper will theoretically discuss postmodern architecture as a program that supports built environment from social to cultural as well as traditional issues. The study will explore the powerful influence of postmodern buildings in supporting cultural design programs at all the levels of community development. The discussion includes legitimate understanding of cultural sustainability and traditional values within the context of postmodern architecture that is related with environment in transition. And, in general context, the paper will further explore how postmodern architecture play significant functions in sustaining culture and tradition positively.

II.   BUILT-ENVIRONMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF TRANSITION

The built environments can be considered as profound artifacts of peoples' past and present, which have been created and inhabit in it (Dingsdale, 1999). However, the social understanding between the societies and their "built environments" is an important subject in the discussion of any environment in transition. Built environment in transition can be regarded as a good example of the general process of changes and it can explain the detailed nature of any environment in transition. Every community just as mentioned above, their political, cultural, social, traditional, economic, and educational processes have always played crucial and specific functions in the development of built context (Aliyu, 2013).

However, the word 'change' can be interpreted as the reciprocal action of current 'processes' and 'antecedent' conditions. Moreover, a known scholar in the field of postmodern architecture noted that the great societal achievement in any transition stages is to produce an improved design that is culturally sound within the built environment (Oldfield, 1999). Similarly, Aliyu, (2015) acknowledged that the gradual transitions in community program and progress are also phenomenon to correspond to enormous important changes in the impact that inhabitants have on the built environment, such that the largest changes in the physical variables are added, as event of the group's affluence. Some of the basic characteristics of culturally successful built environments in transition are the interaction of sciences, tradition, and culture, which is a complex phenomenon but of normative value if succeeded.

Although during transition period, the development and planning schemes, with often concerned to the development of an ideal environments, people adjusted toward social and economic functions (Aliyu, 2015). Even though it is evident that most ideal districts focus attention on the technical and specialized programs with much "public authority regulations" as a means of creating a built environment that is ideal and more communicative to the society. Accordingly, Jokinen, Malaska, & Kaivo-oja, (1998) during transition period information and knowledge are considered as the determining programs of the successful technological and sustainable built environment, because new technological innovations and the scientific knowledges are leading factors to the transformation and reorganization of the societies and the world communities.

Therefore, if care is taken the successful built environment may not be culturally sustainable during the transition processes, because of the modern scientific innovation that is sometimes contrary with the built context. Just as Jokinen, Malaska, & Kaivo-oja, (1998) further acknowledged that in transition periods, so many varieties of programs and future ways are so wide, and the strength of innovation and the effective control are

always fluctuating. But in a situation where culture/tradition were supported by the knowledge of science, however, the environment in transition will always form a spatial organization that is culturally sustainable with effective meaning to its inhabitants. All these approaches recognize the importance of periods of rapid and great change as providing valuable avenues for understanding society, culture, and environmental relationships (Dingsdale, 1999).

Modernist acknowledged that changes in the urban fabric had become a visibly identifiable element of every built environment. This notion pushes Dingsdale, (1999) to argue against the statement of Pickvance 1996, which questioned the 'conceptualization of built environment' in transition, and noted that it is a "radical change" as well as a "moderate change" from the past. He further expressed that radical change is not common in the built environment because, even the ravages of war will not remove all the physical artifacts of the past (Dingsdale, 1999). As the artifacts or material culture of the past will, and always remained in most communities, therefore, there sustainability is needed just as transition involves the concepts of upgrading the norms and values of a society.

III. CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY

Duxbury & Gillette, (2007) says culture emerged gradually out of the field of "social sustainability" and well recognized as a factor with a separate, apparent, and integral functions in sustainability programs. Also, culture as a whole-not even beyond the environmental development program, is revealed broadly as the complicated entity of unique material, belief, spiritual, emotional, and thoughtful feature that describe a particular structured community of people or nation at large. Aliyu, (2015) cited Amos Rapoport, and said the prominent scholar popularized culture in relation to design and acknowledged that "house form is primarily determined by socio-cultural programs of the parent society, which is also associated with pragmatic considerations such as economics, climate, materials, technology and so on" (Rapoport, 1969; Aliyu, 2015).

Therefore, as cities, districts as well as urban centers are growing, the outfit in architectural products and some material culture continued to follow and grow together with the urban or district's developments patterns. However, within the processes of the development most people appreciated the quality and the characters of their cultural artifacts, and carried it parallel with the mutual developments. Scholars on cultural issues in designs says almost every society, with a few exceptions, has structures of religious and cultural meaning, and always all the time possesses enormous symbolic value, content, respect and meaning than the other community buildings (Rapoport, 1969; Gast, 2007). It is clearly evident that in some traditional settlements or even the city areas, cultural, social and religious buildings are not distracted in the design layouts, and are always given significant attention and priorities. "Architecture is a synthetic of material, spiritual and behavioral culture" Nguyen 2007, it creates a context for our contemporary living at the same time provide environment that is culturally sound and climatically appropriate. However, cultural sustainability will always bring about something that is noticeable in the values of a nation's architecture against that of other countries within the same region, and almost all over the entire world (Nguyen, 2007).

In many developing districts, cities or countries as a whole, the cultural sustainability is not in practice, and in some situations, it seems like is a sign of a "melting pot" rather than one clear "local identity". Some immediate processes that may be considered as operating in the cities during transition period will have only an indirect connection with the changes of the material culture or the built environment in general, whilst others will always have a more immediate and direct impact. Therefore, cultural sustainability development instead of being a last observation, most be understood as a progressing element in all the development stages in societies with greater assessments and meaningful considerations (Aliyu, 2015).

However, Duxbury & Gillette (2007), argues that cultural sustainability can finally be considered as the ability and capability to retain and maintain culture and identity of people in designs. While Finlayson (2015), acknowledged the contributions of the Sustainable Development Research Institute, 1998 and concludes that to let change to be guided in such a way that is consistent with the cultural values and dignity of people, designer most accord to the culture system of the parent society. A variety of such concepts as define above have been used in architecture to interpret this cultural sustainability such as, the ability to retain the existing situation in designs, to express the quality of old contextual settings, to represent the past and, most recently to reproduce the same design characters as before. These interpretations of 'cultural sustainability' involve not only "the artistic and calligraphic text as per say, but also the feelings of life, with basic rights of the human being in a cultural and traditional belief" (Duxbury & Gillette, 2007).

IV. SUSTAINABILITY WITHIN THE SCOPE OF POSTMODERN ARCHITECTURE

Lawrence & Low (1990) in a statement argued that the disappointment coursed by the modem solutions in architectural practice made a several number of contemporary designers and allied researchers to find a design principle that is culturally appropriate to the built environment. Architecture is a manifest of human activity, it most stand to define its origin in a manner that is consistent with the recent technology.

However, in a statement figured out by Aliyu (2015), that the manner at which designers acknowledged culture in modern designs have yielded significant functions in recreating the local traditional features and displaying societal identity. Subsequently, in most contemporary competitions in districts, cities, as well as countries entirely, designers have started to consider their own historic models and cultural artifacts by carrying out some findings in their own traditional forms, characters and some sort of principles that will support them (Nguyen, 2007). Consequently, in consideration of the old built context, the human need did not just stand on the matter of living or services provided by other technological programs, it lies to a perfect and reasonable cultural context which often turned to a necessary requirement in today's living (Aliyu, 2013).

Moreover, the recent fascination with what professionals named "postmodern designs" have however, focused much attentions to the designed models in which we play, work and live, but the appeal is still limited to the designs that are environmentally friendly, culturally fit, and traditionally speaking (Dingsdale, 1999).

Figure 1. Residential buildings in Northern Nigeria. Source: (Aliyu, 2015).

Figure 1 above are residential buildings located in northern Nigeria. The designers utilized the ideal manner of postmodern architecture in reviving the cultural and traditional features of the locals. In appearances, the buildings defined the real Hausa culture in both character and fashions. The postmodern language of double coding speaks itself in a contemporary model. The designers directly referred to the old Hausa style with unique appearances in experiential aesthetics. And, if time and usage are the crucial issues in architectural practice, as stated by Charles Jencks, the residential buildings in figure 1 utilized time as a factor of change in both modern, cultural and traditional attitude. The designs are culturally and socially Hausa models, that are traditionally and climatically responsive in design concept and stand as iconic figures of regional identity.

Postmodern architecture is a selective mixture of different characteristics and combination of relevant culture and tradition within its context. It is generally the extension of modernism as well as progressing beyond the modern conception (Jenks 1991). It takes meaningful approach towards norms and values, symbolic designs, vernacular styles, urban morphogenesis and a contemporary move towards space and form of buildings that are related with tradition and culture. However, culture which constitute norms and value, manner and mannerism, idea and the ideology, character and the characteristics, in fact the totality of people's experiences has been enacted and sustained by the postmodernist designs, not for any other thing but to have sound and good communicative society (Aliyu, 2013).

Figure 2. Petronas Building. Source: (Wikipedia, 2021)

For example, Tyrrell, (2003) in his discussion of "cultural Perspective of Sustainable Architecture" he pointed out and acknowledged that "the Malaysian Long-house in figure 2 (The Petronas tower- postmodern design) represents an ancient typology that is culturally and climatically appropriate" (Tyrrell, 2003). The tower was inspired by Malaysian culture--designed by Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects. The ideology of the design symbolized an Islamic culture within and outside the building. The design also represents the Islamic ideology of "unity within unity". These strong Malaysian iconic towers formed an integral part of postmodern architecture in Malaysia that have meaning to a place. Accordingly, Nguyen, 2007 says during this "internationalized style" of the early 20th century architecture by the modernist, a lot of nations destroyed their cultural identity due to lack of respect for material cultural. However, with advent of postmodern architecture most nations try to revive the glory of the past, seeking for a proper way to demonstrate their local culture and also combine it with the functions of architecture plus their daily natural needs (Aliyu, 2015).

The appropriate combination methods in construction (old and new or the double coding), the rejection of single technology, are the channel postmodernist used in the promotion of culture/tradition which is always related to or referred to us as "cultural sustainability" in architecture (Jencks, 1991). With this idea of "cultural sustainability development", contemporary postmodern architects continued to fascinate society during transitional period with the symbolic structures that have cultural and traditional architectural characters. Gast, (2007) says such idea took a large part of architecture in India and continued to flow from generations to generations. Subsequently, designers in India hold this attitude of "cultural sustainability" in their designs with huge magnitude of sustainability. Gast further noted that the lower House chamber (National Assembly) figure 3a & b speaks the language of India in its appearance and expressed the fabric of the region, which also compliment their culture.

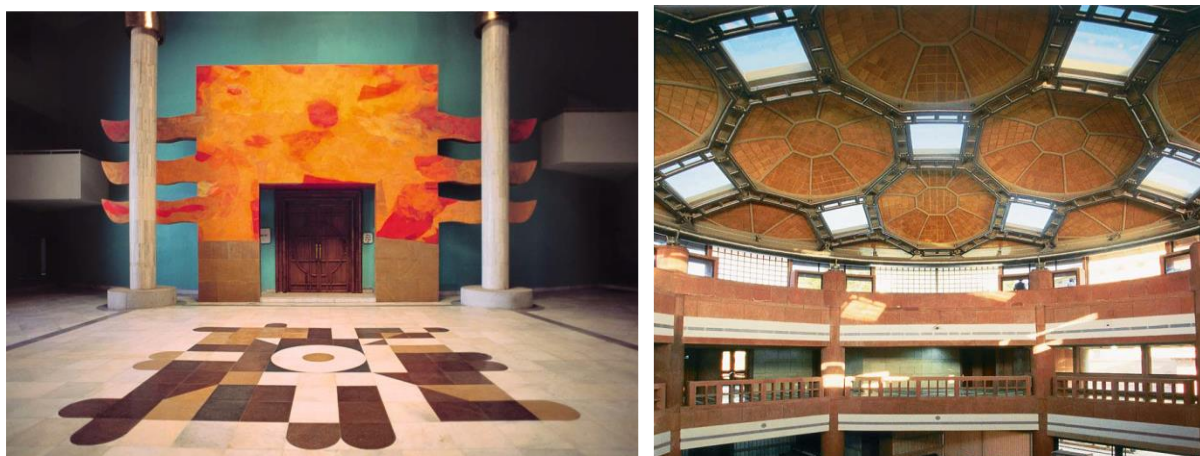Figure 3a. House chamber India (National Assembly) source: (Gast, 2007).

Figure 3b. Entrance and the interior of Lower House chamber in India
source: (Gast, 2007).

The courtyard in the lower house chamber as started by Gast (2007), is also "the classical cultural symbol of something shared (called Kund), a place where people meet, spend time with each other and live together". Gast, (2007) appreciated the cultural and the traditional outfit of Indian contemporary architecture, and says it is essential not to waste the opportunity to present an India culture in modern settings. Figure 4 the parliament building designed by Architect Raj Rewal which is also acknowledged by Gas in 2007, as one among the buildings that is still aware of its mighty history and also is culturally positioned and contemporary proud. The impressive building was inspired by Indian tradition and culture. Architect Raj Rewal was so deemed and considered to suitably displayed culture and heritage of India. In-short the design was inspired by the elegance of local culture and the characteristics of Indian traditional architecture.

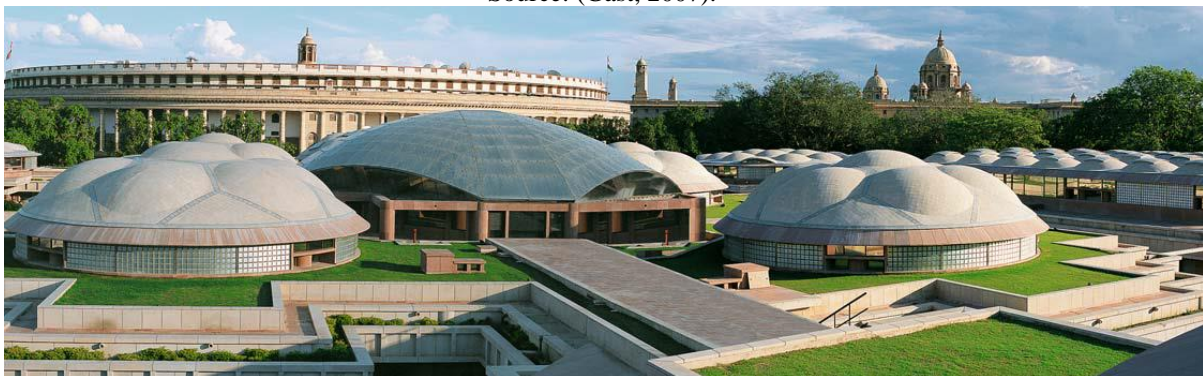Arial view of Indian parliament building designed by Raj Rewal.
Source: (Gast, 2007).

Figure 4. Indian parliament building designed by Raj Rewal.
Source: (Gast, 2007).

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings some nations and their designers have turned to their own culture as a means of recognition in both national and international level. Cultural sustainability and its usefulness have been promoted by the postmodern designers. It is logically clear and so obvious that, the double coded manner of postmodern architecture applied not only on the side of keeping the historic built context, history, and the tradition but also promote other facts, such as sustaining the material culture, protecting family beliefs, and cultural dimensions, reorganizing the physical built settings, and preserving the civil practice in a community.

Therefore, traditional and cultural sustainability instead of being a last focus, has to be understood as a progressing issue in all the community development programs (or during transition period) with much analysis and significant consideration. Katzschner, (2010) says in a very dynamic and changing context for environmental knowledge and in order to bring to fruition important visions of cultural sustainability, professional such as, builders, architects, planners and other allied professionals must attend to postmodernist

programs that include native values, social understanding, and religious beliefs, because they all play a role both in creating and resolving environmental issues. Finally, good architectural practice regarding sustainability of culturally related built elements can be successfully achieved through considerable and valuable steps such as the postmodernist's ideology of embracing built context. The systematic approach is nothing but focus on means to encourage the ideal knowledge of practice that foster sustainability of the built environments.

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