

**Paper: 16; Module No: 27: E Text**

**(A) Personal Details:**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
<b>Principal Investigator:</b>	Prof. Tutun Mukherjee	University of Hyderabad
<b>Paper Coordinator:</b>	Prof. Pramod K. Nayar	University of Hyderabad
<b>Coordinator for This Module:</b>	Prof. Tutun Mukherjee	University of Hyderabad
<b>Content Writer:</b>	Dr. Rajarshi Mitra	IIT, Guwahati
<b>Content Reviewer:</b>	Prof. Tutun Mukherjee	University of Hyderabad
<b>Language Editor:</b>	Prof. Tutun Mukherjee	University of Hyderabad

**(B) Description of Module:**

<b>Items</b>	<b>Description of Module</b>
<b>Subject Name:</b>	English
<b>Paper No &amp; Name:</b>	16; Cultural Studies
<b>Module No &amp; Title:</b>	27; Postmodern Cities
<b>Pre-requisites:</b>	Basic Knowledge of Culture Studies
<b>Objectives:</b>	To give an idea of Postmodern Cities
<b>Key Words:</b>	Postmodern Cities, Culture Studies, Space, English

## Section One: The City

A **city** is a large human settlement with complex economic and municipal systems.

Based on our ideological preferences, there could be several definitions of a city. We can define it as an economic hub, a market centre, a highly populated zone, a converging point for several human networks etc. Probably, the most important aspect of a city is its artificiality. Unlike the villages, every city is absolutely man-made and it functions by the rules and regulations formulated by its settlers. The character of a city is often determined by its primary economic activity. For example, Durgapore in West Bengal, is an industrial city since it was established surrounding a steel plant, whereas, Rishikesh in Uttarakhand, has been, for long, considered a religious city and an important pilgrimage centre. Similarly, there are tourist towns (technically, apart from the size, there is no fixed difference between a city and a town), temple towns, market towns, railway towns, mining settlements, aerropolis (a city with airport at its centre), colonial city etc.

Frequently, history, geographical location or other cultural factors determine the toponym as well as the character of a city. For example, the toponym of Nizam-ruled Hyderabad, with its strong late Mughal culture, in Persian/Urdu means “Hyder” (lion)’s “abad” (city). Similarly, Singapore comes from Sanskrit “Singha” (lion) “pore”(place). Both the toponyms, it should be noted, use lion as a metaphor to bolster their self-image as an important regional power to reckon with.

Whatever maybe the toponym or the principle economic and cultural activity, cities around the world share certain spatial and municipal affinities. The character, culture and politics of a city are fundamentally related to the following spatial, cultural and municipal aspects:

- **Grid** pattern of human settlement
- **Concentration, Density, Agglomeration** (of population)
- **Complex Economic Practices**
- **Municipal Governance** (in charge of urban sanitation, waste disposal, urban traffic etc.).
- **City Networks** (communication, transport, road and mobility within and out of the city).
- **Representation** (cities are variously represented in films, posters, art and literature, providing us a glimpse of the evolving socio-political scenario of a country).

**Modernization** of cities began sometime in the late nineteenth century Europe and North America. Industrial revolution, colonialism, large inflow of capital and mass migration from country to the city resulted in the unprecedented spatial and economic growth of the cities like London, Paris, Chicago and New York. Urban planners devised large segregated settlements for the city dwellers to minimize disputes over space. Modernism, it must be kept in mind, aims at the capitalistic utilization of any space be it a city, holy grounds or agricultural fields. It is built on the utopia that through architecture and planning, metropolitan life should conform to a particular mode of living. The modernist project, with its deep roots in enlightenment, assumes that laws of reality exist objectively and they could be scientifically mastered. Further, modernism holds that science could be used invariably for human welfare and to solve any sort of problem. Modernism's faith in science and universal laws makes it disregard culture and context. Urban modernism seeks to plan a city like an automated machine which can function without human interference. It readily breaks with the traditional forms of architecture and urban planning by stripping down unnecessary decorations and geographical features. For example, as part of modernization, large lakes within the city are drained and filled, empty spaces are readily taken over for construction purposes. In other words, modernity wipes out signs of the rural world from the Indian cities. Urban modernization is characterized by the intensification of the following:

- **Rapid, often cataclysmic urban growth**
- **Industrialization of production**
- **Intricate and variegated networks of transport and roads**
- **Pre-planned, thoroughly segregated settlement patterns**
- **Utilitarian architecture, often homogenous constructions trying to organize population in a unified whole**
- **Bureaucratically structured municipal governance**
- **Various systems of mass communications**
- **Commercialized public spaces and controlled leisure activities**
- **Establishment of apparatuses of a powerful state and nation**
- **A capitalist economy with a fluctuating world market**
- **Mass social movements**

Cities in India are generally linked with **modernism** and **modernity**. In popular perception, the whole concept of "urban India" begins only with western colonialism. Of course, urban centres existed in pre-colonial India: there were large clusters of Mughal cities and towns.

Pre-Mughal India too, had large ports and market centres. But, colonial cities in India were different in character. Firstly, the settlement pattern in colonial cities was often pre-planned and showed marks of racial and economic segregation of population. The large scale construction and the overuse of technology were further hallmarks of colonial cities. These cities were geometrically mapped with the result that the land was stabilized. Moreover, the economic network within the city, and its network with the outside world were at a global scale.

In Indian psyche, colonial cities remained an exotic location. In popular culture, pre-modern Indian villages are often pitted against dark, complex and characterless cities. Numerous Bollywood movies portray the bewilderment of a country bloke who chances upon a city. The popular Raj Kapoor starrer *Shree 420* (1955) or *Jagte Raho* (1956) or a new age Bollywood movie like Govinda starrer *Jis Desh mein Ganga Rehta Hai* (2000) - are all variants on “poor villager in a city” myth. The gross romanticization of the village as a benevolent space as against a ruthless city is a common enough aesthetic practice the world over. However, in India, the legacy of “good-village bad-city” binary has nationalist overtones. Mahatma Gandhi found Indian cities, established and maintained by the British Raj, incompatible with the Indian sensibility. He envisioned a village India with a village (largely agricultural) economy, sustaining a simple life with less desires to satisfy.

Present day India is far from Gandhi’s vision of a village nation. Rather, India is too eager to drop its village/agricultural economy tag. Invited by India’s first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Le Corbusier, a pioneer modern architect, in the 1950s designed Chandigarh, the first ever planned city in India. Urban growth, since then, has been rapid all over India. The Census Report of 2011 shows India is fast emerging into an urban nation. The report records that there are already 53 metropolitan (cities with more one million people) urban centres all over India. Newer schemes and newer ministerial departments are cropping up fast to cope with various patterns of urban agglomeration in India. The Department of Urban Ministry, for example, was set up as a separate ministerial department as recently as in 2004. In December, 2005 the ministry formally launched a massive urban modernization scheme: Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), under which cities were to be financially assisted to improve their civic service in phases. The JNNURM website shows that the Indian government now abides by the forecast that the first half of the twentieth century would see almost fifty percent of India living in the cities.

## Section Two: Indian Cities and Postmodernism

Postmodernism is both an intensification of modernity and a resistance to it. The flow of capital in postmodern scenario undergoes a rapid shift from industrial to corporate. Knowledge and information becomes the currency. With the economic liberalization of India in 1991, several far reaching socio-political changes affected the nation. Its market opened up to foreign trade and its global presence grew, with a large influx of capital in different parts of India. In the 1990s, Hyderabad, now a bone of contention between two newly formed states - Andhra and Telengana – was transformed from a late Mughal city into a glittering metropolis via a vibrant digital industry. The economic and cultural transformation has been such that parts of present day Hyderabad resemble cities in the United States. Even names of certain localities reveal the transformation in Hyderabad: Hi-tech City is where most of the digital industry is located; Cyberabad is where several multi-national companies have invested in setting up companies. Incidentally, Cyberabad is also a nickname for Hyderabad, identifying its status as a global centre of Information Technology. The agglomeration patterns in and around Hyderabad are such that mapping the city is becoming increasingly difficult. The city is ever-increasing and its boundaries are ever-shifting.

At first look, Hyderabad astounds one with its swanky airport, broad roads, posh five star hotels, huge shopping malls, skyscrapers, costly cars and long flyovers. It's a city taken over by the corporate world. Private concerns control much of the economy of the city, attracting skilled labour the world over. Thousands of educated young men and women migrate from different parts of India to work in Hyderabad's digital industry. The shopping malls and posh restaurants cater to the needs of this gentrified digital labour population. A closer look, however, will fail to hide the poverty that surrounds the riches. The number of beggars living off the street, for example, is on the rise in Hyderabad. Banjara Hills, where property prices might soar to hundred crores, teems with professional beggars and poor itinerant hawkers at the traffic signals. As the distance between the rich and the poor widens, petty crime increases and the informal economy finds it difficult to live off the formal sector.

In erstwhile Communist-ruled Kolkata, with its gaping economic and social problems like unemployment, the interdependence between the formal and informal sectors is starkly visible. Calcutta, once the second city of the British Empire, was officially renamed Kolkata in 2001. Kolkata, however, has always been the Bengali nickname for the colonial city. The

renaming was part of an India-wide effort to nationalize/indigenize the names of metropolitan centres with a colonial past. Therefore, Bombay became Mumbai, Madras Chennai, Bangalore Bangaluru and Calcutta Kolkata. Few other Indian cities have had a bloodier history than Kolkata. Scars of history – colonial segregation, partition, influx of refugees fleeing Bangladesh, communal riots, Communist rule – have created enormous economic and cultural pressure on the city. The gap as well as the interdependence between poverty and riches could be readily observed around the ritzy South City Shopping Mall on Prince Anwar Shah Road. Hundreds of makeshift shops serving the stream of mall-goers and the workers in the mall have attached themselves to the walls of the South City Mall. The shabbiness of these stalls is a sharp contrast to the mighty discipline and chic of the mall.

Poverty and riches exist side-by-side, in sharp contrast, in most public spaces in Kolkata. Such contradictions could be extended to explain the ubiquitous presence of religion in a city once ruled by the Communists for more than twenty years. Durga Puja, an autumn harvest festival of the Bengalis celebrating the arrival on earth of Tantric deities, has been transformed into an urban festival in Kolkata. At present, the celebration, if not religious, is heavily corporatized. Every makeshift stage (pandal) with a Durga statue is sponsored by companies trying to reach out to the public. Pandals are built around a theme – Taj Mahal, Himalayan Caves etc. Here, as often is the case, the fantastic and simulated environment is more important than the religion. The simulated pandals attract unwanted attention too. A huge police force keeps an eye on the thick crowd, uses metal detectors and dogs periodically sniff around to pre-empt the dreaded terrorist attack. Terrorism is no more kilometres away in some godforsaken place. It exists now like a spectre over the city's population.

Despite the fear of terrorism, despite corporatization of religion in Kolkata and gentrification of labour in Hyderabad, each city in its own way, resists the processes of utilitarian uses of space. Pockets of resistance defy corporate logic: the little magazine stalls in Kolkata Book Fair selling books at extremely low price, Lamakaan in Hyderabad charging pittance for art shows, Bengali movies dramatizing the threat of malls on old buildings in Kolkata. As modernism intensifies, it often loses control over its professed aims. People take over the modernized space, indigenizing it or putting it to several ruptured uses.

**Postmodern** urbanization, therefore, is characterized by:



- **Rapid, disorderly and haphazard growth**
- **Multi-cultural settlements**
- **Overlapping networks of communication and transport, increased mobility within the city**
- **Gentrification**
- **De-industrialization and corporate-service economy**
- **Privatization and shrinking presence of state**
- **Sharp economic divides, with the dominance of middle class**
- **Various patterns of consumption**
- **Disneyfication**
- **Increased surveillance and the threat of terrorism**
- **Multiple forms of the same city**
- **Anti-modernization, Indegenization and localization**

Urban and cultural theorists like Edward Soja, Henri Lefebvre, Jean Baudrillard and Frederick Jameson, identify postmodern urban space as highly fragmented, dizzyingly multi-dimensional and pluralistic in character. The aim of a fragmented, decentred space is to dislocate one, make one feel utterly lost so that one is compelled to submit to the authority. At times, even though one wants to submit, he/she fails to locate the elusive authority. The decentred spaces immerse you in its din and bustle, making you lose your sense of time and space.

**Postmodern Urban Studies** focuses on space and spatiality. Space, according to theorists like Edward Soja, is not a mere physical entity but a conglomeration of social and cultural relations. Soja's concept of "spatiality" draws from Michel Foucault's concept of space as heterotopia and W J T Mitchell's concept of landscape as not a noun but a verb. The materiality of a space, Foucault argues, is not a void element but comes into being because of numerous human relations attached to it. A space is a heterogeneous space since different beings often share the same space and connect to the space differently. For example, Marxist geographers look for the relation between space and capitalism. They find out ways to measure the evolving influence of capitalism on networks that sustain a space. Soja envisions a transcendent concept of Thirdspace to understand spatiality. The Thirdspace is an all-inclusive category that brings together several knowledge systems including spirituality and

metaphysics to understand space. Soja's six visions of Los Angeles have further influenced the theories related to postmodern urbanity. His visions are:

### **Los Angeles as a**

- **Flexicity:** A blend of deindustrialization and reindustrialization built on not merely high technology but with the help of service sectors and digital world.
- **Cosmopolis:** The central importance of globalization.
- **Expolis:** The city and suburban sprawl resembling each other. The shifting centres in the city.
- **Metropolarities:** The intensification of social divide among the inhabitants of the city.
- **Carcereal Archipelagos:** A city full of closed, fortified living and working spaces where surveillance is intense.
- **Simcity:** A city full of hyperreal, themed spaces and simulated environments. Illusions could as well be part of reality of living.

The following sections will look at the influence of postmodernism on urban India under six heads: **Massive Cities, Overlapping Networks, Gentrification and Privatization, Disneyfication, Surveillance and Terrorism and Anti-modernism and Indigenization.**

### **Section 3: Massive Cities**

This section will deal with disorderly growth and multi-cultural settlements in the metropolis.

You cannot produce an authentic map anymore with lines sharply marking boundaries of an Indian city. Every city is ever-growing. Settlement patterns and large-scale constructions are making suburbs increasingly look like the core areas of the city. Meanwhile, the core areas are losing population and decentralization is fueling demographic shifts. Delhi, the capital region of independent India and a Union Territory as well, had to constitute an apex body (National Capital Region) to track its peripheral growth and agglomeration patterns in the 1980s. Periodically, National Capital Region (NCR) has been bringing under its fold newer urban areas around Delhi. Today, NCR is the second largest urban agglomeration in the world. Several agricultural regions of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan have, over the years, been transformed into urban regions. Past decades have seen planned industrial and urban growth in regions like Noida (acronym for New Okhla Industrial Development Authority) and many more such plans are round the corner for areas like Rithala, Libaspur,



Mundhka and Swaran Park. Municipal Corporation of Delhi, which began with three regions, now divides Delhi into ten distinct regions: North, North West, North East, Central, East, West, South, South West and NCR.

Meanwhile, price of property has soared in the core areas of Delhi with Connaught Place becoming the fourth most expensive office destination in the world. Many areas in Delhi are gradually becoming affluent, upmarket places, inaccessible to lower middle class and the poor, who are increasingly finding it difficult to live even in the suburbs. Despite the financial strains, human migration patterns – mostly rural to urban - in and around Delhi is astoundingly high. A map of Delhi now contains rapidly urbanising Bharatpur, the famous Jat kingdom, still primarily agricultural in character. Delhi, in a way, has always been a migrant city. It has been settled periodically and abandoned by a host of Hindu and Islamic dynasties in the Pre-Mughal and Mughal eras. The influx of Punjabi migrants after India's partition transformed its Mughal character, once and for all. The higher prospects of economic gains, educational and living opportunities have led to migration from all states of India. Apart from the traditional Bihari, Punjabi and UP settlers, Delhi, now, has sizeable North-East, Malayali, Bengali and Marathi populations, each with websites of their own (e.g. <http://delhimarathi.com/>).

Cities are becoming large enclaves not only for different cultural communities but also for several professional communities. Student population, health officials, government bureaucratic community, people seeking health service and a host of related communities share space in the city. Such plurality, at surface level, looks like a positive development, but its effect on the infrastructure of a city is complex and often very negative. The price rise, first of all, pushes the inhabitants to desperation since everyday commodities become inaccessible. The pressure on urban resources like water, power and fuel, is enormous. During the searing summer, parts of Delhi frequently go without water and power shortage is common in the suburbs. It is here that the imbalance of resource use becomes prominent as shopping malls glitter in high voltage bulbs and air-conditioned environment, whereas residential neighbourhoods suffer from lack of basic amenities like power. Disorderly economic, population and spatial growths often mean a sharp decline in living conditions. The inhabitants are pushed to smaller spaces with lesser resources to rely on. City becomes a highly fragmented space with each fragmented boundary severely guarded. In fact, the steady

increase in crime rate indicates a better networked underworld, which tries to control the informal and formal economy.

Religious segregation, an inevitable part of Indian life, is sometimes intense in the cities where religious communities sentimentally vie for the depleting urban resources. Most cities have areas geographically marked for certain religious communities. Geographical segregation might represent a tentative model for peaceful co-existence but in reality, almost all the major towns and cities in India have witnessed communal tensions. Legal authorities have had hard time dealing with the rising levels of communal intolerance. City environments are becoming extremely hostile for its inhabitants.

#### **Section 4: Overlapping Networks**

Any city is a conglomeration of several physical and immaterial networks. Through physical networks like the transport system, cities facilitate communication within its area and with other cities. Immaterial networks like trade, markets, socio-cultural links etc. generate the necessary context for the flow of the capital. As cities grow, their economic and communication networks increase too. To improve mobility, a wide web of transport network connects different nodes of the city. The modern cities developed bureaucratic systems to look after the different components in its physical and immaterial networks. In the postmodern world, city authorities have to raise their surveillance over these networks, which would become more and more complex and multifarious. The physical networks in postmodern world become elaborate links between different nodes of the city and the immaterial networks keep multiplying as the digital and cell phone networks spread.

In present-day India, the city networks have to fast adapt to dense urban sprawl. The result is the emergence of complex, overlapping physical and immaterial networks. Delhi Metro, for example, has been recently placed in the list of top metro systems in the world. It spans around two hundred kilometers serving 141 stations all over the National Capital Region. A new visitor, despite the numerous signs and detailed maps, is bound to feel dizzy while trying to maneuver one's way through a cool, air-conditioned environment. The metro in Delhi is digitally controlled with stations announced in advance and touch and open gates. In summer, the dual aspects of luxury and misery of living in Delhi is prominent while travelling in an air-conditioned metro. Once outside the metro station, the city boils to a temperature of

nearing fifty on a Celsius scale. While inside the metro, it's perpetual autumn/spring or sometimes winter.

Most metro cities in India now have reconstructed their road systems to make room for the thousands of cars sold every day to new urban customers. The result is a huge network of over bridges, flyovers and subways - all controlled by sometimes an even bigger network of automated traffic signals. In postmodern urban world, with the digital world controlling the public transport system, the relation between the material and immaterial has become slim.

The immaterial network further joins hands with the ubiquitous and nosy media. Every small event in a city is news. Rather, news is manufactured with the help of media networks.

### **Section 5: Gentrification, De-industrialization and Privatization**

Unlike the industrialized modern cities, post-modern cities increasingly bank on service sectors which require skilled labour. In many cities, the industrial economy is gradually being transformed into a service sector economy with the result that the working class is being replaced by a new; educated middle class labour. The new middle class relies on its educational skills and aims at a career in business (financial transactions) sector rather than industry. Labour in the industrial cities was primarily divided into three categories: skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled whereas, labour division in business sector depends on occupational demand and individual intellectual skills. The business sector in the postmodern environment does not require manufacturers but professionals, managers and technical experts. Concomitant to widespread gentrification is the gradual withdrawal of the government from service and professional sectors. In fact, government's lack of interference eases privatization and the flow of private capital. India's open market policy of the 1990s has largely aided in the establishment of national and multi-national private companies. The policy is also directly responsible for the boom in professional sectors like law, finances, media and entertainment.

The occupational class structure in modern industrial cities recognized the power of small urban elite but in postmodern business centres a large middle class decides the consumption patterns and controls as well as supports most of the urban services. Cities like Bangalore and Ahmedabad had traditionally strong manufacturing economy. The advent of IT and IT enabled services in the 1980s have transformed their cityscapes drastically. Bangalore now leads the IT sector in India while Ahmedabad has become one of the top destinations for

multinational IT companies. The government has further encouraged the IT sector by digitizing most of its public services like banking, education and tax-paying systems. Digital India is controlled through India's cities thereby opening up huge job potentials and attracting skilled labour from all over the country.

The need for professional and highly skilled labour has further sprouted the need for education. Institutes and universities have mushroomed in the small towns and large cities. Here, an upcoming and desperate young generation looks for better education readily sparing exorbitant amounts as fees. The privatization of the education has witnessed growth of model schools, professional institutes and private universities.

Gentrification could further be witnessed in the real estate and housing sector. The working class neighbourhoods have given way to manor-like gated communities sustaining a middle class population with high disposable income. Their lifestyle is often fashionable and trendy and their cultural tastes elitist and smart. Life in these gated communities are self-sustaining, with the outside world carefully shut off from the inhabitants. The gated community architecturally caters to an extremely secure and entertaining lifestyle: children's parks, swimming pools, departmental stores, kindergartens etc. In India, gated communities further sustain a satellite population of urban and sometimes rural poor in the large number of maids, security guards and caretakers they employ. The number of gated communities is necessarily huge in the suburbs. This has been possible with the devaluation of property in the inner-city and the rising growth of population around the city. Many swanky housing complexes attract investments from the huge community of Non Residential Indians (NRIs) who prefer a hassle-free living when they are in India. The gated communities are like large service sector establishments that try to remove all hassles of civic life and promote good life.

## **Section 6: Consumption and Disneyfication**

With the emergence of the new middle class, consumption patterns in the urban environment have undergone drastic transformation. Entertainment and getting entertained are the key factors governing consumers now. Consumer behaviour in the cities hovers around heavily Disneyfied environments like the shopping malls, themed market complexes and built environments. Disneyfication is a process by which spaces are transformed to resemble Walt Disney theme parks. Aspects of Disneyfication include: theming (an environment built with a particular idea, e.g. Delhi Haat in Delhi), hybrid-consumption (multiple consumption

opportunities in a particular location), merchandising (promotional products) and performative labour (employees act as entertainers rather than mere providers of service).

A good example of a Disneyfied space is Shilparamam – an “art and crafts village” - beside the Hi-tech City in Hyderabad. Like Delhi Haat in Delhi, Shilparamam is a built environment selling traditional Indian goods from handicrafts to cloths to house decors and paintings. It periodically hosts special programmes showcasing rural culture of different Indian states (e.g. the Rupasi Bangla festival in February, 2014). Along with these cultural events, traditional merchandise is sold under “ethnic” package. The sellers are often rural artists selling their wares to the urban populace. In Shilparamam, village is a marketing strategy, an ethnic fashion, a performance of ethnic lifestyle. Shilparamam’s environment is a sanitized version of an Indian village with proper power and water supply. Its clean and decorated shops with lanes in between provide a sense of immersion, not unlike the malls, into a manufactured romance of rural India.

The proliferation of malls and air-conditioned departmental stores throughout India indicate another development in consumer behaviour – homogenization of marketing experience. The air-conditioned spaces of the malls filled with highly priced goods, are decorated in such a way that window shopping becomes a fashionable pastime there. Despite the proliferation of malls and the consequent homogenization of consumer experience, informal business sectors still exist in urban India. Interestingly, Disneyfied spaces and informal sectors might exist in a symbiotic relationship. For example, shopping malls often attract smaller vendors, who sell their merchandize right outside the mall. Moreover, the Disneyfied spaces are a big hit because they employ the lower middle class youths as caretakers, security guards and cleaning staff.

India has further witnessed the rise of Disneyfied religious spaces. Several new temple and temple complexes are built so as to give the visitors an experience of an ideal Indian village. The temples sell their own merchandize, sell specially prepared food in their restaurants and the employees wear attractive and quaint uniforms. A good example of Disneyfied religious spaces would be ISCKON temples in Hyderabad, Bangalore and other important cities. Akshardham in Delhi is built on similar lines around the theme of the Hindu religion and its relationship to animals. Devotees in these temples are treated as consumers.

## **Section 7: Surveillance and Terrorism**



Being frisked by uniformed security guards before entering a shopping mall or museum is a common experience in the Indian cities. A series of terrorist attacks in the major cities of India in the past decade are directly responsible for the rise in security services throughout the country. Cities like Mumbai, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad and Delhi have witnessed some of the worst terrorist attacks. The widespread media coverage of the terrorist incidents has been equally mesmerizing with their graphic on-location details and meticulous reproduction of the scene. Terrorist attacks in a city are immediately transformed into a national tragedy by the Indian media.

The threat of terrorism has led to a general increase in security and surveillance. For example, traffic control system in Kolkata is all the more mechanized and extensive now with laser and CCTV cameras installed at every important crossing. Smaller roads leading to the main road are manned by constables keeping an eye on errant drivers. The police are strict about driving etiquettes like using front seat belt, wearing helmets while riding motorbikes etc. Citizens are under the careful watch always, everywhere.

### **Section 8: Indigenization, Anti-modernism**

Most Indian cities emerged during colonialism and they still retain many colonial characteristics including the architecture. A brief walk through New Delhi and colonial Calcutta reveals how colonialism itself underwent transformation from an impressively curved Victorian architecture (colonial Calcutta) to modernist cityscape with broad roads and meticulous surveillance techniques (New Delhi). Beside these colonial cities, there grew the indigenous or the “native” city which held colonial architecture as its model and yet absorbed Indian influences in unique ways. Scholars have highlighted the concept of indigenous modernity to understand such native appropriation of colonial architecture. Extensive areas in the north (e.g. Shyambazaar) and central Kolkata (Bhowanipur), for example, still retain such hybrid architecture.

Indian cities have further become centres of indigenous art, culture and education. Regional film industries in Mumbai, Hyderabad and Chennai, massive book fairs in Chennai and Kolkata bank on the cultural inclinations of the local population. Often, Indian cities follow the agricultural and cultural festivals with greater pomp than in the villages. New Year in every Indian culture generally coincides with the agricultural cycles of a particular region. Be it Telegu Ugadi or Tamil Pongal, New Year celebration in cities like Hyderabad and Chennai



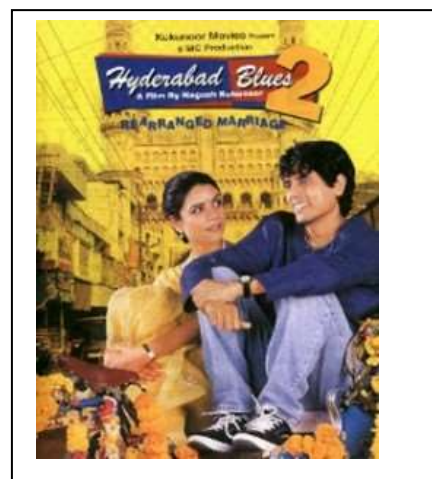
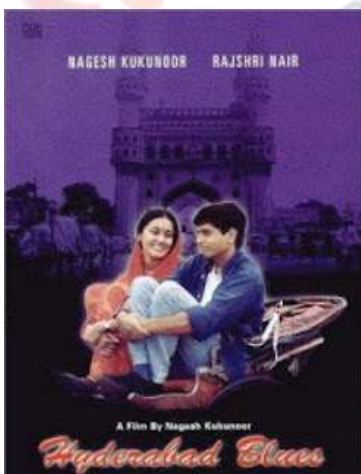
are done in rural ways with rangolis in front of the houses and traditional food eaten in traditional ways. Being traditional in these times of the year is both fashionable and trendy.

Hypermodernism, shopping malls, departmental stores and Disneyfication have not been able to change indigenous consumer patterns too. Farmers around Hyderabad, for example, still do a brisk business in the several Rythu bazaars in the city. Old markets in Kolkata are places of cultural nostalgia and the businesses there are still run by old merchant families.

Conscious citizen communities further resist hypermodernism and Disneyfication in small pockets. Lamakaan in Hyderabad was established to address the need for free public space in the city. It charges a token money from performers for holding performances and hanging out in Lamakaan is absolutely free. Similarly, visitors to several urban fairs in Kolkata are no more required to pay any entry fee or buy tickets.

### Audio-Visual Quadrant

1. Beyond its physical presence, there always exists an imaginary city. Every city has a set of icons – landmarks, important personalities, festivals etc. – by which it projects its character and history. The two posters of a popular movie and its sequel *Hyderabad Blues* and *Hyderabad Blues 2* present the protagonists with Charminar in the backdrop. Built in 1591, Charminar, a landmark situated amidst sprawling bazaars of the old city, has become a global icon of Hyderabad.



2. In postmodern urban India, a major concern is unequal distribution of wealth. This photograph of Raghu Rai taken in Mumbai present the lack of egalitarianism and huge social divide in Indian cities. Dharavi, the biggest slum, with grim living conditions exist side by

side with one of the plush airports in the country: Santa Cruz. The photograph juxtaposes luxury and misery with misery looking up to luxury as a distant dream.



3. In this photograph Raghu Rai captures the busy Mumbai station with overlapping networks. Spatiality, here, is marked by a sense of speed, rush and high mobility.



4. One among a series of photographs on the website promoting Shilparamam – the Disneyfied village in Hyderabad – captures the rural performers with high rises in the backdrop. Performances, entertainment, shopping and return to the roots, all happen at the same time for the customers. The tagline for Shilparamam remains “A home for ethnic culture and tradition.”



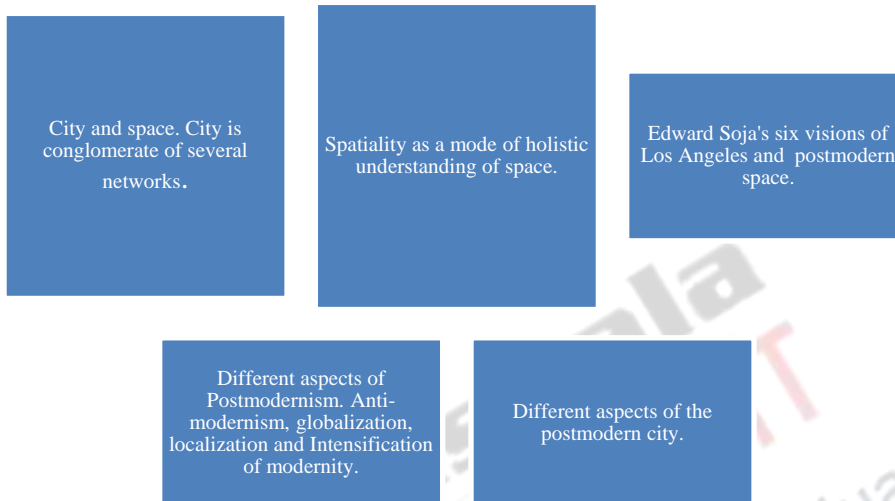
5. Photographs of cities like Kolkata are often extremely poetic. This photograph by Nemai Ghosh snapped during Satyajit Ray's shooting of *The Middleman* (1976) captures the intense dilemma of Bengali unemployed youth in an erstwhile colonial city. The photograph, with familiar Victorian architecture in the backdrop and inscrutable faces of the characters in the foreground, dramatizes the intellectual anguish of the seventies generation in Kolkata. The houses in Kolkata's colonial office district stand as demonic entities squeezing out life from people like the narrow strip of sky visible above.



6. **The websites** of the real estate companies in India advertise the gated communities they have built for their customers. Sugam Park is one of the luxurious building clusters in Asansol (<http://www.sugamhomes.com/sugam-park/>) – a mining city in colonial Bengal, now transformed into a business hub. The website promises hassle-free life, all service provided. The caption reads: A brand new lifestyle waits at Sugam Park.
7. Ramoji Film City, one of the largest film studios in the world, is a simulated environment for filmmakers and tourists. The visitors can ride through the City where several performances are held for them every day. A perfect example of Disneyfication, Ramoji Film City generates huge capital for Hyderabad. (<http://www.ramojifilmcity.com/>)

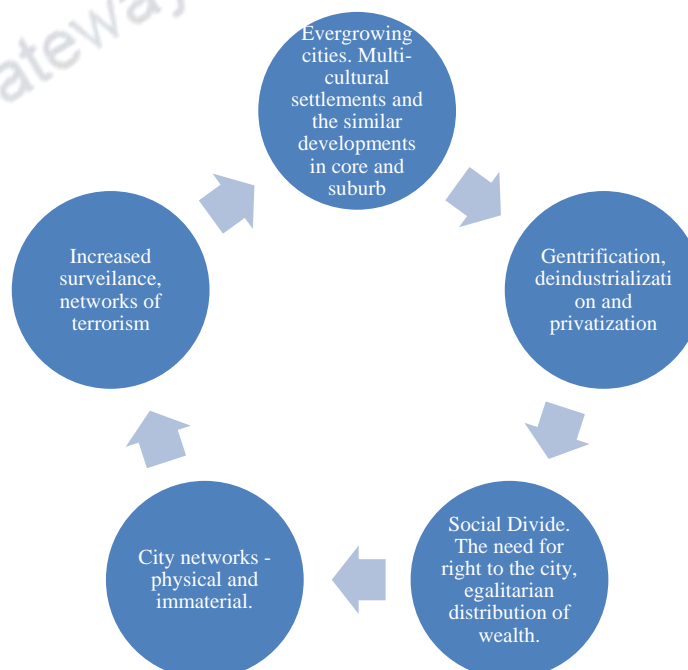
## Story-boarding/Instructional Design

### Slide 1:



### Slide 2

#### Interlinked chain of postmodern developments



## **Glossary:**

**Flexicity:** De-industrialization, reindustrialization and the development of IT industry all over India.

**Cosmopolis:** Globalization of Indian economy. The open market policy of the nineties and the arrival of several multi-national companies.

**Expolis:** The suburban sprawl in cities like Mumbai and Hyderabad.

**Metropolarities:** The slums in Indian cities. For example, Dharavi in Mumbai.

**Carcereal Archipelagos:** The real estate boom and the rise of gated communities in all over India.

**Simcity:** The rise of shopping malls and themed markets in cities like Hyderabad, Delhi, Kolkata, Bangalore and others.

