

**Disaster Recovery and Build Back Better**  
**Prof. Ram Sateesh Pasupuleti**  
**Department of Architecture and Planning**  
**Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee**

**Lecture - 35**

**Designing Culturally Responsive Built Environments in Disaster Context**

Welcome to the course; disaster recovery and build back better. Today, we are going to talk about designing culturally responsive built environments in disaster context. When we talk about the cultural responsive built environments in a disaster context, one has to understand the basics of the cultural issues and how especially, they are related to the built to meet needs and how they change from the pre-disaster context during disaster and the post-disaster context and over a long-run process.

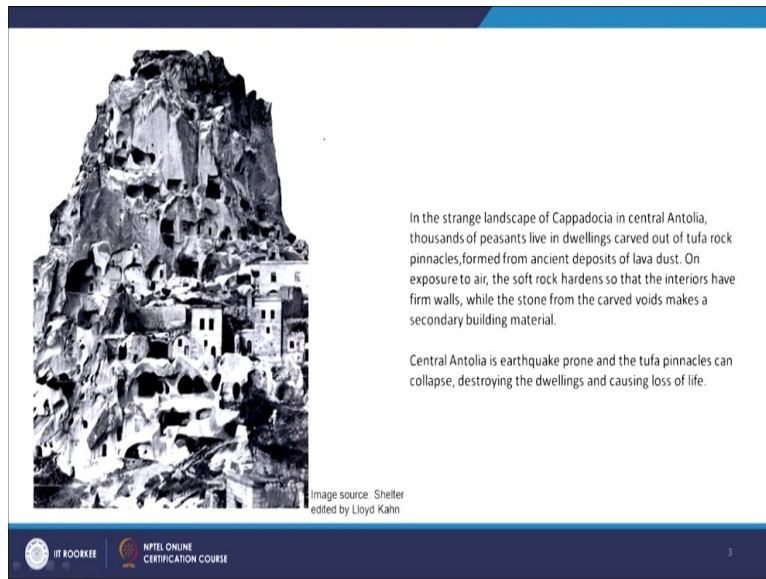
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So, this is where, I would like to introduce you to the contribution of Paul Oliver's work on built to meet needs on especially the part IV on cultures, disasters and dwellings and he brings a number of cases along with it and how culture has been overlooked in the recovery process and as a result what kind of spaces are produced and as a response situation what kind of meanings have developed.

And this is where how development and culture are not related to each other in the process. We have also seen similar examples in the Tsunami recovery process in Tamil Nadu, the case of Tamil Nadu. So, today we will be covering about places in Turkey in the Mediterranean countries and also the recent Hudhud cyclone which my present work is also going on.


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So, the picture which you are seeing here is in the Cappadocia and also the central Antolian region of Turkey. There is a very different landscapes of these pinnacles, the tufa rock pinnacles which are spreaded over in the Anatolian region and these are basically formed from the ancient deposits of the lava dust and because of the exposure to the air this soft rock hardens so that the interiors can have the firm walls and the stone can be carved with some voids and which actually becomes a kind of living spaces.

So, in fact, if you ever look into the Turkey, it actually falls the fault line in the world which the global fault line which actually passes through the Turkey and Turkey is prone to the earthquakes and these tufa pinnacles being a very soft rock nature, they often collapse destroying many dwellings and also causing a serious loss of life. So, what you can see here is like you can see the frequent damages, which is occurring to these pinnacles and in fact, one is also very much concerned about how to protect these natural forms.

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Cavusin village (Old Greek town)

Cavusin is 4 km away from Goreme-Avanos road. Basically houses surround a mountain like massive rock. It is all messed up as a result of the erosion of the rocks over time and earthquakes.


Image source: <http://www.freelancetravelturkey.com/tr/turkiye/11/cappadocia/cavusin-village---old-greek-town-.html>

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In fact, there are some of the case studies in Cavusin village in the old Greek town which is about 4 kilometres from the Goreme-Avanos road. So, here it's a kind of big mountain which is embedded with a lot of dwellings which is intricate dwellings which are embedded like a mountain, what you can see is that all the dwellings, series of dwellings which are very organic nature of it.

And you can see that destructions have happened because of the frequent earthquakes and also the erosion due to the exposure to the air and also the rocks, the soft rock keeps falling down and a lot of destruction over there and during the earthquakes and of course, these communities were given an opportunity to go back and resettle in someplace but some have they denied going back, many of the communities they denied going back.

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Cavusin Cave Village

Image source: <https://www.willflyforfood.net/2016/01/26/cappadocia-highlights-red-tour-with-bridge-of-the-world/>

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And they came back and they try to settle in the you know, vicinity of this village, despite of knowing that this place is prone to earthquakes and there is a danger, they are going to live on this edge conditions but still, why do you think that these people have come and stayed here back. Here, we have to notice one thing; it is not just only on the matter of safety which communities have thought.

There is also the other aspect of their livelihood, which they also have which has actually attracted them back to it and that is why because it is being a tourist spot, so it has actually brought these people back and they started instead of settling in the above areas, they started settling in the bottom part in the foothill area and where they have some restaurants or some kind of economic resources.

So, that is where, the tourist economy is also an important aspect, how communities have believed that the livelihood is also a part of cultural resource and will go to another case in the same Mediterranean climate.

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In 1968, there has been a vast earthquake which has destroyed the restaurant Sicily almost leaving 1 lakh people homeless. There is a small city called Gibellina and this is one of the most affected places in the Belice Valley, which was completely razed to the ground and its community of shepherds and farm labourers relocated to the temporary tent camps. Now, when you talk about an earthquake-affected area, obviously, the whole trouble creates you know, a massive scene.

You know, that is very destructive scene for the people, they somehow under the immediate impact of a disaster, they tend to look for you know, first safeguarding themselves and try to look for an immediate shelter, so that is where they moved to the temporary tent camps.

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But then at that time, the mayor of that particular Gibellina, mayor Corra he talked about, he thought about how disasters could be taken as an opportunity rather the curse because disasters are the agents of change. So, why not take this as a golden opportunity and how we can build a society with these modernistic philosophies and ideologies. So, what he did was he promoted an idea of the cultural renaissance through the urban reconstruction of Gibellina.

And his vision like that is where we talk about a conceived space of the visionaries of the politicians, of the architects, of the intellect, how they want to perceive this space, the urban space and how it has to showcase the visions of modernity. Also, a symbol of emancipation for a region considered by the rest, so it want to be a model for the rest of the country. It is a showcase model, that it can show that this is how the modernism, is a modernist understanding of the place.

And how it can become a role model for the other cities, within the region and because when something has been affected and when someone is really working out on bringing a lot of thoughts and visions into the place-making process. It becomes a laboratory you know, a big laboratory, attracting various artists, various architects and various intellectuals coming from all over the Italy to contribute to make a laboratory of ideas on new forms of building.




So, how an art and architecture can come together, how we can actually revitalize the whole community and how they can actually you know, come up with this kind of aftermath of a disaster and how they can actually bring back to the normal and that to in a more of a modernistic understanding. So, what they did was, they brought a lot of artists, they develops lot of plazas and the piazzas.

Here, you can see that the Piazza del Comune, the community plaza with Torre Civica. It is a kind of civic plaza and here, you can see the new cathedral by Ludovico Quaroni and like that various artists have come to install their own ideas in the form of plazas, in the form of squares, in the form of monuments, in the form of buildings, in the form of housing, also some smaller level of artwork.

And in terms of the new dwellings, they actually aimed for about 50,000 people but today, unfortunately, only 5000 people lived there.

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The new dwellings

While the town was designed to hold 50,000 people, less than 5,000 permanent residents currently live there. If we add to this the fact that many of the grand public buildings and much of the infrastructure remain unfinished because of public funding mismanagement and political corruption, the general sense of emptiness across the city should not come as a surprise.

Furthermore, the typology of the new dwellings, with the front garden detaching the house from the street, separates neighbours even further from one another, changing the habit of front door, street socialising, and instead fostering isolation and segregation of uses.

Source: <https://failedarchitecture.com/village-life-persists-in-sicily-utopian-artspace/>

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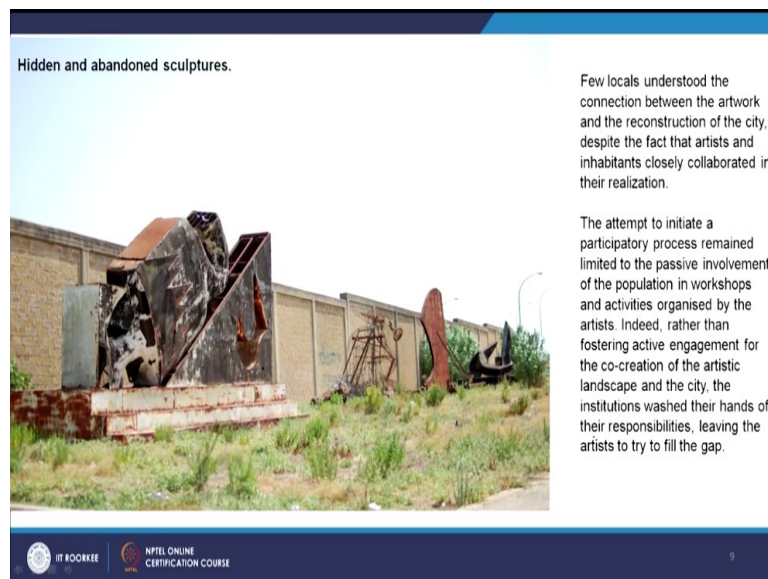
And much of the housing, if you can see that they have these front gardens and they have these detached housing and the whole street, it was a vast street layouts that separates from the neighborhood you know, they are all like a row house aspect but that communal interaction gets missing in this process because that the Mediterranean countries they have this veranda concepts and the evenings sit outside, they chit chat with each other.

But now with the scale of the street and the footpath and the parking and the front garden and so the whole scale have taken away that the social interaction. In fact, instead of socializing it

has fostered the isolation and segregation of users that is how this project have ended up. In here, what you can see in this slide is the plazas.

Do you see any people, you know here the demographic understanding has been hyped a lot from 5,000 and they have aimed for 50,000 and the infrastructure is planned accordingly. Today, what you see is an empty plazas and empty cathedrals, so all together an empty one.

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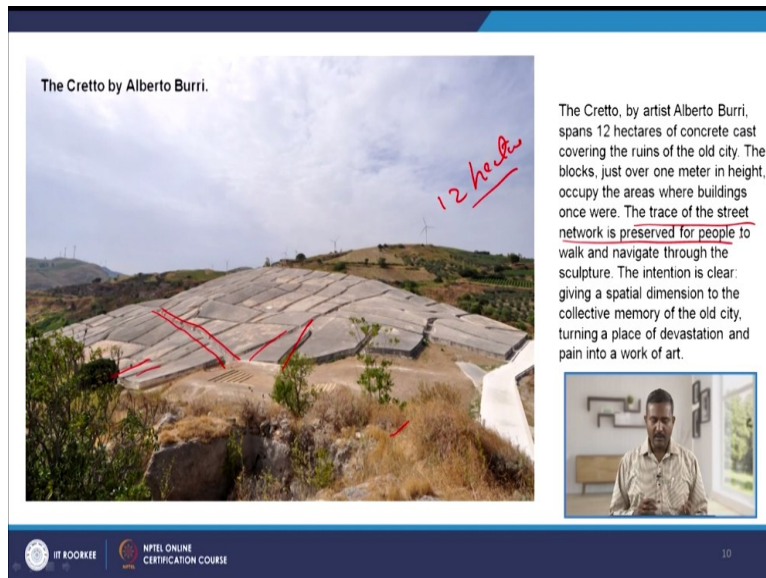
And the locals, few locals have understood the connection between the artwork and the reconstruction of the city, how art can actually bring encouragements with the people, how they can engage them in the participatory ways and you know, how they can realize this innovative way of connecting with the art and many workshops have been conducted by the artists coming from different parts of Italy.

And with the local citizens and in fact, rather than fostering active engagement for co-creation of the artistic landscape and the city, the institutions washed their hands on their responsibilities leaving the artists to fill the gap. So, in that process, what happened was because there is a lot of participatory activities working on and they could see that yes, there is a scope of engaging the public and gradually the funding.

Either the funding institutions or the organizing institutions, they try to wash away their hands that yes, why don't you guys carry on with your artwork you know and try to fill the gap and also there has been infrastructure, many of the infrastructures has remained unfinished because there has been mismanagement.

And also, some political corruptions and what they have envisioned about the city and what they have got is a complete vast scale of a city which is utterly silence. Also, what you can see is the Cretto which is designed by Alberto Burri.

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This is about a 12-hectare land; this is actually the old village where the whole village has got destroyed. Now, what they did was they put, they covered with almost a 1 meter height of the concrete blocks and these alleyways are actually the existing street network of that village so that they want to bring that memory of the skeleton of that village as it is in a kind of block model but one can imagine of the scale of this artwork.

It is, we call it as you know, it is a kind of concrete jungle you know 12 hectares of land has been concretized as a part of in the name of the art and it has been as a memory. So, they try to preserve this street network for people to walk and navigate through the sculpture. So, they can orient themselves, they can reflect that the memories where they belong to, where they used to live you know, that whole memories could be entitlement.

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Unmistakably, what the Cretto and Gibellina Nuova have in common is silence: the first is a city forever captured under a shroud of cement, 'archaeology of archaeology' as a reminder of the past; the second is a cemetery of houses, squares, monuments and unfinished infrastructure.

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But the whole thing you know, what you actually observe is the whole thing is now a silence place, unfortunately, the Cretto and the Gibellina Nuova which have been rebuilt. The common thing is the silence and why the silence is all about; I mean what are the factors that brought this silence. The first one, the Cretto which is captured under the shroud of cement, archeology of the archaeology, as a remainder of the past.

So, they are trying to reflect as a memory which is a completely studied for cement blocks and the second, is a symmetry of houses, squares, monuments and unfinished infrastructure. The second one is actually, is it is the houses which they are made for the people but still not many people are living here and not much of social aspect is there in Gibellina.

And there is also about the livelihood you know, how they can actually get their livelihood aspects of it. There are all many other factors which is related to it, so the scale has been in this what we are learning, a scale has been hyped and as a result of that what we are seeing is the infrastructural input has been mismanaged and an unfinished work has been held over, so in that way, in the name of beautification of the project but it has actually created a different ugly, unfinished parts.

And that way, it has also developed some kind of illegal spaces you know, that people just leftover these unfinished artworks or unfinished projects like that because of there was a funding mismanagement, there is the institutional, the way they looked at the these artists and the work. So, this whole thing has actually reveals us that the lack of understanding of the


local cultural needs and how the short-term, medium-term and the long-run adaptation process.

So, how one can think of the incrementality and one has not think about the incrementality you know. So, if this same project has been taught in a more of an incremental level, that would have been a better success.

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There is never just one cultural context for the providing of shelter following a disaster -there are always at least two.  
They are just distinct:


- the haves and have-nots,
- the powerful and the powerless,
- the relief organizations and the victims of disaster.



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In a cultural context, when we are providing a shelter, there is always two and they are very distinct. One is the haves and the have-nots, the powerful and the powerless, the relief organizations and the victims of the disaster. So, one is on upper hand and one is on the taking hand.


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Allen Barton's (1969) perceives disasters as part of the larger category of 'collective stress situations' which occur when many members of a social system fail to receive expected conditions of life from that system'.

During the relief operation, the traditional, local systems of organization are likely to be rejected in favour of the systems familiar to and exercised by the relief culture.

A victim culture is made aware of the failure of local, traditional, indigenous systems to anticipate the disaster when it happens.



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