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NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATIVE ASPECTS OF VERANDAH IN "WALAUWA" UNDER UVA PROVINCE: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

Vernacular architectural built environments are bio climatically comfortable, effective spaces as means of achieving comfort. "Pila" is a sustainably designed built environment with a goal of long term sensitive humanization of vernacular Architecture. Together it merges natural environmental conditions such as natural light, heat and ventilation in a significant manner. This multidisciplinary sustainable built environment; "Pila", was introduced in the novel mode with the colonization known as "Verandah". Caste system declared during Kandyan period, society composed with groups of people comprising diverse social levels. Under this norms, upper class or elites' constructed a dwelling type "Walauwa". Verandah is the preliminary element that these diverse social structure met. The fixed and semi fixed elements acts as an immediate transitional communicating non-verbally and logically. Uva province faced two Kandyan wars. Three case studies prevailed in Uva belongs to Last colonized British period creates an opportunity to interpret and compare the Verandah periodically. Detailing, materials, proportions and the user behavior was studied in depth on semi fixed elements of the Verandah and analyzed. The study will analytically conclude, how the semi-fixed elements, in depth towards furniture in Verandah non-verbally communicates the prevailed social structure with respect to Uva province.

Keywords: *Pila, Walauwa, Verandah, semi fixed elements, Communicative aspects*

1. Introduction

Kandyan period was the last independent monarchy of the island of Sri-Lanka. Caste system was introduced to the society during this period, creating a hierarchical order as High caste who interpreted themselves as the elites, service caste, and the lower caste. Each caste conveyed different sets of identical characters. To symbolize the social status, economic power position in the social structure. High caste or the elites constructed an advanced ornamental living place named 'Walauwa'. The utilization of 'Walauwa' was a medium of dwelling and place of displaying their social status. The highest elevation of the site was selected to the construction to symbolize the position given to the chief resident in the society. The owner of the 'Walauwa' had the authority to pass judgment over the people through the authorities given by the royal announcement. So people in different social classes gathered in this context. One of the characteristic element of 'Walauwa' was Verandah. It is more exposed to nature.

According to the traditional architecture in Sri Lanka, Verandah is the first built experience of a house. The communication was done nonverbally, using structural, material and behavioral patterns. This space creates the first impression and an immediate transitional built space. This element had been influenced with the arrival of the three colonials as follow,

(Kelegama S, Madawela Editor, 2002, pg 401) Portuguese was the first nation started colonizing Sri Lanka had a chance in arriving the country from Galle. (1505 to 1658). Portuguese colonization influenced mainly the culture, architecture and the religions in Sri Lanka. Then the Dutch who established in 1658 created a great impact towards the Sri Lankan society. The caste systems were not destroyed by the Dutch but they modified the caste system prevailed in Sri Lanka. The British social structure started distributing their powers around 1796. The powers of these elites were assigned for

their personal achievements. The caste system or the kingships were started diverging. Finally in 1815 the power of English was established in the whole country.

Simultaneously, Society changed in the meantime architecture was influenced, Elements were modified. Some were newly introduced. Verandah was, an element introduced by the Portuguese as a modification of traditional 'Pila' in a novel mode. It achieved different moods after Dutch and British periods. When considering the Verandah in 'Walauwa' context; it was the place where owner of the 'Walauwa' from the higher society and outsiders from different social categories met together. (Brohier R.L., 1969) Colonials were main charters who introduced movable furniture to Ceylon. 'Walauwa' was a better context to study the non-verbal communication through the semi-fixed features such as furniture and furnishing. This study look forward on the semi fixed elements of the verandah communicate behavioral patterns and Hierarchy maintained by the society and study the Semi fixed features of Verandah acts as emblems that used in place of commutative elements. They contain various clues. By studying the layout, details, materials, motifs, clues that non-verbally communicated can be simply interpreted. To conclude, British ruled the Sri Lanka nearly two hundred years and involved in socio-economic, cultural, architectural changes. These influences were still visible in hill country, Uva province 'Walauwa'. So there was a need of getting educated by studying historical remains. British influenced semi-fixed elements in Verandah was one of the fascinating broad subject which can be analytically studied under a wide array of areas and to achieve a wider knowledge in Verandah. Throughout this dissertation it signifies the non-verbal communication in semi fixed features (furniture and furnishings) of verandah.

2. Methods and methodology

This research is envisioned to study about semi-fixed features in it, and to analyse their involvement to communicate hierarchy and behaviours. Elite houses "Walauw" have been chosen, as the case studies where the semi fixed features of Verandah were well preserved to do a study in the original format. The details are mainly gathered from the archaeological departments and museums and field research. The information obtained were gathered from the discussions and observations made with the constant visits to these to Walauwa in UVA province. The study is limited to three protected 'Walauwa' in British period which locates in Uva province that was still functioning. Unique semi fixed elements in verandah found in the context were deeply researched. These three cases are studied deeply with the various aspect of the semi-fixed features such as materials, detailing, and proportion. Especially more priority was given on human interacting space and furniture.

3. Materials

First case study ;Dambawinna 'Walauwa' Walauwa located in Goonabaddha, Wellimada ,Uva province with a history runs back to 250 years back. The Structure of the Walauwa falls under 3 periods as Kandyan, Early British, and Late British. Initial origin of Dambawinna walauwa falls under Kandyan period. Second Case Study; Sanarakoon *Walauwa* situated in Puwakgodamulla, Badulla runs to nearly 125 years back. Now it is under the property of Mr. Milroie Rathwaththe as a 3rd generation property. According Milroie Ratwaththa, The *Walauwa* was constructed in the decade of 1880 s. Initially this was a property of former chieftain of Badulla namely belonged to *Rambukpotha* chieftain. Until his grandfather lived this Walauwa was known as *Samarakoon Walauwa*. Third Case Study; Katugaha Walauwa according to Dharmapala Attanayakes' readings, *Maligathanna* (Maliththa) ,Under Pattiyagedara postal division, Haliela this area comes with a great history.

4. Results and discussion

Among the above three case studies initially the layout was considered and then the furniture was assessed; Fig 1, Fig 2, Fig 3.

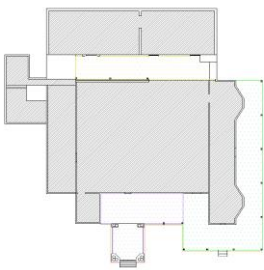


Fig 1- Plan of the Dambawinna Walauwa
Source - Author

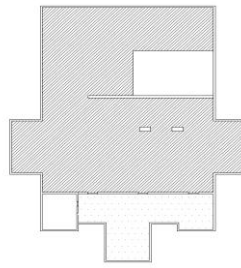


Fig 2- Plan of the Samarakoon Walauwa
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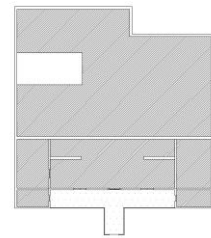


Fig 3- Plan of the Katugahagedara Walauwa,
Source – Author

4.1 Constructive material

Special mixture of clay and cow dung was used to finish the floors of the Verandah. Initial roofing materials of the Walauwa was ‘eluk’ and later on with the half round tiles. These depict that earlier the lives were bounden mostly with the nature. And the complicate functions but simple designs like motar and pestle communicate, how rich agriculturally fed families had been lived in the Walauwa. Proportion and the size helps to visually communicate it. The Indian influences on craftsmanship were not seen in this Verandah. Furniture was so simple. Using mats made the seating more comfortable and built up a hierarchy. Since this verandah was raised up nearly one foot up. The lower class people were not allowed on to this area but the ground level. Most of the agricultural equipment’s were seen on this verandah.

4.2 Verandah furniture layout

The veranda space describes the way how the furniture was arranged. As the space (a) has Mono design furniture (furniture out of rare material and Design) it communicates that this once even in the same verandah space (a) had a hierarchical level respective to space (b).

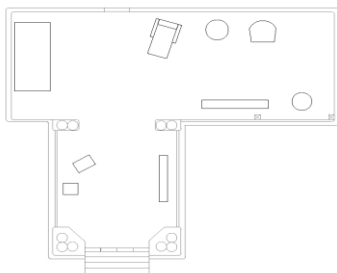


Fig 4 - Plan of the early British Verandah- Dambadeniya Walauwa, source author

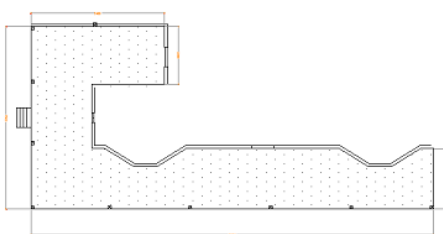


Fig 5 - Plan of the Late British Verandah- Dambadeniya Walauwa, source author

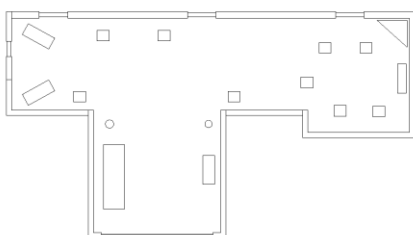


Fig 6 - Plan of the British Verandah-Samarakoon Walauwa, source

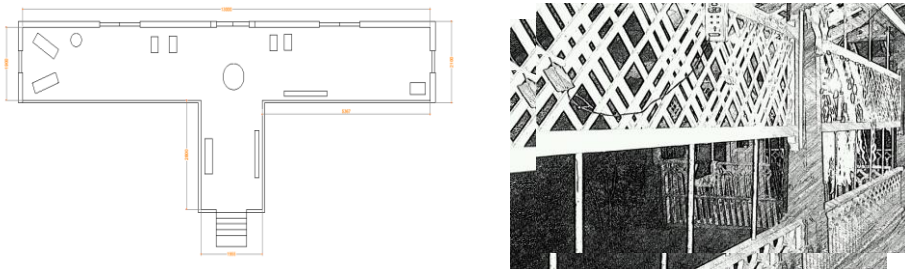


Fig 7 -Plan of the Late British Verandah- Katugahagedara Walauwa, Source author

4.3 Nonverbal Communication

Generally the communication among the people occur The furniture in this area had both Utilitarian function and Expressive Function. Fig 4,5,6,7 in three ways, Verbally, Vocally, Non Verbally. According to the suggestions of (Sarles.H, 1969), socio-conceptual characteristics of communication, that were of course, which were non-verbal and furthestmost important in the logic that they were the most immediate transitional, relatively indicate and they were the “loudest.” Mainly non-verbal communications are perceived visually. There two different ways that the concept of non-verbal communication can be defined in the surroundings, such analogy or metaphor. Nonverbal communication researches the links between different forms of communication have been studied by observing the cues or hints and then making interpretations. Since non-verbal analysis delivers a more beneficial model than does language.

4.3.1 Semi-fixed features in Verandah

The Verandah space provided with decorative set of semi fixed elements that utilize to entertain the outsiders as well as the owners. Furniture had played a main role in it. This was the master chair; Fig 8, used by the British ruler .Europeans has used Nadun timber as a valuable material to emphasize the hierarchical range. The seating posture had built the personality to communicate the status of the user ;fig 17. According to the observation of the below colonial furniture, standard proportions and sizes were used. Since that the height, width, length were standardized creating a double seating space for users; Fig 9. Rich carvings to enhance the social power and the prosperity. The details and aesthetic and the comfort ability of a furniture is the simplest social expressive elements that people could easily grab. Convertable stool ;fig 11, manufactured to the table height, out of nadun timber .Legs are detailed using the lath machine and two legs acts as a single unit that rotated around the centre axis so that the legs are simply foldable. It provided a writing surface at the top to the ruler to sign documents and stuff, and also to keep documents. The *kanappuwa*; Fig 10 made of Ebony timber, popular material for furniture among the Europeans. Varieties of timber gained with different values and prices also emphasize the hierarchical range. Designer has not bothered regarding the details. Because hierarchical value was already through the material. It communicates the pride of the user. “Feeding Chair” ; Fig 12 was made of Nadun 1100x 560x350 mm in size, 90 °in angle. It was unique among the breast feeding mothers. Since this doesn’t have two arm rests it created a perfect seating posture to the mother to feed the child. The proportion of the chair was harmless to the comfort of the child; fig 18. As there were no barriers the child is free to move his body .So it creates a relief to the mother & the child doesn’t get hurt when feeding. The proportion and the size of the furniture were well planned for relaxing purpose also made of Nadun Timber. This conveys the message to the user to relax fig13. The design seems simple and optimum functioning. 900(T.H) x 540x310 mm in size, 90 °in angle. Similar design to the early British feeding chair .Though the pattern of the chair was similar the proportion and the size had been changed; fig 16 .This depict the facts of the prevailed Society And through the observation it clearly convey two generation.

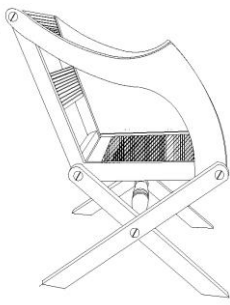


Fig 8 – Master chair
Dambawinna Walauwa
Source- Author

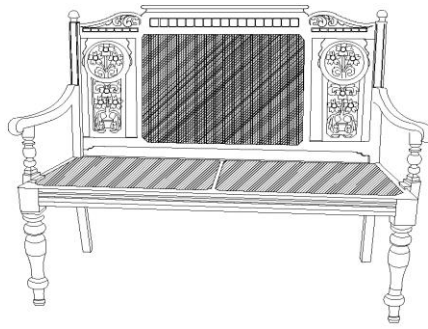


Fig 9 - Two Seater
Dambawinna Walauwa
Source - Author



Fig 10 – *Kanappuwa* ,
Dambawinna Walauwa
Source- Author



Fig 11 – Foldable stool,
Dambawinna Walauwa
Source- Author

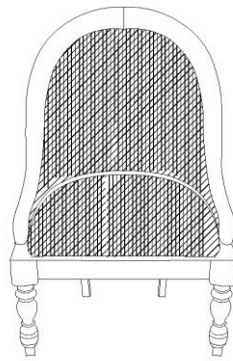


Fig 12 – feeding chair
Source- Author

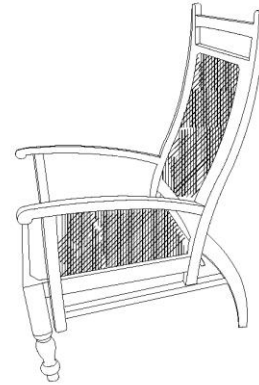


Fig 13 – Arm Chair
Source – Author

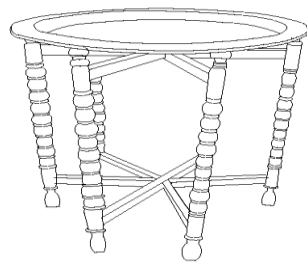


Fig 14- Foldable stool,
Source Author
Katugahagedara walauwa



Fig 15 – Decorative stool
Samarakoon Walauwa, Source – Author

This area was a public Verandah, among all the decorative furniture pieces, this type of furniture was seen, poor decorations, Details and design. The verandah in *Dambawinna Walauwa* shows the inviting quality of the outsiders but silently orders the guest and directs them to the relevant seating through the furniture fig 11. Also positioned in the edge of the verandah which communicates among lower class.



Fig 16 – Feeding Chair in two Sizes
Dambawinna Walauwa. Source – Author



Fig 21 – Ash Tray details and the stool top with the brass tray detail in Katugaha and the corner image is the Details of the Uva Province Flag



Fig 17 – seating posture
Of Master Chair
Source – Author



Fig 18 – user behavior
in Feeding chair
Source – Author

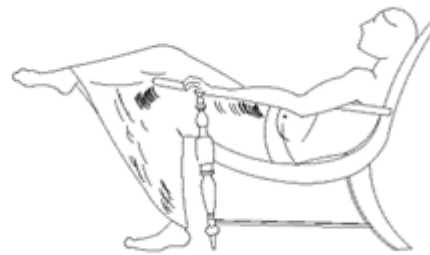


Fig 19 – seating posture in
arm Chair (haansi
putuwa), Source – Author

Furniture made of precious timber was placed in this *Walauwa* that depicts the wealth and power of the owner. The photographs of the Rathwathe generation were highly displayed in this area, this conveys the arrogance of the owner of his generation. And always want to build up the mindset of the outsider since they enter the verandah, that the owners hierarchical status. Highly crafted corner stand used to display the Mr Rathnayaka photographs. And Buddhist painting were displayed to convey the bond with the religion. According to later practice of Mr. Milroie Ratwatte, demolishing that furniture range expresses the inviting quality to all outsiders without considering the social classes.

The philosophy of harmony has been conveyed through the carving of the fan light using carving that mirror to through the center line. The painting on the top of the main entrance depicts the religious devotion towards the god. They believe this gives a protection to the entire living place and the family members. A two seater chair made of *Nadun* timber. Highly decorated details on the top of the furniture that convey the message of prosperity of the owner.

There were an identical feature in this *Hansi putuwa*; Fig 19, a highly decorative ash tray made of brass were placed on the right arm of the chair, signifies British period. This non-verbally communicates the user behavior, the male user in this *Walauwa* were smoking. Ash tray is highly decorative to signify the wealth of the owner. This foldable stool that can be introduced as Mono Design made of Ebony timber; fig 14, top of the stool was made of brass. The stool can be fold flat, and the top brass plate can be removed. These were furniture used in the sense of exhibits. To non-verbally communicate the wealth and power of the owner. When the outsiders visit these type of below chairs were used by the owner to sit. The comfortable, simple details but conveys a hierarchical look for the others. The status of the user was signified through the seating posture. Semi fixed features such as animal horns, and family photographs has been used as quick transitional elements that were “loudest” non-verbal communicative elements. No arm rest, less comfort ability a cheap

material together has built a furniture that convey a certain group of people. Seating posture of the furniture automatically create a gap between the high class and the low class; fig 20.

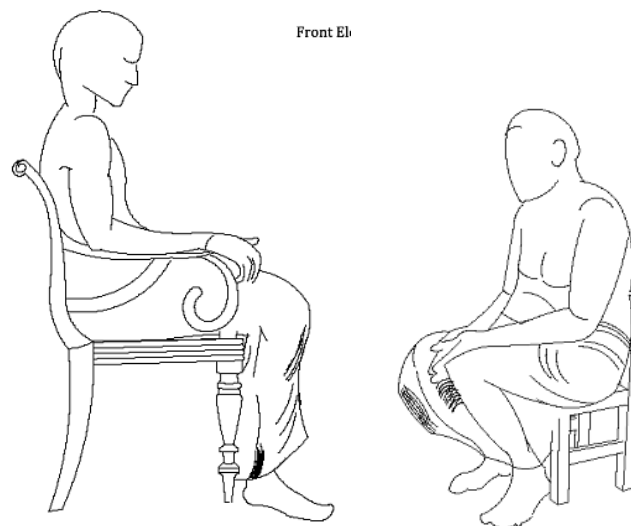


Fig 20 – Seating posture and the behavior of the high caste and the lower caste people

5. Conclusion

Socio- cultural appreciation of the society create a significance impression on the domestic dwelling with the aid of its characteristic elements. Since house is the most individual and the initial social unit and utilized by the same set of social members for a long term, that context contains a long term practiced socio- cultural aspects of the prevailed society. Elite living place “*Walauwa*”, was a dwelling used by the high caste people in the prevailed social structure, with a preserved set of social and cultural aspects (unique behaviors, hierarchical status).

Verandah is a unique element in this context. This space represent the total image of the users of the “*Walauwa*” which proportionately illuminate the significant of society in the prevailed period. Among them the Entrance verandah has been detected as the immediate and the initial transitional space. Semi fixed feature has played a huge role which non-verbally, visualizing, communicates the space stronger.

According to the logical analysis of the above three Verandah in the *Walauwa* context, three categories of Semi fixed features were identified. According to it prominent functions such as semi fixed features such as furniture used to express hierarchy ex; - Master chair, Furniture used to relax ex: - *Hansi Putuwa* and furniture and others furnishings used as exhibit without any functions of behavior. Ex:- Photographs

Human behavior, counting with the interaction and non-verbal communication, were influenced by roles, contexts, and situations plays on the context. In turn, they habitually communicated by clues in the settings. All these together communicates a particular group of people lived in the *Walauwa* context. With the comparison of the three *Walauw* in the Uva province, the over role communication and the transitional message was quiet similar. But the semi-fixed features such as furniture and the other elements was utilized to convey the message was conditionally unique to the owner of the *Walauwa*.

Proportion, size, Materials, details and aesthetics, behavioral pattern, seating posture and the layout together do a justice to reflect the social values of the furniture prevailed in the verandah. Since

verandah was a space that the out society and the inner society meet, the two different social impacts were clearly observed.

Early verandah that was a public area has become a semipublic space since after the British colonization. It was clearly understood the owners of the context non-verbally speaks to the out siders to sit of the suitable position of the seating relevant to the prevailed caste system.

The influence of British colonization toward Uva province was clearly observed through the semi-fixed features in the Verandah. There were some similarities with the details used in some cases with the details of the flag of Uva province. Details were used in an abstract format figu21. Behavior and hierarchy occurs in some context, and that setting is based on meaning, it follows that people behave diversely in same contexts by interpreting the available clues for their meaning. With the Semi-fixed elements Verandah was the main communicating space, which acts as an emblem in 'walauwa' context, which non-verbally communicate behavioral patterns and hierarchy of a prevailed society.

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