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Rooted Futures: Rethinking Landscape Architecture in the Indian Urban Age

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ABSTRACT:

Landscape architecture in India is evolving into a practice that goes far beyond aesthetics, entering the realms of ecological infrastructure, socio-spatial justice, and climate adaptation. This article argues for a re-rooting of the discipline in public, performative, and pedagogical roles, drawing from applied fieldwork, academic studios, and community-driven prototypes. It interrogates how Indian cities—vulnerable to floods, heatwaves, and biodiversity loss—can be reimagined through landscape strategies that are regenerative, inclusive, and locally grounded. Case studies include sponge park proposals, peri-urban ecology studies, and BALA (Building as Learning Aid)-inspired school landscapes. A special emphasis is placed on feminist and social ecology frameworks that reposition care, labor, and accessibility at the core of public space design. The article also critiques current educational practices and advocates for landscape pedagogy that centers site visits, local knowledge systems, and maintenance ethics. As cities become denser and more divided, landscape architecture is proposed not as a luxury, but as civic infrastructure—deeply embedded in the cultural, hydrological, and pedagogical life of urban India.

Keywords: Landscape Architecture, Urban Resilience, Public Health, Gender Equity, BALA, Sponge City, Ecological Infrastructure, CAS, Urban Design Education, Maintenance, Tactical Urbanism, Peri-urban Agriculture

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