

Preliminary Questions – Design and Planning

1) (Question in progress) What are the variations in the Mela over time (how has the city structure changed)?

Certainly the structure of the city had changed over time. We just have to consider the tremendous variations on quantity of people attending to the Kumbh and the increasing challenges that each version brings to all the involved community. For instance on 1953 the quantity of attending pilgrims was 6.000.000, on 1965 was 7.000.000, on 1977 was 10.000.000, on 1989 was 15.000.000 and on 2001 it was 63.500.000.

“The Kumba Mela alternates every three years between Allahabad, Nasik, Ujjain, and Haridwar. During the Kumba Mela festival at Allahabad in 1989 nearly 30 million people attended throughout the 41 days. It is by far the largest gathering in the world, what to speak of religious festival. For that reason it has been called "the largest number of human beings to ever assemble with a common purpose in the entire history of mankind" by the Guinness Book of World Records. That was describing the event in 1989 when 15 million people attended on the Amavasya day. This year, in 2001, nearly 30 million people assembled at one time over the January 24 Amavasya day, making the area of Allahabad the most populated region in the world. Over the course of the 41 days, an estimated 70 million people visited the site.” - Steven Knapp A description of the Kumbh Mela.

2) (Question in progress) How can we visually and spatially document temporary urbanism?

Using Aerial photography (Kite or Balloon) Photography - Video we can visualize:

- Flux patterns at different moments of the day and at different days
- Spots of morning baths and preys
- Main baths
- Impact of events in the spatial occupation.
- Outcomes of the grid under different occupancies

It is possible to produce mappings of:

- Spatial Use
- Material Flows
- Operational zones

- Kinds of Occupants
- Density of people per block
- Hourly Occupation
- Spatial Elasticity (Quantity of people using the space at different time)
- Material Geography (Effects of the extracted materials in the surrounding area)
- Access, flux and contained spaces
- Percentage of land occupied
- Compatibility of uses
- Reoccupation or elimination of all the infrastructure once the festival ends

Observations of the urban code at the Kumbh:

It is possible to take as reference the recently published book “Urban Code” by Anne Mikoleit and Moeritz Purckahuer and answering the following questions using diagrams sketches and photographs, as they do in their 101 rules for Soho. .

- Where does people walk more?
- Where are street vendors located?
- Where people buy more? Why?
- Where the rent for the tents increases?
- Does rent increase or decrease with density?
- There is presence of global brands? Which ones?
- Who knows better the districts, pilgrims, salesman, Tourists, Gurus, Sadhus, Prayagawalas,
- Tirtha Purohits, Akhara, Anna Ksetra?
- What are the landmarks of the place?
- What are the bigger attractors for people?
- Are shops located together?
- What does kind occupants carry in their hands while walking?
- Different typologies of shops sell different kind of objects? There is specificity in this sense?

- Does shops start selling in the early morning bathes or after?
- Crowding attracts people or people want to be by themselves?
- Does emptiness plays an important role on crowding formation or congregation tents play the main role?
- Does parking have any kind of protection structures - niches?
- There is wasteland inside the Mela boundaries? If yes, who occupies it?
- How flexible or fix are the movement patterns through the grid? Which are the more repeated?
- How is the composition of the blocks? Are there typologies of blocks? Blocks made up of big tents divided or are always single tents one next to the other?
- Does density per tent represent income of the dweller?
- How many entrances tents have? Access to blocks is given in the perimeter or there are also courtyards?
- Are entrances meeting points? How big are entrances? Does their size influence different kinds of behaviours?
- Does a pedestrian enter the space of the shops or they remain outside on the street?
- How active are residential roads versus more business oriented? Does different kind of occupation affect level of activity on streets?
- At what times does the provisions arrive? How are they distributed? How is the infrastructure of distribution composed?
- Does different kinds of occupant use the streets at different moments of the day?
- Does people moves at different paces at different times of the day?
- Day to day happens at the rivers on the streets or inside the tents?
- What are the different kind of clothes that different people occupies? Particular ways of dressing contribute with particulars colours to the cityscape?
- How many people move using boats rickshaws or tuc tuc? And where are they located for catching the people? Do rickshaw men live inside the Mela boundaries?
- There are children? Where do the plays? Are there public amenities like benches or playgrounds?
- What are the meeting points?
- How is the smell of the city? Does different parts have different smells? If yes which ones? Can we map it?
- What is the role of street performers and particular characters in animating the public space?
- Where and how is the trash collected?
- How is the nightlife? Uses change during the night or they remain the same?

- What are the outcomes of narrow versus wide streets? There are one-way streets?

Diagrams of:

Flux

Structural elements (Walking paths, streets that allow vehicles, plot structures of the grid)

Assemblage of the city

3) (Question in progress) Is there a stratification within the grid that separates types of pilgrims, and genders, from each other?

At Kumbh Mela of 1989 the administration designated inside the grid places for different kinds of pilgrims. They basically separated in five categories, each of them designated in the plan with one letter.

P	Prayagawalas (Local People)
TP	Tirtha Purohit (Priest of pilgrimage)
K	Kalpawasi (Place for people how goes to the Kumbh with religious purposes)
M	Sadhus
A	Akhara
AN	Anna Ksetra (People who volunteer and give food to everybody for free because it gives food karma)

Sadhus got the one of the most privileged sites occupying the first row on the banks of the river, just after them "Prayagawalas", which is the denomination for people from Allahabad got placed in the second row. Perpendicular to The Sangama there was two spots designated for the "Akhara", which are a particular kind of Sadhus. The second, third and four row parallel to the Ganges and perpendicular to the Yamuna was shared between the "Kalpawasi", "Prayagawalas", and the two spots just described at the encounter of the river for the Akhara. Since for Hindus the encounter of the rivers is the most holy place, we can assume that the most privileged site is the occupied by the "Akhara" and the "Kalpawasy" which where located just bit more west. Right after the to rivers get together there is place for the "Anna Ksetra" These are people who take care of the food and volunteer feeding the assistants for free. They do this because it gives them "good Karma."

(Image 1 Kumbh Mela Map 1989)

"The *akharas* (the different spiritual sects or groups) stay in different camps at the Kumbh Mela wherein their religious discourses and spiritual talks and debates are one of the main attractions for visitors to the Mela." - Steven Knapp: *A description of the Kumbh Mela*.

4) (Question in progress) What is the relationship between pedestrians and vehicle traffic during the festival?

Based on the 1989 plan we can see that the most of the pedestrian areas are concentrated in the most dense part of the city, in the place in which the tents are located. Vehicles and pedestrians are segregated intentionally. We can read from the map that vehicles are located on the southern part of the Yamuna and eastern part of the Ganges including also boats that travel along the Yamuna. On the Ganges there are not boats because of the presence of bridges. The segregation of Vehicles is probably a form of controlling risks of accidents.

5) What is the relationship between the physical structure of the temporary city and the temporal events that occur there?

6) How is land allocated?

7) How does temporal or temporary urbanism challenge large and permanent, but often brittle, urban form?

8) How can the spatial systems that emerge from this study inform natural and political emergency situations (i.e., refugee camps)?

9) What are the physical boundaries of the festival, and do they change from festival to festival?

10) (Question in progress) How is the city zoned between public and 'private' (residential) spaces?

The city is organized in sectors and camps. Each sector contain several camps and each camp itself contains different functional parts. There are shops, tents for sleeping and many kinds of amenities. There is a whole tourism industry of camps for visitors.

11) How are the collective systems—tent construction, electricity, water, sewage management, internet, cell phone towers, public restrooms, food distribution, medical care, and crowd control, to name a few—spatially constructed and deconstructed?

12) What are the timetables and route maps of public transport in the surrounding city, and to what extent do they change for the festival?

13) What is the land use data over the course of multiple years for the site?

14) (Question in progress) Can we relate the Kumbh to other similar models (temporary army camps and music festivals), or does it have a completely unique structure?

The Kumbh Mela could certainly be related with other kinds of massive public gatherings however it is important to have in mind at what levels it is useful to establish relationships.

Some interesting levels and cases of comparison would be:

- Gathering Motif (Religious, hazard, disaster, leisure, commemoration, political manifestation)
- Assembled Form, (Size, materiality, constitutive parts, time framework of assemblage)
- Time framework (Duration, number of repetitions, periodicity)
- Operability (Risk management, opportunity of public interest, opportunities for massive business)

15) Is the transition between the festival use of land and the agricultural use of land conscious

and well embedded in the cultivators imagination or is it a spontaneous action?

16) What is the relationship between the physical structures and the temporal events that occur in the Kumbh?

17) What are the physical boundaries of the festival?

18) Do they change from festival to festival?

What are the ways in which the Kumbh challenges traditional ways in which cities are designed and built?

19) What is the relationship between pedestrians and vehicles during the festival?

20) What is the relationship between the Kumbh and the broader landscape that contains it?

21) (Question in progress) What are the timetables and route maps of public transport in the surrounding city, and to what extent do they change for the festival?

Airport

The airport is located at a distance of 12 km from Allahabad city and is operational for domestic flights. Nearest other operational airports are Lucknow, Varanasi and Kanpur. Allahabad Airport. Currently two flights operate from this airport, both being Air India Regional, to Delhi. The Airport currently doesn't have Night landing facility, but in near future the system would be installed as a part of upgrading the airport. The Airport has VOR (Very High Frequency Omni Range) and DME (Distance Measuring Equipment) installed as part of up gradation in 2011. Allahabad airport's area is 1 Acre, the terminal's capacity being 50, for both arrival and departure. It's a civil enclave. The adjoining concrete apron measures 500 by 150 metres, and has 2 parking bays to cater to 1 CRJ and 1 ATR aircraft simultaneously. Allahabad's runway is oriented 12/30, is 8125 metres long and 150 metres wide. The Airfield has ground lighting facility and also equipped with Instrument Landing System (ILS) as well as Navigational facilities like DVOR/DME and an NDB.[1]

In normal dates there is an average of two daily flights arriving from Delhi

AI 9912 Air India (DEL) Delhi 9:15 AM

AI 9812 Air India	(DEL) Delhi	4:25 PM
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In normal dates there is an average of two daily fights departing to Delhi.

AI 9912 Air India	(DEL) Delhi	9:15 AM
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Trains

Arrivals in normal times

Image 2 (Time Table 1)

Image 3 (Time Table 2)

Image 4 (Time Table 3)

Image 5 (Time Table 4)

Image 6 (Time Table 5)

Image 7 (Time Table 6)

Image 8 (Time Table 7)

Image 9 (Time Table 8)

Departures in normal time

Image 10 (Time Table 9)

Image 11 (Time Table 10)

Image 12 (Time Table 11)

Image 13 (Time Table 12)

Image 14 (Time Table 13)

Image 15 (Time Table 14)

Image 16 (Time Table 15)

Image 17 (Time Table 16)

Buses

Taxis

Rickshaws

Auto Rickshaws

- 22) What is the reason for the grid?
- 23) What are the physical, political and economical variations in the Kumbh over time?
- 24) How does the weather affect the site daily, monthly or yearly?
- 25) How can we visually and spatially document temporary urbanism?
- 26) Where do pilgrims come from and how do they travel?
- 27) Where and how are religious institutions allocated space?
- 28) How is the technology for the festival chosen and why?
- 29) Is there anything conspicuously missing?
- 30) How has the technology used at the festival evolved over the years?
- 31) How are collective systems such as tent construction, electricity, water and sewage networks, internet hubs, cell phone towers, public restrooms or food storages constructed and deconstructed?

32) How is land allocated?

33) How can the spatial systems that emerge from this festival inform other temporal settlements?

34) How is the city zoned between public and 'private' spaces?

35) (Question in progress) How much new infrastructure is deployed at the place of the Kumbh?

Most people may not know the many preparations that are required to get ready for such a huge festival. We have to remember that the Kumbha Mela grounds has to accommodate 50 times more people than the city of Allahabad. Therefore, at the Mela site, over 145 kilometers of pipelines for the water supply have been laid, plus 120 kilometers of connecting pipes. These would be serviced by 26 tubewells specially bored at the ghats. There are also 450 kilometers of overhead power lines, serviced by 35 sub-stations to light up 15,000 streetlights. For the event of a fire, there are 1090 fire hydrants set up. This is a very important factor when one considers that there are about 5,000 ashrams or camps, most of which are using tents, in the Mela grounds, each with numerous participants. Additionally, to get to and from the *sangam* area and around the main grounds, there are 15 specially built pontoon bridges, along with 75 kilometers of metal plated roads (the plates are long steel sheets big enough only to allow traction for the tires of a vehicle), and 74 km of sand and cloth roads. - An Extra Report on Kumbha Mela, 2001. Stephen Knapp

36) (Question in progress) How does pilgrim get in and get out of the city?

For one thing, as you can imagine, there were serious traffic problems within the city of Allahabad. Some local workers could no longer drive cars to work because of the number of people on the streets of the city. They had to resort to using bicycles to get to work for several weeks. As groups of 10 to 50 pilgrims would come by train, bus or cars and make their way to the Kumbha Mela camps in unending processions, the city could do nothing but cope and make way. The train and bus stations were filled with arriving and waiting pilgrims milling around or sleeping in whatever space they could find. Trying to get out of Allahabad was sometimes more difficult than trying to get in. - An Extra Report on Kumbha Mela, 2001. Stephen Knapp

37) (Question in progress) Does transportation system change from year to year?

As the time drew closer to the Amavasya Day (the new moon), more and more people were streaming into the Kumbha Mela grounds. There had been seen a four-fold increase in vehicular traffic since the 1989 Mela, and certain vehicles used in the past, like bullock carts, were no where to be seen. By the time Amavasya arrived, no cars or trucks were allowed into the grounds or to drive along the streets of the Mela grounds for a day. There was room only for the huge crowds. - An Extra Report on Kumbha Mela, 2001. Stephen Knapp