Built Environment & Society

Field Visit: Ritchie Street

Group 8

Second largest electronics hub in India

Multi-cultural setting: Vendors from different parts of India

Houses over 2500+ shops

Customer base: Mostly professionals and students

Started as a radio market in the 1970s

Notorious for selling illegaly copied content

Ritchie Street: Over the years

- Continues to serve as an electronic hub for students who are looking to source electrical products at very affordable prices- will play an integral role in elongating the lifespan of the region amidst increasing competition from e-commerce websites

- Shift from cash to digital transactions have aided the shopkeepers in keeping up with the changes but still many shopkeepers are reluctant of accepting UPI-based payments- cash still serves as an easy medium of exchange for them

- Given its prominence as India's second largest electronics hub, it is crucial to understand how the region plays a role in the city's e-waste management practices

Our Journey

ARRIVING AT RITCHIE STREET
- Greeted by a lot of stares and gawking
- Crowded streets- had to move around as one single, squashed entity
- Easily accessible location due to the presence of Government Estate metro station in the vicnity

PARADISE FOR TECHNOPHILES
- Rows and rows of shops filled with electronic gadgets of all generations and models
- Availability of dupes of higher-end brands at very affordable prices

ARCHITECTURE
- Streets are greatly filthy and littered with garbage
-- Appears to be a different world altogether when juxtapositioned with the immaculately looking government buildings that are situated opposite the streets
- Clear depiction of the existence of the old Chennai and the modern Chennai in one place

FOOD EXPLORATIONS
- Decided to binge on some street delicacies after walking around for too long
- Famous for housing the Irani Cafe
- Food scene gains vibrancy after sunset on the opening of Burmese food shops

Possible Research Topics

- Socioeconomic Impact of Ritchie Street on the Surrounding Area
- Retail Space Utilization and Design in Ritchie Street
- Digital Transformation and E-commerce's Impact on Ritchie Street
- Cultural Identity and Diversity in Ritchie Street
- Impact of Ritchie Street on Chennai's e-waste generation and management

Possible Themes

Spatiality

- Analyze the architectural changes, urban planning influences, and socioeconomic factors that have shaped the street's built environment over time.
- Explore how retailers in Ritchie Street utilize their limited space for showcasing and selling electronics goods. Analyze the interior design, layout, and visual merchandising strategies employed by businesses to maximize their retail efficiency.

Cultural

- Cultural dynamics of Ritchie Street, considering the diverse range of customers and businesses. Examine how cultural factors influence the street's architecture, signage, and overall character.

Technological

- Investigate how technological advancements have influenced the design and layout of Ritchie Street's shops and stalls.
- Analyze how the rise of e-commerce and online shopping platforms has affected the traditional retail landscape of Ritchie Street. Investigate whether businesses have adopted digital strategies to stay relevant.

Thank you