ABSTRACT

The critical study of vernacular settlement architecture is a topic of research that tries to answer whether matrilineal kinship has specific impact on design of settlement and architecture. The cases in Kerala, India and in Minangkabau, Indonesia are done with regard to common social-spatial organization of matrilineal kinship, tropical environment setting and paddy-farming main stay. The study is based on the assumption that settlement and architecture are a result of the establishment of dwelling culture where kinship is one factor that establishes a social-spatial organization and, therefore an arrangement of settlement and houses. The concepts of settlement elaborated for the case in Kerala is tara-Nayar, and for the case in Minangkabau is nagari. These settlements are characterized by matrilineal joint family residential compounds, which are called taravad in Kerala and kampung or kaum in Minangkabau.

This research is aimed to identify social-spatial organization framework of matrilineal kinship that is able to explain the common and different principles of design of settlement and architecture that occur in both regions. Anthropo-Arch method supplemented with Territorial Control analysis is utilised to establish the research methodology. The term design in this context is understood as the state of social-spatial integrity examined through the extent of territorial control over horizontal structure in landscape and its visual reflections.
The unilineal kinship in both cases demonstrates social and spatial integrity that is maintained through collective orientation toward single line of ancestor and therefore constitutes clan-based habitation. The matrilineal kinship makes the reference of ancestor and clan from the maternal line. In the case of both places the main findings show that the matrilineal kinship principles in design habitation demonstrates that architectural and spatial reflection of matrilineal kinship in both places associate spatially and functionally more to degree of communal characters, consequently produced by division of role of property holder in female part, and property management in male part. It also demonstrates fluidity of network of houses in various level of habitation which is governed by kinship and spiritual bond.

Habitation and dwelling culture of matrilineal society shows that the concept of centre is not rigid and does not appear as a singular apex. It appears as a dynamic entity and more as an ancestral reference rather than monument. The special allocation of space given for female correlates more to preserving the fertility and welfare within the construction, building and settlement structure; and maintaining pure descent of clan by preserving female within the functional structure of the building and settlement.

Differences take place in varying degree of manifestation of these concepts due to contextual environment, local social history, and intensity of urbanization. Nagari demonstrates, more communal characters which coincides with higher degree of matrilineal characters than in Kerala. Kerala has more urbanized characters and complex historical upheavals that led it to transformations and relocations, including the transformations of clan-based into caste-based society, and inclinations toward more paternal characteristic.
than Minangkabau. This assessment coincided with the fact that design configuration in Kerala is rigid, centre and territory is better defined, and architectural profession is better established and centered to a particular community with particular skill. These rigid configurations are relatively less in Minangkabau.