ABSTRACT:
While travelling on local public transport and visiting some of the city’s recreational spaces, I sense a certain dearth of ways in which these facilities provide for the ordinary people with a medium through which they can communicate and interact positively with each other. This indicates that in the urban atmosphere of Karachi, a socio-cultural value is amiss; like a well-defined and properly functioning public square or congregational space; allowing for urban interaction.
The definition for a congregational or public space is quite simply: “containers of public activity”. Yet a more comprehensive one would be containers of public activity for all and sundry. From a bird’s eye view these public spaces appear to be the city’s nuclei, performing the function of lungs for closely packed architectural clusters.
In Karachi, the Kothari parade and its environs are a fine example of a public space that architecturally, historically and culturally has all the elements of a vital urban congregational hub, though has it really assisted in the establishment of an interactive and integrated society is a question to ask. Also there is barely any evidence of replicating the same elsewhere. The city of Karachi has a culturally disintegrated populace along with its other undeniable urban issues.
Since any thought or action by the architect has a ripple effect, it is pertinent to ask: Can
architecturally sound public or congregational spaces contribute in building an interactive urban atmosphere?
The dissertation spreads over four chapters, the first chapter explores the urban issues of Karachi and the numerous factors responsible for creating these urban issues are clearly stated. In the second chapter I discuss the social, physical and psychological need for a public space. In this chapter an understanding is developed for how people require a public space for social networking. The third chapter defines the advantages of society enjoys in having good public spaces. These advantages bring positive outlook for the people and the country. The last chapter discusses a case study in Karachi, after stating the problems of this case study the positive features of this site are also elaborated. In the urban context architecturally sound public spaces fulfill the physical and functional requirements of the city and the social and cultural needs of people.