

**A STUDY OF ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE  
MANAGEMENT BY THE INFORMAL COMMUNITY  
BODIES IN TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS OF  
OLD DHAKA**

**IFTEKHAR AHMED**

*(B.Arch.), Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology  
(Master of Urban Design), The University of Hong Kong*

**A THESIS SUBMITTED**

**FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
IN ARCHITECTURE  
DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE  
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE**

**2012**

## **Acknowledgements**

Writing this dissertation has been a rigorous yet enjoyable experience. It wouldn't have been possible without the valuable support of a number of individuals to whom I am sincerely grateful.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Dr Johannes Widodo and my co-supervisor Dr Wong Yunn Chii for their valuable guidance, continuous support and encouragement in conducting this research. Their guidance and support has been a great inspiration for me. I thank Dr. Fuad H. Mallick from BRAC University and Dr. Mahtab-uz-Zaman for their support and recommendation which helped to pursue my studies at NUS.

I thank all those kind individuals who have supported me and rendered their assistance during my field study in Old Dhaka. I like to thank all the participants in the field study for their warmth and hospitality and making me feel like one of their own. Thank you for sharing your valuable knowledge about the heritage of Old Dhaka.

I like to thank all the colleagues that I have met during the conferences and seminars that I attended during this study. The conversations and shared knowledge was a great support for this study.

Finally, I like to thank the members of my family, my mother Tayebun nesa, my brother Taslim, my wife Tania and my daughter Nusayba. I am grateful for their love and understanding, without which this study wouldn't have been possible.

Iftekhar Ahmed  
January, 2012

## Table of contents

Acknowledgements.....	ii
Summary.....	ix
List of Tables.....	xi
List of Figures.....	xii
List of Maps.....	xvi

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background .....	1
1.1.1 Research Focus: Informal Heritage Management in Old Dhaka.....	3
1.1.2 Problem Statement.....	6
1.1.3 Gaps in Existing Studies on Urban Heritage.....	8
1.2 Research Objective.....	13
1.3 Research Questions.....	13
1.4 Importance of the Research.....	14
1.4.1 Contribution to Theory.....	16
1.4.2 Contribution to Practice.....	16
1.5 Delimitations.....	17
1.6 Organization of Thesis.....	18
1.7 Research Methodology.....	21
1.7.1 Observation as Research Tool.....	24
1.7.2 Interview as Research Tool.....	25
1.7.3 Grounded Theory Method.....	28
1.7.4 Summary of Research Methodology.....	32

## Chapter 2

### URBAN HERITAGE CONSERVATION

2.1 Introduction.....	33
2.2 The Importance of Heritage Conservation.....	33
2.3 Definition of Relevant Terms.....	36
2.3.1 Heritage.....	36
2.3.2 Architectural Heritage.....	37
2.3.3 Heritage Conservation.....	38
2.3.4 Heritage Management.....	40
2.4 History of Urban Heritage Conservation.....	40
2.5 Evolution of the Concept of Urban Conservation.....	43
2.5.1 Shift of Paradigm: Recognizing the Intangible Values.....	44

2.5.2 Heritage and Authenticity.....	47
2.6 Theoretical and Conceptual Developments: International Charters of Heritage Conservation.....	48
2.7 A Brief Critical Review of the Heritage Conservation Charters.....	52
2.8 Urban Heritage Conservation: the Key Issues.....	55
2.9 Historic City Centers: Some Common Elements.....	56
2.10 Traditional Neighborhoods in Historic City Centers.....	60
2.11 Case Studies of Urban Heritage Conservation in Historic Cities of Asia	62
2.11.1 Georgetown, Penang.....	62
2.11.2 Lahore Walled City.....	68
2.11.3 Lucknow.....	74
2.12 Chapter Conclusion.....	80

### Chapter 3

#### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND INFORMAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT**

3.1 History and Concepts of Public Participation.....	81
3.1.1 The Concept and Development of Public Participation.....	81
3.1.2 Essential Elements and Procedures of Public Participation.....	86
3.1.3 Public Participation: Factors that Work For (or Against) it.....	88
3.2 Types of Public Participation .....	92
3.2.1 Formal Public Participation.....	92
a. Role of Facilitators and Authorities.....	95
b. Role of Civil Society.....	96
3.2.2 Informal Public Participation.....	98
3.3 Definitions of Relevant Terms.....	100
3.3.1 Informal Heritage Management.....	100
3.3.2 Public.....	101
3.3.3 Public Participation.....	101
3.3.4 Community.....	102
3.3.5 Informal Community Bodies.....	103
3.4 Heritage, Meaning and Collective Memory.....	104
3.5 Community Identity and Cultural Continuity.....	107
3.6 Social Value of Heritage.....	109
3.7 Importance of Public Participation in Heritage Conservation.....	111
3.8 Contemporary Concepts of Participatory Heritage Conservation.....	112
3.8.1 Contemporary Ideas and Public Participation in Heritage Conservation.....	112
3.8.2 Elements of Participatory Heritage Conservation.....	115
3.8.3 Steps and Processes of Participatory Heritage Conservation.....	117
3.9 Informal Heritage Management.....	120
3.10 Case Studies of Community Heritage Conservation.....	123
3.10.1 Krishan Temple, India.....	124
3.10.2 Astana of Syed Mir Muhammad, Pakistan.....	128
3.11 General Observations.....	131
3.12 Chapter Conclusion.....	132

## Chapter 4

### URBANISM AND HERITAGE OF OLD DHAKA

4.1 History and Overview of Dhaka city.....	133
4.2 Urbanism of Old Dhaka: Elements.....	141
4.3 Traditional Neighborhoods of Old Dhaka: the Mahalla.....	144
4.4 Chronology of the Development of Traditional Neighborhoods.....	145
4.5 Mahalla, Community and Urban Form.....	146
4.5.1 Relationship of Mahalla and Community.....	146
4.5.2 Sociocultural Influence on Space Formation in Mahalla.....	147
4.5.3 Mahalla: Formation, Transformation and Continuity.....	151
4.5.4 Social Unit Formed by Crafts and Trade: Role of Economic Activities.....	155
4.6 Heritage of Old Dhaka: Elements.....	157
4.7 History and Living Heritage.....	161
4.8 Heritage as Cultural, Political and Economic Resource.....	163
4.9 Types of Heritage.....	165
4.9.1 Community Buildings.....	165
4.9.2 Private Property.....	168
4.10 Culture and Religion: Influence of Intangible Elements on Tangible Heritage.....	170
4.10.1 Cultural and Religious Events in Old Dhaka and the Continuity of Heritage.....	170
4.10.2 Social, Cultural and Religious Events as Platform for Informal Heritage Management of Built Heritage.....	172
4.11 Traditional Crafts of Old Dhaka.....	173
4.12 General Observations: Collective Ownership, Informal Heritage Management and Community Coordinated Continuity of Heritage.....	178
4.13 Chapter Conclusion.....	179

## Chapter 5

### FORMAL HERITAGE CONSERVATION IN DHAKA

5.1 Background of Formal Heritage Conservation in Dhaka.....	181
5.2 Formal Heritage Conservation: The ‘Top Down’ Approach.....	182
5.3 Background of the Department of Archeology.....	183
5.4 Legislations for Heritage Conservation.....	187
5.5 Methods of Listing Architectural Heritage.....	190
5.6 Heritage Status and Ownership.....	193
5.7 Formal Approach to Conserving Intangible Heritage.....	194
5.8 Limitations of Formal Heritage Conservation in Dhaka.....	195
5.9 Case studies of Formal Heritage Conservation by Department of Archaeology.....	198
5.9.1 Formal Heritage Conservation in Panamnagar.....	198
5.9.2 Formal Heritage Conservation in Lalbagh fort.....	204

5.9.3 Formal Heritage Conservation of Khan Mohammad Mridha's Mosque.....	211
5.9.4 Formal Heritage Conservation of Northbrook Hall.....	216
5.9.5 Comparison of Case Studies of Formal Heritage Conservation.....	219
5.10 Recent Steps by Formal Authorities to Protect Local Heritage.....	221
5.11 Present Scenario after the <i>List</i> : Vulnerable Local Heritage.....	224
5.12 General Observations.....	227
5.13 Chapter Conclusion.....	229

## Chapter 6

### COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN HERITAGE MANAGEMENT IN OLD DHAKA

6.1 Heritage Management in Old Dhaka: Active Participation of the Community	231
6.2 Stakeholders' Role and Participation in Informal Heritage Management.....	232
6.3 Informal Heritage Management and Continuity of Use.....	233
6.4 Social Capital and the Local Community.....	235
6.4.1 Definition of Social Capital.....	235
6.4.2 Social Capital in Old Dhaka.....	237
6.5 Informal Community Bodies of Old Dhaka.....	240
6.5.1 History and Development of Community Bodies.....	240
6.5.2 <i>Panchayet</i> : History, Development and Activities.....	241
6.5.3 Organization of <i>Panchayet</i> .....	244
6.5.4 Roles and Responsibilities of Community Bodies.....	247
6.5.5 Informal Heritage Management by Community Bodies.....	249
6.5.6 Informal Community Bodies, Consultation and Community Involvement.....	251
6.5.7 Bangshal Pond: a Case of Successful Community Management.....	253
6.6 Heritage Management Activities of Informal Community Bodies.....	256
6.6.1 Decision Making, Task Management and Implementation.....	256
6.6.2 Financial Management.....	257
6.6.3 Involvement of Community Bodies in Heritage Management.....	258
6.6.4 Primary Contributions of the Informal Community Bodies.....	259
6.7 Informal Community Heritage Management: Some General Observations....	263
6.7.1 Managing Continuity of Intangible Elements.....	264
6.7.2 Informal Heritage Management and Notion of Authenticity.....	265
a. Authenticity and Continuity of Use.....	265
b. Some Relevant Issues of Authenticity.....	268
6.7.3 Construction Methods and Other Physical Issues.....	270
6.7.4 Steps of Informal Heritage Management.....	274
6.7.5 Role in Managing the Community Businesses.....	275
6.8 Chapter Conclusion.....	276

## Chapter 7

### CASE STUDIES OF INFORMAL HERITAGE MANGEMNT IN OLD DHAKA

7.1 Selection Criteria of Case Study Areas.....	277
7.2 Types of Architectural Heritage and Management Approaches.....	277
7.3 Case Study Area 1: Kosaituli.....	279
7.3.1 Kosaituli <i>Panchayet</i> .....	281
7.3.2 Kosaituli Mosque.....	283
7.4 Case Study Area 2: Shankharibazar.....	293
7.4.1 Linear Row Houses of Shankharibazar: Background and Significance.....	293
7.4.2 Intangible Elements and Cultural Events.....	297
7.4.3 Informal Heritage Management Activities.....	297
1. Space Formation and Community Coordination.....	298
2. Property Subdivision.....	297
3. Other Activities Related to Heritage Management.....	303
4. Living Heritage: Threats and Challenges.....	307
7.4.4 Pogose School.....	308
7.5 Case Study Area 3: Armanitola.....	314
7.5.1 Armenian Church.....	316
7.5.2 Star Mosque.....	321
7.6 Internal Conflicts and Problems of Informal Heritage Management.....	328
7.7 Public-Private Collaboration in Dhaka: Solid Waste Management by <i>Waste Concern</i> .....	332
7.8 General Observation: From All Case Study Areas Combined.....	333
7.9 Chapter Conclusion.....	335

## Chapter 8

### SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

8.1 Summary of Heritage Management Activities by Community Bodies.....	337
8.2 Interpreting Ownership, Continuity of Traditional Wisdom and Heritage Management.....	339
8.3 Religious Values and Beliefs.....	340
8.4 Depopulation, Intervention and Diminishing Social Capital.....	342
8.5 Spheres of Community Control: Problems and Challenges of Managing the Living Architectural Heritage of Old Dhaka.....	345
8.6 Formal vs. Informal: Government Intervention and Conflicts.....	348

## Chapter 9

### CONCLUSION

9.1 Informal Heritage Management: a Problem of Identity.....	351
9.2 'Community Ownership' and Cultural Tourism.....	352

9.3 A Possible Support System.....	355
9.4 Possible Areas for Future Research.....	359
9.4.1 Possible Areas for Future Research on the Informal Heritage Management System in Old Dhaka.....	359
9.4.2 Possible Issues to be Explored in Relation to the Proposed Support System.....	360
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	363
<b>Selected key bibliography categorized by the research concepts</b> .....	381
<b>Publications by author in the research area</b> .....	390
<b>Appendices</b> .....	391



## Summary

The heritages of the historical quarters are of profound significance for the local communities. Heritage connects to the communities past, and ensures the continuity into future. They are product of many generations; created and carried through shared experiences. They symbolize their values, ensures continuity of their traditional way of life and socio-cultural practices rooted in place.

Most of the traditional neighborhoods in Old Dhaka, the historic core of the capital city of Bangladesh, have survived the urban development around them. This study examines how the communities in the traditional neighborhoods sustain their heritage with a particular focus on the roles of informal community bodies in shaping and managing the architectural heritage in the traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka. This study finds that the traditional informal community bodies have been playing a significant role in managing and sustaining the local architectural heritage, working parallel to the formal authorities.

To keep the heritage *alive*, it is important to allow the community to continue with them, and most importantly, enable them to voice their opinion and actively participate in the heritage management. Community support and engagement is crucial for heritage conservation at living heritage places, as the success depends on their active involvement through collaboration among different stakeholders, skilled heritage professionals, traditional craftsmen and the overall community. Many unfortunate attempts at heritage conservation by the formal authorities have devalued this. In most cases, the projects excluded the local communities from the conservation

process, to save the heritage in 'pristine and authentic' condition. Also, in the process of formal conservation, the intangible heritages are rarely taken into account and the valuable cultural links are discontinued.

This study finds that there are two key problems with the identity of spontaneous community participation in the form of informal heritage management. First, the idea of community participation is limitedly recognized or practiced in Bangladesh, Even in these limited efforts, the process is essentially 'top-down', meaning the initiative is taken by the organizations, not from the community itself. The second problem is that of formal authority's reluctance to investigate whether community participation in the form of informal heritage management already exists, before any steps are taken.

This study examines the ways the local communities in the traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka have retained their cultural continuity and managed their architectural heritage withholding development pressure in a fast changing urban environment around them. The study uses Grounded theory method as a qualitative approach for three selected case study areas of Old Dhaka. Open ended interview questions and observation have been used as research tools.

This study shows that there is a stark contrast between the formal heritage conservation and informal heritage management process on important issues. The situation at present is highly contested. In several cases; a completely new dimension has been created by the formal interventions by government bodies, especially over the last two decades, and the results are alarming. The value and continuity of the local heritage, which has been solely dependent on the informal management system for centuries is increasingly becoming vulnerable.

## List of Tables

Table 1:	Basic information types, conceptual constructs and variables in... the interview	27
Table 2:	Shift of paradigm in heritage conservation.....	46
Table 3:	Key issues in heritage conservation charters.....	51
Table 4:	Different Heritage Values.....	109
Table 5:	Promoting Deliberation.....	114
Table 6:	Five essential questions to be answered in participatory conservation process.....	122
Table 7:	Traditional and contemporary management approaches.....	118
Table 8:	Population of Dhaka 1700 to 1961.....	134
Table 9:	Chronological development of some of the traditional neighborhoods and few of the important Architectural heritages of Old Dhaka.....	145
Table 10:	Five major types of obsolescence.....	156
Table 11:	Comparison of case studies of Formal heritage conservation.....	220
Table 12:	Types of continuity in the traditional neighborhoods.....	267
Table 13:	Summary of activities related to heritage management in Old Dhaka.....	334
Table 14:	Comparison between the issues of formal and informal heritage conservation.....	349

## List of Figures

Figure 1:	Summary of the research methodology.....	32
Figure 2:	Heritage elements in historic quarter of Penang.....	65
Figure 3:	Model and aerial view of Lahore Walled City.....	70
Figure 4:	Heritage of Lahore Walled City.....	71
Figure 5:	Heritage of Lucknow.....	77
Figure 6:	Eight rungs on the ladder of citizen participation.....	82
Figure 7:	Continuum of Participation.....	84
Figure 8:	South Lanarkshire’s wheel of participation.....	84
Figure 9:	Comparison of length of time: Unilateral decision versus public participation.....	89
Figure 10:	Location map, plan and section of Krishan temple.....	124
Figure 11:	Krishan temple – before and after restoration.....	126
Figure 12:	Community participation in conservation of Krishan temple.....	126
Figure 13:	Location map, section and plan of Astana of Syed Mir Muhammad.....	128
Figure 14:	Astana of Syed Mir Muhammad before and after stabilization and restoration.....	129
Figure 15:	Reconstruction and community involvement in conservation of Astana of Syed Mir Muhammad.....	130
Figure 16:	Aerial view of Old Dhaka showing the River Buriganga, river terminal and the high density urban fabric.....	141
Figure 17-1:	Some basic elements of Old Dhaka Urbanism-1.....	142
Figure 17-2:	Some basic elements of Old Dhaka Urbanism-2.....	143
Figure 18:	The manifestation of socio-cultural choices in the space formation in <i>mahallas</i> .....	149
Figure 19:	Transformation and continuity of the <i>mahalla</i> with growing Physical and Socio-cultural layers with time.....	150

Figure 20:	Urban pattern in the <i>mahallas</i> .....	151
Figure 21:	Development stages in the residential subdivision in Shankharibazar, a <i>mahalla</i> of Old Dhaka.....	152
Figure 22:	Hierarchy and transition from public to semi-public to private to sacred spaces (horizontally and vertically) in the Physical forms of <i>mahallas</i> .....	154
Figure 23:	Diagrammatic representation of linear and transverse horizontal subdivisions of property in the <i>mahallas</i> .....	157
Figure 24:	Tangible heritage elements of Old Dhaka.....	158
Figure 25:	Intangible heritage elements of Old Dhaka, including traditional crafts, skills, and businesses, and construction styles.....	159
Figure 26:	Tangible and Intangible elements of heritage in traditional neighborhoods with forces of change.....	160
Figure 27:	Community heritage buildings of Old Dhaka.....	166
Figure 28:	Different residential heritage buildings of Old Dhaka.....	169
Figure 29:	<i>Puja</i> celebrations (left) and <i>Pohela Baishakh</i> celebration (right)	171
Figure 30:	Steps of <i>Chini-Tikri</i> ornamentation.....	174
Figure 31:	<i>Chini-tikri</i> ornamentation in Old Dhaka.....	175
Figure 32:	The process of making stucco.....	176
Figure 33:	Stucco ornamentation in Old Dhaka.....	176
Figure 34:	Shankha and conch shells.....	173
Figure 35:	Craft of clay idols.....	178
Figure 36:	Administrative structure of the Department of Archaeology in short.....	186
Figure 37:	Different sections and responsibilities of Department of Archaeology.....	187
Figure 38:	Different methods used by the Department of Archaeology for detecting and listing architectural heritage for conservation.....	190
Figure 39:	Heritage buildings of Panamnagar before conservation.....	200

Figure 40:	Improper restoration and conservation measures at Panamnagar	202
Figure 41:	Plan of Lalbagh fort.....	205
Figure 42:	Aerial view of the Lalbagh fort within the high density urban fabric.....	206
Figure 43:	Illegal encroachments at Lalbag fort.....	209
Figure 44:	The <i>Poribesh Bachao Andolan</i> (Poba) formed a human chain....	210
Figure 45:	Plan of Khan Mohammad Mridha's Mosque.....	212
Figure 46:	Khan Mohammad Mridha's Mosque.....	213
Figure 47:	Hybrid architecture of Northbrook Hall at Old Dhaka.....	217
Figure 48:	Vulnerable local heritage.....	225
Figure 49:	The Kosaituli Panchayet and Mosque committee members at Star mosque of Armanitola.....	243
Figure 50:	Aerial view of Bangshal pond.....	253
Figure 51:	Different activities in the <i>Bangshal</i> pond.....	254
Figure 52:	Involvements of community bodies in heritage management.....	259
Figure 53:	Kosaituli location map in Dhaka city, Kosaituli map and Aerial view.....	280
Figure 54:	Different parts of the ornate Kosaituli Panchayet house.....	282
Figure 55:	<i>Chini-tikri</i> ornamentation in exterior and interior of Kosaituli mosque.....	285
Figure 56:	List of the members of the Kosaituli mosque management committee (past and present) displayed on the mosque wall.....	287
Figure 57:	List showing revenue and expenditure of 2009 of Kosaituli mosque management.....	289
Figure 58:	Shankharibazar location map in Dhaka city, Shankharibazar map and Aerial view.....	294
Figure 59:	Vibrant street life and rich architectural heritage of Shankharibazar.....	295
Figure 60:	3D animation showing the linear row houses of Shankharibazar...	296

Figure 61:	Plan and elevations of house 62 and 63 in Shankharibazar.....	296
Figure 62:	Combined elevation of liner row houses of Shankharibazar.....	297
Figure 63:	Aerial view showing a clear shift to cardinal axis in space formation of Shankharibazar.....	298
Figure 64:	Diagrammatic representation of linear and transverse horizontal types of property subdivision in <i>Shankharibazar</i> .....	299
Figure 65:	Developmental stages in the residential subdivision and extension	300
Figure 66:	A row house of Shankharibazar with open to sky courtyard.....	300
Figure 67:	Sketch showing different stages of property subdivision and shared usage of courtyards and roof top terraces in Shankharibazar	301
Figure 68:	Different Conservation phases.....	303
Figure 69:	Open to sky courtyards with shared utilities and their circulation	305
Figure 70:	Shared roof top temples.....	306
Figure 71:	Image collage showing different parts of the Pogose High School	309
Figure 72:	Informal heritage management activities at Pogose high school...	313
Figure 73:	Armanitola location map in Dhaka city, Armanitola aerial view and map.....	315
Figure 74:	Image collage showing different parts of the Armenian Church...	317
Figure 75:	Different parts of the Star mosque at Armanitola.....	322
Figure 76:	The new extension overshadowing the original Binat Bibi mosque	330
Figure 77:	The demolished Churhatta mosque site showing construction of the new block.....	331
Figure 78:	Summary of Heritage management activities by Informal community bodies .....	338
Figure 79:	The horizontal-vertical relationship between socioeconomic forces, physical context and religious values and beliefs.....	341
Figure 80:	Depopulation, intervention and diminishing social capital.....	344
Figure 81:	Spheres of community control: problems and challenges of managing the living architectural heritage of old Dhaka.....	347
Figure 82:	A possible support system for vulnerable Informal heritage management system in Old Dhaka.....	357

## List of Maps

Map 1:	Map of heritage conservation zones Georgetown from 1987 to 2005 – reflecting policy changes towards the historic city.....	63
Map 2:	Map of Lahore Walled City.....	69
Map 3:	Map showing Lucknow heritage area.....	75
Map 4:	Map showing growth of Dhaka over 400 years.....	133
Map 5:	Left - Map of Pre Mughal Dhaka and Right - Map of Mughal Dhaka.....	135
Map 6:	Left - Map of Dhaka in 1859 and Right - Map of Dhaka in 1905-11.....	137
Map 7:	Map of Dhaka after 2000.....	140
Map 8:	Map showing location of Panamnagar.....	199
Map 9:	Map of Panamnagar.....	199
Map 10:	Maps showing transformation of linear row houses of Shankharibazar.....	302
Map 11:	Map showing neighborhood boundary condition in Shankharibazar with adjacent neighborhoods.....	306



# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research Background

The built environments in the older urban fabrics are rich palimpsest of layers of history. It is important to conserve the elements of heritage value in these built environments for continuity of local identity and culture.

The traditional neighborhoods in these urban fabrics are enclaves of community living. Communities are rooted in place and develop their own set of rules, rituals, belief system, signs and symbols. They are based on religion or culture, and they find their expression in a range of built forms having socio-religious relevance, both at the collective and individual level. Often these built forms are the valued architectural heritage of the area and continue the legacy of the local community.

Architectural heritage, especially the ones that are rooted in places of living communities with extraordinary cultural richness in the tangible and intangible environments, can be considered the carriers of cultural continuity. Giddens<sup>1</sup> refers to 'place' as the meaning conferred on particular spaces by groups of people through sustained association at various levels. Elements other than built heritage, like rituals and festivals, both cultural and religious, are important to manage and sustain the built heritage. The management of the built heritage is crucial for survival of both the local culture and the communities. In the fast changing urban scenario, any heritage

---

<sup>1</sup> . Giddens, 1990.

management and conservation effort should correctly identify the *local* for it to be successful. The role of community should be better understood in this context.

How the communities of traditional neighborhoods shape their environment and continue to manage it with their common wisdom and knowledge can help to sustain the future of these neighborhoods; especially those withholding development pressures.<sup>2</sup> Rather than approaching the problems of heritage conservation or future development with the norms governed by the heritage conservation charters (as shown in Table 3), it may be beneficial to examine the way these communities in the traditional neighborhoods maintain their cultural continuity in a fast-changing environment around them, especially in the urban context.

This is more relevant in the case of traditional neighborhoods that are *living* and their architectural heritage continues to be used, inhabited and maintained by the community. The social coherence and involvement of the community are strong in these traditional neighborhoods. These *living* neighborhoods with their architectural heritage are important as very few places in the cities have survived the onslaught of modern development with their transmitted symbols, inherited lifestyles and lived spaces intact.

There have been several cases where the formal or top down intervention has seen either loss of authenticity of heritage or in extreme cases, damage of entire historic fabrics altogether, or *artificial* elements entirely replacing the *original* heritage.<sup>3</sup> Even with good intention of the formal authorities, this happens due to the lack of

---

<sup>2</sup> . See for example, Holod and Rastorfer, 1983, Kulterman, 1997 and Widodo, 2007, pp 46-50.

<sup>3</sup> . See section 5.9.1 Formal Heritage Conservation in Panamnagar.

knowledge about both the sociocultural aspects in living traditional neighborhoods and the local construction style and use of materials.

On the contrary, in many cases, the communities in the traditional neighborhoods with their vernacular knowledge of the crafts and construction have often ensured the continuity of the architectural heritage by informal management, but their role is yet to be fully studied. The community effort in shaping and managing the built environment is potentially valuable and in fact essential to consider for future evaluation of architectural heritage conservation or sustainable development in traditional neighborhoods. This potential is identified<sup>4</sup> but yet to be fully explored. There have been very few studies in this area, and they have tried to address the topic of architectural heritage conservation in general but have not focused the issue within the framework of the working *living* social system of the urban traditional neighborhoods. This study aims to explore the informal management system of the urban architectural heritage in the traditional neighborhoods by the community bodies.

### **1.1.1 Research Focus: Informal Heritage Management in Old Dhaka**

For any conservation effort to be sustainable, the local representation is critical. Along with the formal authorities, and the private sector, local residents, who are the traditional caretakers and informal managers of architectural heritage, have emerged as the important stakeholders in the conservation and management of the architectural heritage.<sup>5</sup> The local community has the best knowledge about their architectural heritage, the construction style and use of materials; this knowledge is passed on

---

<sup>4</sup> . See for example, Briggs 2003, Cnaan and Milofsky, 2007, Howe and Logan, 2002, Imon, 2006, Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996, Turnbridge, Jones and Shaw, 1996.

<sup>5</sup> . See for example, Aplin, 2002 and UNESCO 2007.

through generations along with the local building traditions, craftsman's guilds and traditional social practices.

No tangible architectural heritage is complete without its intangible parts. Cultural resources and local identity are important intangible qualities to conserve along with the built environment. The urban neighborhoods become unique places from the complex social and ethnic compositions. They develop their own niche and areas (in craft, business, etc.), with continued traditions and customs. Tradition can be described as a collection of symbols and meanings, chosen to represent the local cultural and social continuity in time and place inherited from the past.<sup>6</sup>

The traditional urban neighborhoods in the older city fabrics are complex interwoven socio-spatial systems, which have gained their cultural relevance throughout their sociocultural histories. Their heritage values are not confined to the built form, but are integrated in the everyday social life, customs and rituals, social structures and socio-religious events. Anthropologists Redfield and Singer identify "*little tradition* as characterized by popular customs, attitudes and practices found in older localities amidst the spaces of the .....cities where it is embodied in the activities and everyday survival strategies of the inhabitants".<sup>7</sup>

The identity, meaning and value associated by the community for the architectural heritage is not always obvious, rather often expressed in symbols, customs, practices, historical interpretations, uses of urban space that are ultimately reflected on the built heritage. So, the conservation of the lived and livable past (in the form of built heritage) in the traditional neighborhoods must be in line with the needs and

---

<sup>6</sup> . Askew, 1994, p 4.

<sup>7</sup> . Redfield and Singer, 1954, p 53.

aspirations of the local people actually living in the environments. This is more relevant for heritages that are still in use, thus *living*.

This study examines how the communities in the traditional neighborhoods sustain their traditional way of life and continuity of place. The research focus is the roles of informal community bodies in shaping and managing the architectural heritage in traditional urban neighborhoods of Old Dhaka, the historic core of the capital of Bangladesh. Dhaka was established in 1608 as a Mughal provincial capital. Several traditional neighborhoods of the historic core (known as Old Dhaka) date back two to three hundred years. Many of these neighborhoods are still governed by informal community bodies known as *Panchayet*, and they play a very significant role in shaping and managing their neighborhoods. Many of these community bodies date back to the British colonial period in the sub-continent, when they were established to manage the local neighborhoods. Field study shows that the traditional community bodies (like *Panchayet*), have a very significant role to play not only in shaping these neighborhoods throughout the history of Old Dhaka, but also sustaining them in their original form in the twenty-first century. Often they work as a parallel to the formal government in the traditional neighborhoods in Old Dhaka.

This issue is particularly important as many of these neighborhoods are rich in architectural and cultural heritage that dates back up to three hundred years. Most traditional neighborhoods in the historic fabric of Old Dhaka have remained more or less intact and most part of them survived the urban development around them. As compelling and historically valuable a place may be, it is the people and activities that breathe life into its streets, alleys and open spaces. The neighborhoods are *living* and continue to be inhabited and maintained by the community bodies. They are

especially more important as very few places in the city have survived the onslaught of modern development with their transmitted symbols, inherited lifestyles and lived spaces intact. The social coherence and involvement of the community are strong in these traditional neighborhoods. The traditional management system of these informal community bodies has proven successful in sustaining the historic fabric and their true cultural essence for the past two hundred years. So, the detailed understanding of how this was achieved may potentially help not only in heritage conservation, but also in sustainable future development in these areas as many of the old structures are beyond repair and may need to be redeveloped. This study examines the traditional community management practices and their manifestation at the neighborhood level, focusing on the architectural heritage.

### **1.1.2 Problem Statement**

Public participation is a relatively contemporary idea that has gained relevance in different fields like urban planning, forest conservation, etc. for the last few decades.<sup>8</sup> However, it is yet to be fully explored in the field of urban heritage conservation. Since the second half of the twentieth century, with the advent of modern development, urban heritage in the traditional quarters of the older city fabrics reached a critical point, with ever increasing pressure to give way for the new. Unfortunately, their survival is not always the focus for the formal authorities in the high density developing countries. Even in cases where there is the good intention of ‘conserving’, many cases have seen that the formal authorities are either ill-equipped or lack the appropriate knowledge to undertake proper heritage conservation or management. The main problem that stands out is the lack of *traditional knowledge*,

---

<sup>8</sup> . See for example, Burke, 1979 and Kothari, et al, 1996.

both in terms of sociocultural issues and local construction techniques. Another common trend is the very communities that actively generate and maintain the heritage and the traditional way of every-day life (which is crucial for survival of the heritage), are often marginalized<sup>9</sup> in the formal process of heritage conservation.

Within this context, it is even more critical to study the *alternate* to the formal approach that are in practice in the traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka. The communities surviving in the traditional urban fabrics have been continuing the old patterns of allegiance, local traditions and way of life. The informal heritage management has been in practice over centuries but has not been studied in detail to evaluate their place in the spectrum of heritage management.

The existing studies in the field of heritage conservation mainly focus on the process of conservation, which is mostly *formal*,<sup>10</sup> thus often ignoring the importance of the role of local involvement. Several attempts explore this area *on surface*, as a sub-branch of study,<sup>11</sup> but rarely focus on the relevance of the local involvement in heritage management. Even in cases where the local issues are discussed,<sup>12</sup> it often revolves around cultural issues (like the cultural festivals and rituals celebrated in the communities) and not so much on the actual heritage management and its mechanisms.

The social or anthropological studies in the area of community involvement are more concerned with the social behavior, group memory and historical traditions.<sup>13</sup> These studies often conceive the traditional areas as self-contained cultural enclaves and the

---

<sup>9</sup> . The marginalization can happen through cultural tourism, forced disassociation from the religious or cultural activities related to the heritage, etc.

<sup>10</sup> . See for example, Orbasl, 2008, Prusina, 1999.

<sup>11</sup> . See for example, McNeely, 1995 and Nelson, 1989.

<sup>12</sup> . See for example, Askew and Logan, 1994, Cooke, 1989, Holod and Rastorfer, 1983 and Howard.

<sup>13</sup> . See for example, Kong and Yeoh, 1995 and Low, 1992.

challenges posed by the advent of modernity on the architectural heritage are rarely explored.

The studies that actually focus on urban heritage<sup>14</sup> are more concerned with historical timeframe and their representation in structures, but rarely on communities and *living* heritage places. Pilot field study by the author has shown that the traditional informal community organizations have played a very significant role in shaping and managing the architectural heritage throughout history. Their role is often parallel to the formal authorities. The study of their role is relevant, as the *living* heritages generally are not *frozen* in a particular state, and it is difficult to pin point an exact timeframe in history to evaluate them. Rather, they evolve over centuries and should be considered as representation of different periods of history simultaneously. It is only the communities that have adequate knowledge about these living heritages, and the transmitted traditional knowledge through generations is critical for their successful conservation. The research problem can be summarized as:

The role and heritage management system of informal community bodies and their contribution to sustaining the architectural heritage of the traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka is yet to be fully explored.

### **1.1.3 Gaps in Existing Studies of Urban Heritage**

A main gap in knowledge in the chosen study area is the lack of information in the comparative study of the *Formal* versus *Informal* approach of heritage management and their relative merits. This is crucial in situations where the *Formal* approach has

---

<sup>14</sup> . See for example, Cantacuzino, 1975, Harvey, 1989, Jokilehto, 1999, Schuster, 1997 and Watt, 2007.



been proven inadequate in several cases due to various reasons, compared to the traditional system of heritage management, which may be called the *Informal*.

Studies by authors like Jenkins, Khan, Mathur and Tirmizi<sup>15</sup> identify the challenges that exist in other Asian cities where heritage in the historic quarters are under pressure from the forces of modern development. However, as there is rarely any informal heritage management system at the community level, very few actually explore the issues of heritage conservation that may be informal. This study aims to explore the ‘bottom up’ informal approach contrary to the formal ‘top down’ approach for their possible use both in theory and practice in terms of architectural heritage management.

This study aims to examine the vernacular knowledge which represents the community spirit and social values as manifested in the architectural heritage formation, with focus on their organization and management by the informal community bodies. Very little significant research has been done on the area of informal community heritage management. This is even more relevant for the study area of Old Dhaka, where there is lack of a broader understanding of the issues concerning the architectural heritage and the local heritage management system.

*Panchayet*, one of the main (along with few others) informal community bodies, though identified has not been extensively studied for its contribution in heritage management. The role of *Panchayet* has been known in other areas of study (like sociology, anthropology, etc.), but their role has not been studied in detail in the area of architectural heritage management.

---

<sup>15</sup> . See Jenkins, 2008, Khan, 2010, Mathur, 2010 and Tirmizi, 2010.

In the context of Old Dhaka, there have been few prior studies on heritage conservation and other related issues. During the early nineties, the importance of the heritage of Old Dhaka was recognized in a series of workshops and seminars, findings of which were later published as books.<sup>16</sup> The findings of these reveal the realities of the heritage of Old Dhaka mainly in terms of the existing threats and challenges, but do not go in depth into the issues.

There have been academic studies, which also identify similar issues. Khan<sup>17</sup> explored an alternative approach to the redevelopment of Old Dhaka. Kabir<sup>18</sup> studied the possibilities of sustainable future development considering the heritage in the traditional neighborhood of *Shankharibazar*. Imon<sup>19</sup> studied the overall issue of sustainable urban conservation and the possibilities of public participation in the process. He gives an overview of the policy frameworks involved in the formal process of urban conservation and identifies the existence and possibilities of public participation. Though the study identifies its importance, it does not explore how the community bodies actually work in Old Dhaka, especially in managing architectural heritage.

Significant issues like the process, steps and procedures involved in architectural heritage management at the community level are not addressed in Imon's work. For example, details of the heritage management process at the 'ground level', the mechanisms of the vernacular 'bottom up' approach (which may go beyond the common public participation mechanisms) where the community is directly involved, how the 'top down' policies are transformed at the community level, can only be

---

<sup>16</sup> . See Imamuddin, Hassan & Alam, 1990 and Imamuddin, 1993.

<sup>17</sup> . Khan, 1982.

<sup>18</sup> . Kabir, 2000.

<sup>19</sup> . Imon, 2006.

revealed through detail study of actual cases of architectural heritage management. This community approach has the potential to show whether the local control system to manage the heritage has the potency to ensure their continuity. Through selected case studies, where the informal heritage management system is involved, this study explores details like organization or vernacular resources, phasing, use of materials, importance of local crafts, etc. which reveal the overall system and process of community involvement, which were missing in the existing studies.

Non-Profit organizations like the *Urban Study Group*<sup>20</sup> have done some significant research in terms of identifying the importance of heritage conservation in Old Dhaka. There have been several newspaper articles<sup>21</sup> that mostly identify the challenges facing the heritage of Old Dhaka, but the research is limited in scope.

The present study builds on the issues addressed in the previous research and explores the issue of architectural heritage management, and how the informal community bodies of Old Dhaka (with the local communities) are involved in the process with a focus on finding how it actually works in terms of managing the architectural heritage. The existing studies do not show how the traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka have sustained their cultural continuity and continue to manage their local architectural heritage with their informal management system. Furthermore, no study has taken into consideration, their societal norms (with detailed analysis of their living environment) and how they are manifested in the management of the local architectural heritage. This can be useful for future sustainable heritage conservation

---

<sup>20</sup> . [www.facebook.com/pages/Urban-Study-Group/241851761085](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Urban-Study-Group/241851761085), accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2011.

<sup>21</sup> . See for example Ali (2006, November 18 and 2007, 26 April) and Ghias (2008a, May 28 and 2008b, July 28).

and also for other related contexts in the high density cities that face similar situation where the traditional neighborhoods are under pressure to face the challenges of modern development.

Imon's study focused on the milieu prior to 2006. However, there has been a fundamental policy change by the government in 2009 with the declaration of ninety-three heritage structures and seven heritage sites as protected.<sup>22</sup> The new list of protected heritage led to greater formal intervention, which significantly lowered the potency of the local communities in terms of managing their own heritage in cases. This meant that part of the findings of earlier studies were of lesser value under the changed milieu post 2009. It is under these circumstances that the present study was undertaken, which explores whether the existing informal heritage management system has been compromised by the new legislation for protected heritage.

The declaration of the 'list of protected heritage', which often challenges the authority of the local community bodies and their power to manage the architectural heritage, created a new gap in the existing knowledge of the area, which naturally, none of the studies mentioned could cover as no such limitations existed before. The highly contested situation created by the new 'list of protected heritage' meant that it is essential to explore the issues of *formal* vs. *informal* approach under the dramatically changed circumstances. Along with the search of how the local community bodies manage the architectural heritage, this study explores the actual conflicts and challenges (for local involvement) that were created at community level with the new 'list of protected heritage' and how the communities are dealing with them. The present study builds on the existing knowledge and aims to fill the knowledge gap

---

<sup>22</sup> . Dutta and Billah, 2009, March 23.

created by the transformed milieu (post declaration of the list of protected heritage).

The study explores an important area of research that has the potential to a new set of findings that can challenge the findings of the earlier studies.

## **1.2 Research Objectives**

To systematically address the relevant issues of the study area, the research has the following objectives:

1. Identifying the critical elements of the heritage management system of the informal community bodies that helped to sustain the architectural heritage in the traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka for over 300 years.
2. Studying the role of informal community bodies and their relationship with the local communities in managing the tangible and intangible cultural elements of the traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka.
3. Identifying the key aspects of the informal heritage management system that sustain the character and cultural continuity of the architectural heritage in traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

Through the selected research questions, the research seeks to explore the research objectives mentioned above. They are as follows:

R.Q. 1 How the communities and their informal community bodies shape and sustain the traditional neighborhoods and how this knowledge is used in heritage management?

R.Q. 2 What is the role of traditional knowledge and other elements (religion, culture) in shaping the traditional neighborhoods and their local architectural heritage in Old Dhaka?

R.Q. 3 Is the management system of the informal community bodies adequate to ensure the continuity of the architectural heritage in the traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka?

#### **1.4 Importance of the Research**

Urban development has distinct trends in the major high density cities in different parts of the world. However, the challenges and threats faced by urban heritage are similar. Some of these are: rising population density, decaying social fabric, loss of traditional craft, rising land value leading to high development pressure, poor or no conservation policy leaving them vulnerable. Often, the limited conservation efforts have little or no connection or consultation with the local community in the decision-making process.<sup>23</sup>

Not surprisingly, the limited conservation efforts that take place formally are very ‘top down’ in approach. The reason behind this is the colonial legacy that these cities carry on in their policy-making and legal system, thus often making them obsolete for the cause. The conservation policies formed through various Eurocentric charters generally prove to be inadequate in many high density Asian cities, because of the completely different socioeconomic milieu (from the European and Western context). The situation is equally dire in other cities from the rest of the world, which have

---

<sup>23</sup> . See, for example, Binh 1998; Briggs 2003; Engelhardt 1998; Jigyasu 2003; Kerr 2000, Kothari 1996, Sangachhe 1998; Shorey 1999.

similar contexts. This change of context has been ignored in the local conservation policy making, leading to the disappearance of the valuable heritage in the high density urban areas in many Asian cities.

The urban heritages in these cities are generally located within the traditional fabrics with deep community associations. The limited formal conservation efforts thus prove to be inadequate and often disturb the heritage, rather than conserve it. This happens due to a lack of community association. For a more sustainable and holistic conservation effort, understanding of the role of informal community heritage management is required. Several traditional urban neighborhoods in Old Dhaka have an informal heritage management system that has been successfully operating for centuries, protecting the local heritage.

This study aims to investigate the structure and strength of the social norms and traditional knowledge in the local communities; and how they are used by the informal community bodies to manage the tangible architectural heritage (also related intangible heritage elements) in the traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka.

This will serve two main purposes; the findings from the research can make a potentially important contribution to the theory, by filling the knowledge gap about the informal heritage management system in Old Dhaka. The understanding of how the informal heritage management system works, can potentially contribute to practice; in terms of supporting (by the other stakeholders or government) the existing informal heritage management system. Also, it can be useful for a possible integration of the informal heritage management system with the formal conservation system. These issues are discussed in the following sections:

### **1.4.1 Contribution to Theory**

This study can potentially contribute to theory by adding new knowledge in the area of informal heritage management and community participation in conservation. This study can contribute to an understanding of the formation, organization and management system of local architectural heritage by informal community bodies and the extent to which various community management issues are reflected in the built heritage of traditional neighborhoods. This will help to understand the public participation system through informal community heritage management and its potential use in conservation effort or relevant policy making. It can also help us to understand the continuity of social/communal assets and how the informal community management system helps to sustain them. Old Dhaka shares the common traits as those of many other high density cities that face challenges of conservation, so the findings of this study may be useful as a theoretical reference to further study of areas with similar urban heritage issues.

### **1.4.2 Contribution to Practice**

It is expected that this study will help us to understand the management system of existing informal community bodies of Old Dhaka, which can be potentially beneficial in future conservation efforts. Knowledge of this informal system could be used in future sustainable conservation efforts both by supporting the existing informal system and by integrating them with the conservation policy making. It is also expected that findings from this study can help to explain informal heritage management system practiced in the traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka. This knowledge in turn may help us to understand and may also be practically useful for



similar heritage contexts in the historic cores of other high density cities. The knowledge can be potentially useful in establishing a model for a sustainable heritage conservation strategy with active local public participation.

### **1.5 Delimitations**

This study focuses on architectural heritage management by informal community bodies in the traditional neighborhoods of the historic core of Old Dhaka. From a wide spectrum of tangible elements, this study focuses on architectural elements in the traditional neighborhoods with their associated intangible sociocultural values. Through a detailed study of the social, cultural, economic contexts of Old Dhaka, public participation in the form the informal heritage management system has been examined in depth. The study focuses on two key areas of knowledge: the organization of the informal community bodies and the community heritage management. The meaning of key issues like ‘informal community bodies’ and community ‘heritage management’ varies widely within the literature, so the meaning of these and other relevant concepts for this study are defined in chapters 2 and 3. These are applicable throughout this thesis. The development of Old Dhaka has been a process of four centuries. Over this period of time, the historic core has been generally developed into different enclaves based on crafts, special business and unique social compositions, though there are places that have a good mix of the above. This study focuses on three particular traditional neighborhoods of the historic core of Old Dhaka that have survived with their heritage and unique characteristics and have practicing informal community bodies. The presence of practicing informal community bodies is the most important criteria behind the selection of the case study areas along with representation of unique historical and cultural characteristics and

presence of important architectural heritage. Each area represents a special type of architectural heritage and informal community management style. Some of them are unique, while others share the common characteristic; thus giving an opportunity to compare.

## **1.6 Organization of Thesis**

Based on the types of content, the thesis is organized into three broad parts. The first part (includes chapter one to three) introduces the key background, concepts and literature review of the research area. Rather than putting in separate sections, personal reflections were integrated with the literature. After introducing the research background and research problem with other relevant issues in terms of urban heritage conservation, this part explores public participation and informal heritage management. The first three chapters are organized in such a way that familiarizes the reader with the key issues of the research; so that the next part relates better with the first. The second part (includes chapter four to seven) basically presents the organized data from the field study along with the secondary materials from various sources. Chapter four to seven explores the urbanism and heritage of Old Dhaka, formal and informal involvement in heritage conservation and management, with selected case studies. Case studies were used in each of the chapters to demonstrate the key concepts and their application in the research area. The third part (includes chapter eight and nine) summarizes the key research findings and gives the conclusion. The chapters are discussed in detail here:

Chapter one is basically divided into two parts; after introducing the research area, the research problem, questions, objectives and importance are explained. The importance of the research was strengthened by highlighting the knowledge gap in the research area, as there are very few existing studies done in the context of Old Dhaka. This second half of chapter one explores the research methodology. The selection of the research method and tools were based on the experience of the pilot study done by the author in the case study areas of Old Dhaka. The rationale behind selection of grounded theory method and relevance (for the case study areas in Old Dhaka) of the research tools like observation and open-ended interview are highlighted in the second part of chapter one.

The study follows similar structures for chapter two and three. The literature review captures the key concepts and contested issues of heritage conservation, public participation and informal heritage management, in the global and Asian context. After introducing the history, theoretical, conceptual and practical development of urban heritage conservation (chapter two) and public participation (chapter three); both the chapters uses related case studies of Asian context to demonstrate and relate to the literature reviewed. This gives the reader a comprehensive idea of the research concepts, which helps to relate to the case studies of Old Dhaka.

Chapter four explores the background and relevant concepts of the heritage and urbanism of Old Dhaka in two parts. The chapter introduces the issues discussed in chapter five and six. Every heritage and its context are unique. Thus, it is important that the historical development and urbanism of Old Dhaka gives a background for the heritage of Old Dhaka in the second part. Introduction to elements of urban fabrics

like the *mahalla* helps to understand the context of heritage in Old Dhaka with their typologies and other related social, cultural and religious issues.

One of the key focuses of this study is to show the contrast between the formal and informal heritage conservation in Old Dhaka. This is explored in chapter five and six. Chapter five gives an overview of the formal heritage conservation in Dhaka with the relevant legislations, methods and recent steps undertaken. To study their actual impact in the heritage sites, three case studies of formal heritage conservation have been selected; ranging various scales and types. Chapter six follows the concepts of public participation in heritage conservation discussed in chapter three. With a focus on how the community participation in heritage management work in the traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka, chapter six explores the relevant history, organization, roles, involvements and management system of the informal community bodies with relevant examples.

The author selected several important heritages of Old Dhaka, both at the scale of individual building and urban ensembles, to demonstrate the issues discussed in chapter six. Chapter seven presents the key findings from the three cases study areas (where the field study was conducted), with the selected heritage structures and sites. They were selected in such a way that covered a wide array of informal heritage management activities.

The data presented in the chapters five, six and seven, presents the findings of the research. They are summarized in chapter eight, highlighting the key findings. During the course of the field study, several concerns and possibilities for the future of the heritage of Old Dhaka were shared by the community members. These were considered along with the author's own reflections, to conclude the study in the chapter nine. The chapter concludes the thesis with a set of recommendation for the

future of the heritage in Old Dhaka. This is followed by the possible directions for future research.

### **1.7 Research Methodology**

This study adopts the qualitative approach for selected case study areas with the grounded theory method. The method was used because it enabled the researcher to evaluate and explain informal heritage management issues relevant to the research area.<sup>24</sup> Open-ended interview questions with observation have been used as research tools in three selected case study areas of Old Dhaka. For a research topic like this, the issues are multilayered and multidisciplinary. It was essential for this type of research to use open ended nondirective interview questions to give scope to the respondents to express themselves freely on a certain topic, compared to, for example, scaled questionnaires or multiple-choice questions. The nature of the topic dictated that several of the respondents (like the members of informal community bodies like *Panchayet*) have greater knowledge of the research issue and gave more informative responses than the common community members, thus rendering use of any weighted scale or quantitative investigations less reliable.

A research methodology which is oriented and concentrated on the user's view, as is the case of this study, requires a certain degree of flexibility. This was achieved with the use of the open-ended interview with observation as research tools. Comparatively, a survey may have yielded data that would be more quantitative in nature but would have shed very little light on the subtle changes and dynamics of how community management systems work in the real world. Similarly, the meanings associated by

---

<sup>24</sup> . Leedy & Ormond, 2010.

the community with the local heritage, and their sacred meaning in the everyday sociocultural and religious sphere could not have been captured with a standard questionnaire. An open-ended approach using flexible research tools like open-ended interview and observation provides valuable insight into the social, cultural and religious behavior in the local communities which is directly related to the informal heritage. The flexible approach also omitted the risk of going in the field with a ‘baggage’ of pre-conceived notions on part of the researcher.

A one-week pilot study was conducted by the author to finalize the case study elements and the research guidelines. During this period, key elements and informants were identified. The author also became familiar with the sociocultural environment of the local communities. In the final field study, along with observation by the author, for each of the case study areas, about 25 open ended non directive interviews were conducted. Several of the responses revealed historical data. These were compared and cross checked with multiple responses and theoretical data where available. This was complemented by archival records, local publications and newspaper articles, photography, sketching and watching people in their everyday life.<sup>25</sup>

Care was taken to select interview respondents from among the long-term local residents, representatives of the informal community bodies, caretakers of the local architectural heritage, etc. in the selected case study areas, so that they could best contribute with their knowledge about the sociocultural elements. Data collection lasted for three months (January to March, 2010). The field study period was carefully selected in such a way that coincided with several important religious and cultural events (for e.g. *Laksmi puja*, *Poush Mela*, etc.) in the communities, so that their role

---

<sup>25</sup> . Barbour, 2008 and Leedy & Ormond, 2010.

and relationship with the architectural heritage management could be better understood. In most of the occasions, interviews were conducted on weekends when most of the residents were at home, mosque or temples. This enabled the interviews to be conducted effectively as the author gradually became more familiar with the local residents and was more accepted by them. The residents felt freer to communicate the latent issues pertaining to informal heritage managements and formal intervention.

On a few occasions, the author met several respondents in a lively group discussion in community settings like mosques. This gave a good insight on how the sociopolitical system works in the traditional neighborhoods, and the respondents felt freer to exchange their views in a social setting. Data was collected in written a narrative form.<sup>26</sup> This was later coded, categorized and sorted into initial and advanced memos. This helped to refine the underlying issues of the heritage management system by the informal community bodies gradually.

Another important issue that was considered during both observation and interviewing was the nonverbal communication. The research data is considered reflection of deeper phenomena. Words are not always taken in their common meaning, rather treated as symbols and the data has attributes of its own, both latent and manifested data are analyzed in the process. Importance was also given to nonverbal communications and tone of voice in the transcribing and interpretation whenever possible, since they often give clues to the latent deeper phenomena. The initial analysis process takes the unstructured communications with the respondents from the open ended qualitative research data<sup>27</sup> and eliminates unstructured materials.

---

<sup>26</sup> . Kvale, 1996, McNamara, 1999 and Leedy & Ormond, 2010.

<sup>27</sup> . “Open ended research material is that resulting from responses to nondirective questions, which by their very nature impose as few constraints on respondents’

The field study (in the case study areas) for this research was conducted using a combination of methods (e.g., interviewing, observation, etc.). Qualitative in nature, the field study conducted enabled detail understanding of the sociocultural sphere and their relationship with informal heritage management in the everyday life in the chosen communities in the case study areas.

### **1.7.1 Observation as Research Tool**

It is very difficult to envisage the interview responses to the context where they were conducted unless the interviewer himself has acquired adequate information about them. This included both circumstances, physical and social context of the traditional neighborhoods, including the chosen case study elements. Observation enables gaining the *site-specific* knowledge. The author felt it was necessary to discover certain elements of the community's physical, social and cultural environments before proceeding with the interview. Observation also included taking photographs, making sketches, taking measurements of the physical and social environments. The field study was conducted in such a way that enabled the author to observe various important religious and cultural events in the communities.

Other significant issues observed were the different roles community members have in the social structure, the relevant terminology used in the local *mahallas* (neighborhoods), and the sociocultural organizational structures in the communities and how these affect communications. During the observation phase, the author became more familiar with the local community members, and thus they expressed

---

answers as possible, unlike, for example, multiple-choice questions.”(Mostyn, 1985, p 115)



themselves better during the interviews. Observation compensated for any information or nuances of the community life missing in the interview process. Observation also enabled the author to become familiar with the local practices, norms and values in the community, so that the interviews could be conducted more successfully.

### **1.7.2 Interview as Research Tool**

Standardized open-ended interview has been used for the study as it is deemed most appropriate to collect data on the research issue which involves responses of the community people. The open-ended interview is considered easier to respond to and better to express opinions or impressions. The interviews seek to describe the meanings of central themes in the life world of the subjects with the main task of understanding the meaning of what the interviewees say.<sup>28</sup> They are far more personal than questionnaires and have the advantage of both the interviewer and the interviewee exploring the critical issues through the questions and answers, with possible follow-up questions. "There is an implicit or explicit sharing and/or negotiation of understanding in the interview situation which is not so central, and often not present, in other research procedures."<sup>29</sup>

Interview gives the distinct advantage of checking any misunderstanding on the part of both parties (interviewer and interviewee) immediately which other research tools (like the questionnaire) do not. "Interviews enable an on-the-spot directness to the informant and a general speed of response not obtainable any other way."<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> . Kvale, 1996.

<sup>29</sup> . Brenner 1985, p 3.

<sup>30</sup> . Ibid, p3.

McNamara<sup>31</sup> finds that interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind a participant's experiences. The interviewer can pursue in-depth information around the topic. Standardized, open-ended interview asks the same set of questions to all interviewees, thus facilitating faster interviews because responses can be more easily analyzed and compared.

The interview questions were sequenced in such a way that the respondents were asked familiar facts (like community history and community bodies) before more probing questions on controversial issues (like disputes over the selection of members of informal community bodies, disputed issues of heritage management and internal clashes within the community). Questions about the past were asked before the present critical issues. The last of the questions were asked in such a way that gave the respondents opportunity to provide any further information they preferred to add. On most of the issues questioned, there was agreement of all the respondents about the information. However, there were also disagreements and personal opinions; in such cases, explanations were sought. Several key issues were identified in the open-ended interview process during the field study in Old Dhaka.

The data generated can be categorized into four basic information types. The first type was knowledge based information that included community members views on the neighborhood's local history, physical fabric, economic activities related to traditional business and craft, neighborhood organizations and decision making, etc. The second type involved the community members' views, opinions and thoughts on the social, cultural and religious practices in the traditional neighborhoods. The third type was based on the feelings of the respondents, which often involved non-verbal

---

<sup>31</sup> . McNamara, 1999.

communications. The fourth category was based on the sensory experiences (what they heard, touched, etc.) of the community members.

The more relevant of the issues mentioned are shown with information types, conceptual constructs and variables in Table 1:

Table 1: Basic information types, conceptual constructs and variables in the interview

Information type	Construct dimensions	Variables
Knowledge based	Historical	Local community history, stories.
	Physical	Building and neighborhood layout, land use, building mass/form, materials, architectural details, construction techniques, patterns and motifs.
	Economic	Types of crafts, neighborhood businesses and related practices.
	Process	Neighborhood decision making, development policies and regulations, problem identification and solving, implementation and management.
	Political	Community organizations, community involvement and control.
Values, opinions and thought process based	Cultural/Religious	Main cultural and religious events, festivals and celebrations, sacred/valued practices.
	Social	Community livability, affordability, community composition, relationships and hierarchy.
Feelings based		What a person feels rather than his thoughts. These were often expressed in the form of non-verbal communication that was noted.
Sensory perceptions based		What the community members have experienced through their senses; what they have seen, heard, touched, smelled or tasted.

Source: Author.

### 1.7.3 Grounded Theory Method

The research uses grounded theory method as it is empirical in nature and seeks to find out what is going on in the relevant area of study, without preconceived ideas about the research area. Glaser<sup>32</sup> describes grounded theory as "multivariate. It happens sequentially, subsequently, simultaneously, serendipitously and scheduled." Grounded theory method was selected as it helped to capture the multilayered issues of informal heritage management in Old Dhaka. The process of grounded theory is that of abstraction, refinement and conceptualization. Grounded theory codes and summarizes the findings into probability statements about the relationship between concepts. "Grounded theory is the systematic generation of theory from data acquired by a rigorous research method. Grounded theory is not finding, but rather is an integrated set of conceptual hypotheses."<sup>33</sup>

For the research, several conceptual levels model of grounded theory method was used during and after the field study. First, data was collected using observation and open-ended interviews, during the field study in the traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka. As the data collected by interview questions was not uniform in nature, they were sorted and conceptually coded according to relevant issues like history and development of the community bodies, how the informal heritage management system works, intangible elements, etc. After the data was coded, memos (on various issues) were prepared. This process was used in several phases, initially, while the field study was conducted (for the preliminary data) and also, during the post-field study analysis. The process was continued with further refinement (with subsequent

---

<sup>32</sup> . Glaser, 1998, p 1.

<sup>33</sup> . Ibid, p 3.

data collection) that constantly enhanced and helped to raise the conceptual construct of the codes. This involved a rigorous process of continuous refinement and induction that constantly improved on the conceptual construct of the codes prepared earlier, until the coded memos were conceptualized into an integrated grounded theory that was evolved and derived as the key research findings. Conceptualizing the coded memo was ultimately a process of abstraction that was continuously refined, raised and polished. An important quality of the grounded theory process was that analysis was delimited as gradually a core category occurred with development and refinement of concepts related to informal heritage management.

The field study consisted of several basic steps of the grounded theory method as identified by Glaser and Strauss<sup>34</sup>. The data collection and processing were simultaneous. For example, when the first set of data was collected, the initial analysis was done simultaneous to further data collection. Constant comparison of the codes was done during each stage of analysis. The theory was developed and continuously refined during all the stages of data collection and analysis. This approach helped in developing conceptual codes from data rather than going into the case study areas of Old Dhaka with preconceived logically deduced hypotheses. The data were coded into memos of different categories with their properties. Coding was a constant process of comparison and categorization of data. The comparison was continuously checked against further data. This became gradually complex as the quantity of data increased during the later stages of the field study. This was due to “simultaneous emergence of different levels of conceptualization and different ways of being related to theoretical codes.”<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> . Glaser and Strauss, 1968, Glaser, 1978 and Strauss, 1998.

<sup>35</sup> . Ibid, p 144.

Memoing was used to ease and systemize the process and also to help preserve, document; capture and track conceptual ideas. Glaser<sup>36</sup>, describes memos as “theorizing write-up of ideas about substantive codes and their theoretically coded relationships as they emerge during coding, collecting and analyzing data and during memoing....Memos capture and keep track of the emerging theory.” The memo writing was followed by sorting, which involved rigorous conceptual build up from a volume of memos into an integrated theory that culminated as the research findings. The systematic process using memos helped to interpret the complexities and multilayered social system of Old Dhaka and helped to identify, develop and refine the relationship between the categories. The final stage involved further refinement of coded data towards developing the theory.

The data collected from the field study in Old Dhaka can be categorized into five types<sup>37</sup>: first and the most basic type is the *baseline data*. Here the respondents of Old Dhaka simply described basic information about the history and everyday activities in the traditional neighborhoods. The second type can be categorized as the *interpreted data*. This set was more insightful than the first, as the respondents tried to articulate and describe the more critical issues of their neighborhoods in terms of social life and concerns. This set of data helped the researcher to get a real insight into the core issues of the research. The third type is *properline data*. Here the respondents shared the key activities related to informal heritage management that can be categorized as *proper* about the research area. The fourth type is the *vague data*; this set was the response of the community members describing the events related to informal heritage management, but their meaning was not always apparently clear; but as the

---

<sup>36</sup>. Glaser, 1978, p 177.

<sup>37</sup>. As identified by Glaser, 1998, p 138.

research progressed further, they became clearer in combination with further data. The fifth type is the *conceptual data*; this involved more ideological, rhetoric or reified descriptions. This set of data was generated when the response was of such critical nature that could be categorized into key concepts. Generally, this type of data was generated at the later stages of the interviews, when the researcher gained a certain level of trust of the respondents in the traditional neighborhoods.

Both during and after the field study, grounded theory involved both induction and deduction. Gradually, the induction dominated deduction. The inductive process initiated when data was collected in the case study areas. This was followed by the process of conceptualization without any preconceived notion or knowledge on the researcher's part, to dominate the search. Through this conceptualization and refinement, a pattern or relationships started to emerge among the codes categorized into key issues of informal heritage management. It was during this stage (when a significant amount of data was collected), when the patterns started to emerge, that the deductive part started. During the later stages of the field study, when additional data were collected and compared for verification; the deductive process actually served and helped the inductive process. The process depended on induction in the form of interpretation of the local respondents' experiences in the traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka. The researcher avoided inferences (or deduction) or pre-conceived notions about the research issues (of informal heritage management) at this stage. This approach of grounded theory was very relevant for the current research as the local community's views and experiences were the key elements, on which the conceptual grounds were constructed rather than any other method.

Figure 1 gives a summary of the different aspects of the research methodology:

### 1.7.4 Summary of the Research Methodology

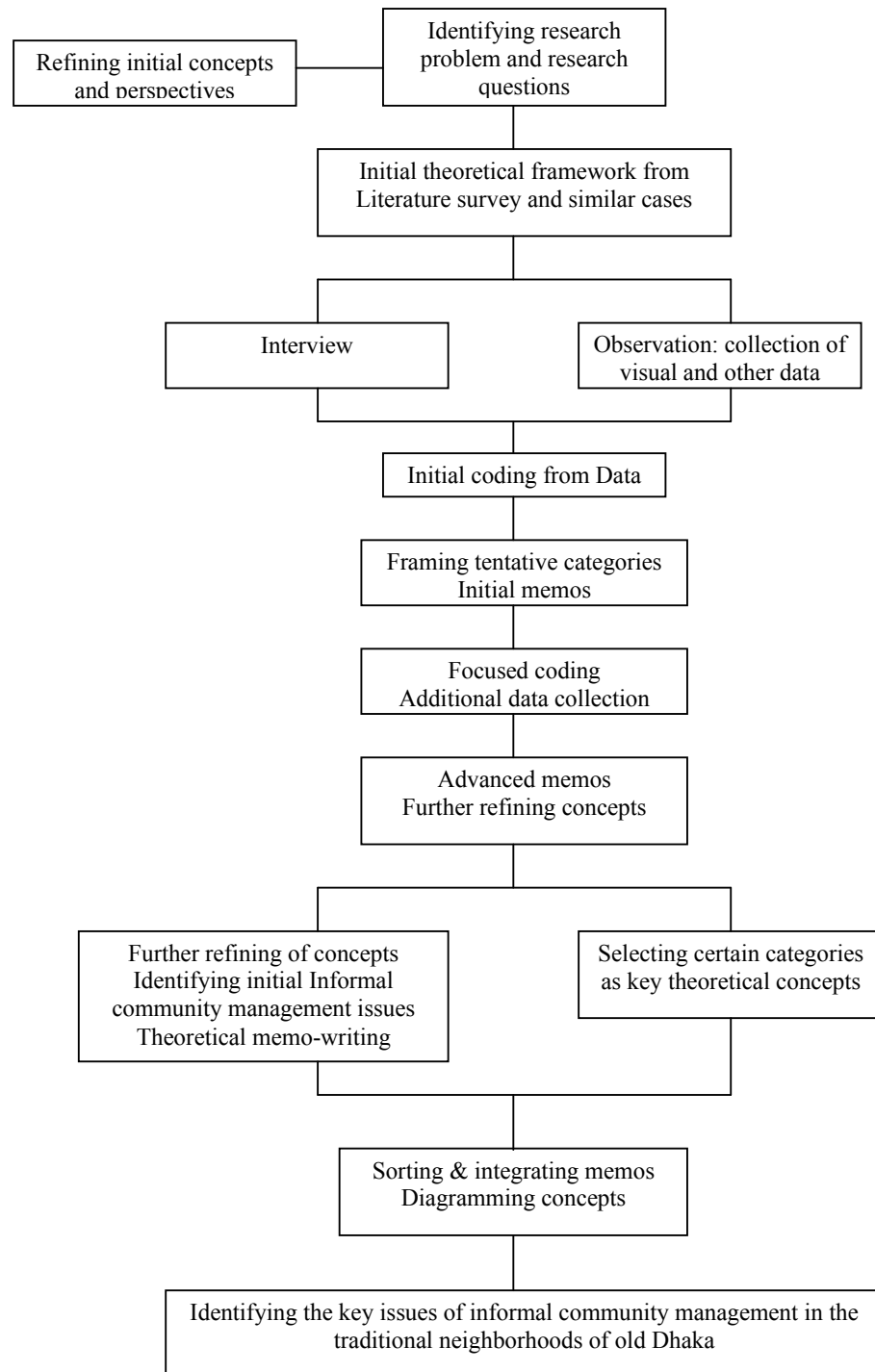


Figure 1: Summary of the research methodology, source: Author.



## Chapter 2

### URBAN HERITAGE CONSERVATION

#### 2.1 Introduction

The term *conservation* in relation to heritage has been used in varied expressions, but commonly denominates protection from anything that threatens or destroys heritage. The process of heritage conservation encompasses the identification, documentation, protection and routine maintenance of the culturally important elements of the built environment, including structures and sites. This chapter gives an overview of the concept of heritage and heritage conservation, with a focus on urban heritage in the historic quarters of Asian cities. After introducing the basic concepts, the chapter focuses on more contested issues that are closely related to the Asian cities and especially relevant for this research.

#### 2.2 The Importance of Heritage Conservation

The historic built environments enable us to relate to our past, which in turn helps to make meaning of our present. Harvey<sup>38</sup> states: “The impulse to preserve the past is part of the impulse to preserve the self. Without knowing where we have been, it is difficult to know where we are going.” He argues that the past can be the foundation of individual and collective identity, as the objects from the past are often significant cultural symbols. He adds: “Continuity between past and present creates a sense of

---

<sup>38</sup> . Harvey, 1989, p 86.

sequence out of aleatory chaos and, since change is inevitable, a stable system of ordered meaning enables us to cope with both innovation and decay.”<sup>39</sup>

Heritage gives us a sense of point of reference of who we are, in terms of providing a security or point of refuge; as Hewison<sup>40</sup> asserts: “The heritage represents some kind of security, a point of reference, a refuge perhaps, something visible and tangible which...seems stable and unchanged. Our environmental heritage.....is a deeply stabilizing and unifying element within our society”.

The historic urban fabrics are records and tangible (with associated intangible values) expression of the local identity. Their built heritages are irreplaceable. These built environments of high cultural significance are conserved to convey local history to present and future generations. Lowenthal<sup>41</sup> identifies the importance of heritage conservation: “Only by studying the lives of past people and by learning what had happened in history could help people understand their present selves and circumstances and hope to foresee what life would be like in times to come.....Hence the past was a fount of useful lessons, lessons that could serve as a precept for the present and the future.”

The historic environments of our traditional urban centers are a combination of richly textured historical layers that form the local identity of a particular place. The Nara Document on Authenticity<sup>42</sup> recognizes the importance of heritage conservation: “The diversity of cultures and heritage in our world is an irreplaceable source of spiritual

---

<sup>39</sup> . Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> . Bagguley, Mark-Lawson and Urry, 1990, p 109.

<sup>41</sup> . Lowenthal, 1993, p 182.

<sup>42</sup> . The Nara Document on Authenticity, 1994, p 1.

and intellectual richness for all humankind. The protection and enhancement of cultural and heritage diversity in our world should be actively promoted as an essential aspect of human development.”

Heritage conservation is critical not only to save important elements of the rich architecture of urban centers, but more importantly to save the unique local identity and continuation of culture of places and communities. Basically, these two (tangible and intangible) elements are inseparable issues. Lynch<sup>43</sup> observes: “The intention of conservation is to preserve the link of the rich cultural heritage of the past with the present. By maintaining the existing old buildings, we know our roots.”

Historic quarters face continuous pressure to change. It is not rare for a heritage conservation effort to go in the wrong direction by enforcing wholesale changes that ultimately uproot the spirit and cultural significance of the heritage itself. Thus, the Burra Charter<sup>44</sup> advocates a cautious approach to change: “Do as much as necessary to care for the place and to make it useable, but otherwise change it as little as possible so that its cultural significance is retained.”

The Burra Charter<sup>45</sup> identifies the importance and relevance of social value of heritage in the form of association between people and place. The Charter mentions the importance of heritage conservation: “Places of cultural significance enrich people’s lives, often providing a deep and inspirational sense of connection to community and landscape, to the past and to lived experiences.....places of cultural significance

---

<sup>43</sup> . Lynch, 1972.

<sup>44</sup> . The Burra Charter, 1999, p 1.

<sup>45</sup> . Ibid, p1.

reflect the diversity of our communities, telling us about....who we are and the past that has formed us.”

Urban heritage is the important starting point for any development of urban policy. UNESCO<sup>46</sup> identifies the importance of heritage conservation: “Any city’s future must be anchored in its individual identity. Its ‘urban heritage’ must be the starting point for the development of urban policy. This heritage and its accumulation – the history of a city, its neighborhood and its residents – must be studied, recorded and told.”

## **2.3 Definition of Relevant Terms**

### ***2.3.1 Heritage***

Heritage is not simple to define as it not linear and embodies multiple issues and elements. Heritage is not static; it is inherited; an element to be passed on through subsequent generations. It may be the cultural legacy, and continuity inherited in time that incorporates the identity of place and people from past into the present. The very nature of heritage suggests a perpetual process that evolves with time and embodies the local traditions, knowledge and cultural values.

The notion of heritage is culture and context specific and more importantly related to peoples’ memory association and intangible elements with the built heritage. Clarke

---

<sup>46</sup> . UNESCO, 1996.

and Johnston<sup>47</sup> define heritages as: “indivisible and valued creation that comes from people, culture and place together.” According to them, heritage can be both tangible and intangible, without being one or the other, as it takes place in the everyday practices; “embodied and embedded in ritual, cosmology and prosaic subsistence practices. And yet heritage is recognized in conversation as legacy, as something to be passed on.”<sup>48</sup> On a similar note, the Deschambault Declaration<sup>49</sup> defines heritage as the combined creations and products of nature and of man. Heritage is a rich inheritance that may be passed on in its entirety, inviting peoples' recognition and participation.

A closely related concept to heritage is culture, as the notion of *what constitutes heritage* is culture specific. Culture is a resource from which the traditional communities revitalize their identity. Jenkins<sup>50</sup> defines culture as: “a series of codes, symbols, forms of knowledge, and strategies for survival related to location and common values. It is communicated as a mode of identification within a cultural group and used as a means of differentiating one group from another.....this encompasses ‘traditional’ culture that reflects ways of life that are passed on from one generation to another.”

### ***2.3.2 Architectural Heritage***

As this study focuses on architectural heritage management by informal community bodies, it is relevant to define what constitutes architectural heritage. One of the most

---

<sup>47</sup> . Clarke and Johnston, 2003.

<sup>48</sup> . Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> . Deschambault Declaration, ICOMOS Canada, 1982.

<sup>50</sup> . Jenkins, 2008, p 3.

comprehensive definitions of architectural heritage was given at the Convention of the protection of the architectural Heritage of Europe<sup>51</sup> : “‘architectural heritage’ shall be considered to comprise the following permanent properties: 1. Monuments: all buildings and structures of conspicuous historical, archaeological, artistic, scientific, social or technical interest, including their fixtures and fittings; 2. Groups of buildings: homogeneous groups of urban or rural buildings conspicuous for their historical, archaeological, artistic, scientific, social or technical interests which are sufficiently coherent to form topographically definable units; 3. Sites: the combined works of man and nature, being areas, which are partially built upon and sufficiently distinctive and homogeneous to be topographically definable and are of conspicuous historical, archaeological, artistic, scientific, social or technical interest.”

However, for this study, the term architectural heritage will refer to the built heritage in the form of building, groups of buildings and sites of heritage value in the traditional neighborhoods of historic core of Old Dhaka.

### ***2.3.3 Heritage Conservation***

The term *conservation* means "the act or process of preserving something in being, or keeping something alive."<sup>52</sup> Contrary to what is often done in the formal approach, conservation is not only preservation of historic buildings, rather it is a multidisciplinary multi-stepped complex method which may include any number of the processes of renovation, restoration, regeneration, reconstruction, adaptive reuse,

---

<sup>51</sup> . The Convention of the protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe, 1985, Article 1.

<sup>52</sup> . Cantacuzino, 1975.

and routine maintenance without altering the original form. The Burra Charter<sup>53</sup> defines conservation as: “all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance.....Conservation may, according to circumstance, include the processes of: retention or reintroduction of a use; retention of associations and meanings; maintenance, preservation, restoration, reconstruction, adaptation and interpretation; and will commonly include a combination of more than one of these.”

Heritage conservation has gained importance in contemporary society because of people’s desire to find connection (tangible and intangible) to their historical roots and a ‘sense of place’, especially for those places that are slowly losing their identity and unique character by the onslaught of modern development. Most contemporary societies recognize the importance of conserving what remains of their past in the form of heritage. Conservation is a continuous process and responsibility of every generation; to save and pass on the elements of heritage value to the succeeding generations unimpaired. The scope of heritage conservation has broadened significantly since the later part of 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly in the last few decades. The long ‘accepted’ ideas of heritage conservation have been continuously stretched and challenged with growing recognition of the importance of seemingly ‘unimportant’ objects of built environment or a local craft, that are more important to the local community than the state recognized monuments and other structures, because of the memory and values associated with them. Thus, shifting the focus from individual monuments or structures of religious or civil importance, it now encompasses common unpretentious buildings, ensembles of old buildings in

---

<sup>53</sup> . The Burra Charter, 1999, p2.

traditional neighborhoods or historic districts, and sites of cultural importance often referred to as *cultural landscapes*.

### **2.34 Heritage Management**

For the purpose of this research, heritage management means the everyday activities to protect the heritage in the traditional neighborhoods of old Dhaka, practiced by the local communities, especially informal community bodies. Heritage management draws on the principles of heritage conservation but is different. It involves the use of traditional knowledge, skills and sociocultural values of the local communities that are rooted in place. Heritage management differs from heritage conservation (even though similar approaches and methods are used for both), as the process is continuous and an ongoing part of everyday sociocultural activities of local communities. Heritage management involves active community participation in the identification, interpretation, assessment, decision making, maintenance and preservation.

### **2.4 History of Urban Heritage Conservation**

Heritage conservation is almost never linear; rather a very complex manifestation of policies, ideas, beliefs, and practices. Heritage conservation is often biased by the development trends and demands of the contemporary society with its embedded values, priorities and requirements. Heritage conservation has been approached in diverse ways throughout its long development according to the choices of place,



people and sociocultural influences. Jokilehto<sup>54</sup> categorizes the significant trends in the heritage conservation into four principal headings in his important work *A History of architectural conservation*. Even though they are sequenced, these developments basically occurred in parallel since the eighteenth century. They are:

1. Monuments as memorials: Gaining recognition during Renaissance, the principal meaning of monuments and memorials recalled antiquity as a lesson to be learnt from for the sake of humanity and contemporary design. It is a common trend to prioritize their conservation over other ‘lesser’ structures and places. Having perceived to be of greater political and/or religious value in general, naturally more resources are allocated for their conservation. They are often symbolic or iconic in nature. In many cases, the original message of the monuments takes a backseat to facilitate association with a contemporary political or patriotic value.

2. Stylistic restoration: The movement started in the late eighteenth century based on the newly emerging values in the cultural context, emerging romanticism and identification of medieval buildings as part of national heritage. Championed by Mérimée and Viollet-le-Duc in the mid-nineteenth century, the core idea was towards restoration of the lost stylistic integrity and the absolute concept of beauty of classicism associated with the concept of style. The movement was strengthened by pragmatic architects who emphasized the need to reuse historic buildings – rather than just preserving them as documents. They were supported by political stakeholders, for whom it became a national prestige. The movement emphasized ‘unification to purification’ of style and continued throughout the twentieth century.

---

<sup>54</sup> . Jokilehto, 1999.

3. Modern conservation: Modern conservation started from the second half of eighteenth century based on changing evaluation of historic structures and growing criticism of *stylistic restoration*. The movement emphasizes the need to preserve the genuine and original, the different layers and transformations of history with the patina of age. The concept of ‘authenticity’ became important as ‘universal value’ in humanity, while the most ‘faithful’ restorations and reproductions of ancient forms were discredited. The movement was pioneered by Carter, Ruskin, Morris and Boito and formulated into modern conservation theory by Riegl, Giovannoni and Brandi. Modern conservation paved the way for the scientific approach (with analysis and documentation) in conservation. Rather than proposing a model, the movement established a critical process for the definition of what is to be conserved and how. The approach gained importance in the care of historic buildings and management of historic areas. The international charters and recommendations take this approach as basic reference.

4. Traditional continuity: Parallel to other movements, since the eighteenth century, authentic sources of folk art, traditional knowledge and creativity have been recognized as cultural identity. Towards the end of twentieth century (along with recognition of global ecological interests and sustainable development), this was followed by efforts to safeguard traditional areas and communities with the diversity and continuity of living cultures. Dilapidated historic city centers, places of historic value and other cultural landscapes came into focus of conservation efforts. But at the same time, safeguarding traditional knowledge and living heritage requires the acceptance of change as an essential element of the process. Change can be gradual

and within the sociocultural system, the idea is to manage change and define the essence of what is maintained as it is not practical to conserve everything in a living heritage area. Basically developed since the 1950s, the methodology for the conservation of traditional historical areas with their way of life has been gradually accumulated in the form of guidelines and international recommendations and charters. These are expected to be incorporated in local and national planning strategies.

## **2.5 Evolution of the Concept of Urban Conservation**

Over the last few decades there has been a major evolution of the concept of urban conservation, in the form of growing recognition of the intangible values of heritage. Until recently, no importance was given to the non-material or intangible qualities of heritage, which is inseparable with the association and living experiences of the local community. This happens as most heritage conservation efforts are oriented towards built forms or the physical fabric. Fortunately, there is growing recognition of the importance of incorporating intangible values and people's knowledge of their heritage and sociocultural environment.<sup>55</sup> Clarke and Johnston<sup>56</sup> identify the recent shift from conserving only built heritage towards recognizing "heritage as an expression of social identity and as a location for community action that incorporates both the tangible fabric of place and the intangible values of meaning, memory, lived experience and attachment."

---

<sup>55</sup> . Vines, 2005.

<sup>56</sup> . Clarke and Johnston, 2003.

### 2.5.1 Shift of Paradigm: Recognizing the Intangible Values

The issues of tangible and intangible elements in heritage conservation are constructed and interwoven in time. The tangible built heritage and their intangible qualities are inseparable (as it has been often tried); they always have been for *living* places.<sup>57</sup> Loh<sup>58</sup> identifies the importance of recognizing and recovering the totality of the tangible and intangible values. They can be created in addition to the original themes and reveal the spirit of place, which forces people to engage with the site as they use of all the senses. The process allows them to be touched by a place. One of the principles of Conserving Historic built heritage (for UNESCO award for the Asia-Pacific region) is: “Tangible cultural expressions derive their origin, value and continuing significance from intangible cultural practices (Principle 2).”<sup>59</sup>

The tangible elements of heritage are more commonly recognized and thus conserved. They are visible qualities, and also recognized by other senses like touch, etc. Comparatively; it is the intangible elements that are difficult to decipher through common observation. They require more in-depth investigation and clear understanding. Intangible elements can be in the form of cultural practices, local customs and rituals, crafts and arts, language, folklore, legends, attitudes, traditions, the interactions of community and places, among many others. Powell<sup>60</sup> identifies the importance of intangible elements: “The intangibles give meaning to the tangible qualities. Buildings and spaces are the crystallization of intangible elements.”

---

<sup>57</sup> . Regional Seminar for Cultural Personnel in Asia and the Pacific, 1998.

<sup>58</sup> . Loh, 2007, p 12.

<sup>59</sup> . UNESCO, 2007, p 3.

<sup>60</sup> . Powell, 1994, p 15.

The Nara Document<sup>61</sup> also emphasizes the importance as a major shift of paradigm of heritage conservation: “All cultures and societies are rooted in the particular forms and means of tangible and intangible expression which constitute their heritage, and these should be respected.” The Nara Document<sup>62</sup> describes these elements as “Form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting, spirit and feeling, and other internal and external factors. The use of these sources permits elaboration of the specific artistic, historical, social, and scientific dimensions of the cultural heritage.” As the Nara Document identifies, intangible heritage qualities are not quantifiable, often abstract even metaphysical in nature. Their presence is embedded in the living traditions. They include traditional crafts, rituals, performing arts, lifestyles, oral traditions, cultural events and associations acquired through use.

Following the Nara Document (1994), other charters like the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage also gives high emphasis on the protection of tangible elements and cultural spaces, which are associated with the manifestations of intangible cultural heritage and promotes the “respect for the intangible cultural heritage of the communities, groups and individuals concerned.” Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage<sup>63</sup> identifies: “The “intangible cultural heritage” means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to

---

<sup>61</sup> . The Nara Document on Authenticity, 1994, p 2.

<sup>62</sup> . Ibid, p 2.

<sup>63</sup> . Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage, 2003.

generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity.”

Conservation approach adapted throughout the world is diverse in nature for various factors. They vary according to political will and socio-economic realities. Even with contemporary recognition of intangible values as critical part of any conservation effort, there are still examples where they are ignored to pave the way only for conservation of built heritage. However, in general, there has been a clear shift of paradigm in heritage conservation since the late twentieth century. From only conserving the ‘important’ built form, it has shifted to "places that fall within community, personal and familial memories – places that form a familiar past."<sup>64</sup> This is also evident in several conservation charters during the last few decades. Table 2 shows some of the general elements that used to be prioritized in the conservation process, with the contemporary additions:

Table 2: Shift of paradigm in heritage conservation

Former conservation paradigm (till late twentieth century)	Contemporary conservation paradigm (since late twentieth century)
Age of built form	Role of communities and involvement
Construction style and ornamentation	People’s memory association
Proportional rarity	Living traditions
Historical association	Cultural practices
Scientific value	Sociocultural value
Categorical preference (e.g. Religious)	Crafts and artistic traditions

Source: author

<sup>64</sup>. Clarke and Johnston, 2003.

These issues in turn effect how well the heritage itself will be conserved or managed. Though recognized in several charters, the rate at which this recognition is being converted into incorporation in the formal conservation practices are few and far between.

### **2.5.2 Heritage and Authenticity**

The concept of heritage conservation is contested and context specific. It varies greatly, ranging from the Eurocentric concept of pristine and authentic heritage to the Asian perspective; which puts a great value on the cultural spirit of the heritage and recognizes the continuity and flexibility of authenticity. Each heritage is unique and there is no universally accepted norm or policy for heritage conservation. This is reflected in the ever growing need to reinterpret the issue of adaptability to context in the heritage conservation charters that followed the Venice Charter (1964). It is identified in Burra Charter (1979, revised 1999) and the Nara Document on Authenticity (1994) among others. The Nara Document on Authenticity<sup>65</sup> asserts that definition and judgment of authenticity must be culture-specific. It states (article 11-13): “All judgments about values attributed to cultural properties as well as the credibility of related information sources may differ from culture to culture, and even within the same culture. It is thus impossible to base judgments of values and authenticity within fixed criteria. On the contrary, the respect due to all cultures requires that heritage properties must be considered and judged within the cultural contexts to which they belong. Therefore, it is of the highest importance and urgency

---

<sup>65</sup> . The Nara Document on Authenticity, 1994, p 2.

that, within each culture, recognition be accorded to the specific nature of its heritage values and the credibility and truthfulness of related information sources. Depending on the nature of the cultural heritage, its cultural context, and its evolution through time, authenticity judgments may be linked to the worth of a great variety of sources of information.”

Many authors make similar arguments to the Nara Document. For example, Jenkins<sup>66</sup> identifies this essential *context-specific* quality of heritage: “The subject of heritage conservation exposes the dichotomy of constructed patriotism versus empirical legitimacy, for it must be recognized that each of the terms – ‘culture’, ‘heritage’, and ‘conservation’ – and more importantly, ‘authenticity’, have various interpretations, depending on the context in which they are placed, and which evolve over time.”

The definition of the architectural heritage and their authenticity is generally contested. “While heritage is much related to tradition, it often becomes very difficult to establish authenticity of traditional.”<sup>67</sup> They are extraordinarily rich culturally in terms of their tangible and intangible environments. The intangible is manifested and imprinted in the tangible architectural heritage, and they are inseparable.

## **2.6 Theoretical and Conceptual Developments: International Charters of Heritage Conservation**

Heritage conservation is contested, relative, culture and context specific. There has been growing recognition of the importance of heritage conservation and its different

---

<sup>66</sup> . Jenkins, 2008, p 2.

<sup>67</sup> . Askew & Logan, 1994, p vii.



contested elements, especially over the second half of twentieth century. The journey started from the European countries and the initial impetus of saving the cultural heritage came in the form of Venice Charter (1964) and the World Heritage Convention (1972), followed by several similar efforts by UNESCO and ICOMOS. The history of heritage conservation has been dominated by Eurocentric constructs until very recently.

Each heritage is unique and complex as Logan<sup>68</sup> observes: “the pathways between the source of a cultural feature and the destination of its influence – between the aesthetic conception and its physical impact – is complex.”

Heritage is rooted in specific places. No universal conservation policy is applicable to all regional positions on heritage conservation practice. For example, the attitude, need and approach toward conservation vary widely among the European and Asian countries. Logan<sup>69</sup> observes: “These alternative statements push the world’s cultural heritage conservation system towards a more cultural relativist approach and away from an insistence on common standards universally applied. UNESCO has been....aware of this tension between creation of a uniform global conservation system and the assertion of local cultural identity and needs.”

Thus, from the declaration of the Venice Charter (1964), there has been a constant need of *adaptability* to the context, giving rise to subsequent Burra Charter (1979, revised 1999) and the Nara Document on Authenticity (1994). There have been

---

<sup>68</sup> . Logan, 2002, p xiii.

<sup>69</sup> . Ibid, p xix.

several documents, charters and legislations on the issue, but none could be established as globally acceptable.

The gradual recognition of the unique Asian approach to heritage conservation, where more importance given to the cultural reverence and symbolism of the heritage, paved the way for a major shift in the conservation paradigm. The importance of intangible element, role of community and cultural context was identified. Larsen<sup>70</sup> identifies this: “Indeed Asians, especially East Asians, played a particularly important role in breaking down the Eurocentrism that once dominated – indeed many would argue, still dominates – the operations of UNESCO and ICOMOS. The Nara Document on Authenticity (1994) represents acceptance by the global organizations that the conservation approach taken by a nation or a community should be appropriate to the cultural context in which that conservation is taking place.”

Following this trend, the initial conceptions about the built heritage have transformed over the years into a more comprehensive view, encompassing issues like the intangible cultural elements and the importance of community identity and active involvement in the heritage conservation process. Logan<sup>71</sup> states: “While use of the Venice Charter may be highly appropriate for the preservation of ancient stone structures in Europe, the Nara position is that the charter is much less relevant in dealing with timber structures that require periodic renewal, which is the typical situation in much of Asia.” The Nara Document takes an alternate approach that puts greater importance and reverence on the building's symbolism, allowing the periodic renewal of structures. The importance of preserving the craft skills involved in such

---

<sup>70</sup> . Larsen, 1995.

<sup>71</sup> . Logan, 2002, p xx.

restoration and reconstruction has been identified in the Nara Document. Table 3 highlights this gradual development, and the key issues different heritage conservation charters identified over the years:

Table 3: Key issues in heritage conservation charters

<b>Charters</b>	<b>Key issues and elements</b>
The Venice Charter (1964)	Refers to cultural, architectural, historical, scientific and social significance. Identifies the importance of heritage setting and original fabric, documentation, contribution from all periods in the buildings character, maintenance of heritage for social purpose.
The Burra Charter (1979, with revisions in 1981, 1988 and 1999)	Highlights cultural significance and value, “Cultural significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations and is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects.”
The Washington Charter on the Conservation of Historic Towns and Areas (1987)	Promotes conservation of historic urban areas to be an integral part of economic and social development. “Qualities to be preserved include the historic character of the town or urban area and all those material and spiritual elements that express this character, especially: urban patterns as defined by lots and streets; relationships between buildings and green and open spaces; the formal appearance, interior and exterior, of buildings as defined by scale, size, style, construction, materials, colour and decoration; the relationship between the town or urban area and its surrounding setting, both natural and man-made; and the various functions that the town or urban area has acquired over time.”
ICOMOS New Zealand Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Value (2002)	Highlights cultural heritage value and cultural meaning. States comprehensive definitions and conservation processes; and principles to guide the conservation of places of cultural heritage value. These places: “have lasting values and can be appreciated in their own right; teach us about the culture of those who came before us; provide the context for community identity whereby people relate to the land and to those who have gone before; provide variety and contrast in the modern world and a measure against which we can compare the achievements of today; and provide visible evidence of continuity between the past, present and future.”
The Nara Document on Authenticity (1994)	Promotes the importance of authenticity relative to local culture: “within each culture, recognition be accorded to the specific nature of its heritage values and the

	credibility and truthfulness of related information sources.....depending on the nature of the cultural heritage, its cultural context, and its evolution through time, authenticity judgments may be linked to the worth of a great variety of sources of information, which may include form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting, and spirit and feeling, and other internal and external factors.”
Hoi An Protocols for best conservation practice in Asia (2001)	Identifies the main problems leading to erosion of heritage fabric of Asian urban areas. It promotes: “regional standards of best conservation practice which will assure that the values inherent in the heritage sites of Asia are safeguarded and that their authenticity is preserved and truthfully explicated during the process of conservation, restoration, rehabilitation and subsequent maintenance and use.”
Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China (China principles, 2002)	China principles promote that: “The heritage values of a site comprise its historical, artistic, and scientific values. Heritage sites should be used in a rational manner for the benefit of society. The values of the site should in no way be diminished by use for short term gain.
Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage (2003)	Identifies the importance of the intangible cultural heritage and defines it by the domains of: (a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; (b) performing arts; (c) social practices, rituals and festive events; (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; (e) traditional craftsmanship.
Quebec Declaration (2008)	Recognizes the importance of spirit of place and the fact that it is a “continuously reconstructed process, which responds to the needs for change and continuity of communities, it upholds that it can vary in time and from one culture to another. It defines “the spirit of place is made up of tangible (sites, buildings, landscapes, routes, objects) as well as intangible elements (memories, narratives, written documents, festivals, commemorations, rituals, traditional knowledge, values, textures, colors, odors, etc.),

Source: Table prepared by author, Charter source: [www.international.icomos.org](http://www.international.icomos.org) and [www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco).

## 2.7 A Brief Critical Review of the Heritage Conservation Charters

Table 3 shows the gradual development of different heritage conservation charters over the years. This section gives a critical review of a few selected charters that are

commonly accepted to have greater significance and global impact on the theory and practice of heritage conservation.

The Venice Charter<sup>72</sup> is commonly considered as the baseline and founding document for the heritage conservation philosophy in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was a significant step towards recognizing the importance of better conservation practices for traditional buildings and places. But there have been critiques of the Venice Charter in terms of ignoring the intangible heritage values (even though it identifies the cultural, architectural, historical, scientific and social significance of heritage). The Charter ignored the importance (in heritage conservation) of the local attachment and cultural value attributed to the heritage structures, by the local communities. It also created ambiguity on the issue of impacts of new development. Hardy<sup>73</sup> observes, “the requirement of clause 9 that new work ‘must be distinct from the architectural composition and must bear a contemporary stamp’, has been misused to justify clashing new buildings in old places around the world. The results have..... prompted UNESCO to reconsider the issue of new buildings in historic urban landscapes.”

The Burra Charter (1979, with revisions in 1981, 1988 and 1999)<sup>74</sup> follows the Venice Charter as another important milestone and a powerful instrument towards recognizing the cultural significance of a site. But it also had its limitations, as it had to be revised several times. Tainter and Lucas<sup>75</sup> observed that the value (the core of significance) is not inherent in objects or sites as was assumed by the "empirical-positivist approach" that existed prior to the charter. It has been recognized since then that value is created by the community as they interpret the objects, adding knowledge

---

<sup>72</sup> . The Venice Charter, 1966.

<sup>73</sup> . Hardy, 2009.

<sup>74</sup> . The Burra Charter, 1999.

<sup>75</sup> . Tainter and Lucas, 1983, p 714.

in time-place continuum. However, they criticized the charter as it initially didn't recognize the importance of identifying the value that is generated from the attachment and meanings the social groups and individuals attribute to the object over a period of time." The relationship of object to subject is not unique but variable and dependant on (social, political and cultural) contexts, place and time."<sup>76</sup> Most critics<sup>77</sup> agree that the Burra charter has to be revised (in addition to the three revisions) to accommodate the advances in conservation theory and practice and to address the challenges posed by the multivalent, plural and contingent values that exist in the contemporary society.

Following the Venice Charter and the Burra Charter, the Nara Document on Authenticity (1994)<sup>78</sup> attempts to address the critical gap left by the previous two charters. Starn<sup>79</sup> identifies, "The call of the Venice Charter to 'common responsibility' for 'a common heritage' returns at Nara, but this time with the codicil that this 'demands respect for other cultures and all aspects of their belief systems' (Article 6). Authenticity remains 'the essential qualifying factor' (Article 10), but not reductively so, 'within fixed criteria' (Article 11)."

The Nara Document puts greater importance on the culture specific authenticity judgments. The meaning of authenticity varies from culture to culture and it has been recognized in the Nara Document. Article 13<sup>80</sup> stresses the importance of knowledge and understanding that helps to relate to the original and subsequent characteristics of

---

<sup>76</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>77</sup>. See Kamel, *et. al*, 2007 and Zancheti, *et. al*, 2009.

<sup>78</sup>. The Nara Document on Authenticity, 1994.

<sup>79</sup>. Starn, 2002, pp. 1–16.

<sup>80</sup>. The Nara Document on Authenticity, 1994

heritage. It continues, “their meaning, is a requisite basis for assessing all aspects of authenticity.....the sources for authenticity judgments . . . may include form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting, and spirit and feelings, and other internal and external factors.”<sup>81</sup>

The gradual development of the heritage charters shows how the intangible values and the importance of local cultural attachments have gradually gained acceptance in the contemporary heritage conservation theory and practice.

## **2.8 Urban Heritage Conservation: the Key Issues**

Time-place continuity is a key issue in heritage conservation. Even in the traditional historic quarters, change is inevitable. Sometimes it is wholesale, instant. While in other cases, it is a gradual and slow process. Either way, it should be accepted as part of the time place continuity as a heritage is not a ‘frozen’ entity. The Nara Document of Authenticity<sup>82</sup> states: “Cultural heritage diversity exists in time and space.” Particularly, for any *living* heritage place, continuity and adaptability is part of the historic process, unless the heritage value itself is not threatened. Other authors like Powell<sup>83</sup> agree to this concept: “Heritage areas should not be ‘frozen’ in a time warp and preserved like a museum tableau of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is necessary to strike a balance between the economic pressures for growth, change and renewal and the need for cultural continuity. Conservation is definitely not a nostalgic retreat to the past.”

---

<sup>81</sup> . Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> . The Nara Document of Authenticity, 1994, p1.

<sup>83</sup> . Powell, 1994, p 16.

This is also essential for the survival of communities, as none survives without adapting to changing times. This issue is critical, especially for the Asian context, as the heritage is often *living* and periodic renewal is an accepted norm for the survival of the heritage. This is evident in the reconstruction of the wooden temples in countries like Japan, where the heritage value is judged by the spiritual quality of the place rather than the structure only.

Another important issue is the intangible value associated with places and cultural practices; they are inherently related with heritage. The integration of intangible elements in the conservation process requires a “shift from a somewhat static view of significance to one that recognizes the dynamic and contextual nature of social meaning.”<sup>84</sup>

## **2.9 Historic City Centers: Some Common Elements**

The post-World War II shift from agricultural to industrial economy has led to a rapid growth in the Asian cities. This growth has been unprecedented in the last few decades of the twentieth century and continuing in the twenty-first century. The growth is reflected in the shift of population; about 41 percent of the world’s urban population lived in the Asian cities by 1990<sup>85</sup> and currently seven of the ten most populous cities in the world are in Asia with an urban population of 1.36 billion,<sup>86</sup> out of world’s urban population of 3.48 billion.<sup>87</sup> This high population density meant a great pressure on the Asian cities to develop faster, which in turn has put pressure on

---

<sup>84</sup> . Clarke and Johnston, 2003.

<sup>85</sup> . Logan, 2002, xii.

<sup>86</sup> . IRIN News, 2010.

<sup>87</sup> . Hanlon, 2010.



the historic urban quarters of these cities. Some of these areas are resisting the pressure, while others have almost disappeared. Adding to this pressure is the ever growing challenge of rapid and less pliable globalization. "Few communities, particularly urban ones, have avoided external influences, but it is the way that such influences are addressed that expresses and strengthens a community's ethnic identity, and the cultural distinctions which it makes between itself and others perceived as different."<sup>88</sup> The historic centers of Asian cities, including Old Dhaka, share these similar traits. They face the forces of rising population and globalization by the strength of their unique heritage and cultural identity.

The historic city centers of Asia (and also in other parts of the world), especially in the high density cities, share some common characteristics. The unique characteristics and qualities that separate Asian cities from other cities of the world may be called the "Asian-ness".<sup>89</sup> With rapid globalization, this uniqueness is fast disappearing. It is only in places with historic urban fabrics that these qualities are still very prominent with distinct Asian qualities intact. These important qualities are present in traditional historic neighborhoods where the continuity of the sociocultural practices is manifested in the heritage value. Formed by successive generations, they are palimpsests of layered cultural diversity and complexities. Hoi An Protocols<sup>90</sup> define: "A Historic Urban Site or Heritage Group is made up of a number of related and spatially adjacent, or at least proximate, resources, all of which are individually of heritage value and/or, which contribute to the overall heritage significance of the group."

---

<sup>88</sup> . Barth, 1969, p 10.

<sup>89</sup> . Logan, 2002, p xii.

<sup>90</sup> . Hoi An Protocols, 2001.

In most cases, these historic urban sites are *living*, and they undergo continuous transformations due to socio-economic pressures. As a definite consequence, heritage is vulnerable and constantly threatened. This process of transformation is complicated and manifestation of a global and local conflict; as Askew & Logan<sup>91</sup> explain “The processes that are bringing about this transformation are diverse, and the elaboration of their features is complicated by the current ‘post-modern’ dictate for ‘meaning’. Despite these reservations, it is clear that there are a number of processes that are producing changes in these cities. Perhaps the totality of this process is best captured by the phrase ‘the global-local dialectic’ which suggests a continuing battle between global forces impinging upon the local.”

The rapid socio-economic transformations create the global-local conflict. Heritage conservation has become highly relevant to protect the *cultural identity* of the Asian cities in this milieu. The *local* qualities in contrast to the *global* are formed with the tangible urban built form with which the intangible qualities are inherently attached. Generally, global forces have put heavy pressure on local heritage and ultimately make them disappear. There are rare exceptions, and they in turn trigger a strong ‘localism’ with growing interest in local traditions, history and cultural identity. It is especially critical to identify and understand these local forces before any conservation effort.

---

<sup>91</sup> . Askew & Logan, 1994, p vii.

Another persistent problem common in historic urban centers is the loss of rich cultural traditions and regional identity giving way to alien elements and images, mainly due to economic pressures.

Engelhardt<sup>92</sup> finds that there are some commonalities among the situations faced by the urban population living in the historic urban centers in Asia/Pacific with respect to the site. Some of these situations are:

1. It is a common phenomenon for the local populations to live in or may, in fact be the proprietors of the protected buildings in the historic urban centers of ancient cities.
2. The communal inhabitants of religious or other public historical monuments still continue to use these buildings for their original purposes, thus keeping them *alive*. Such occupation and stewardship of heritage areas are a continuing tradition in subsequent generations.
3. Use of traditional equipment and techniques are responsible for protecting and maintaining the authenticity of the heritage in the cultural landscapes, especially the rural ones.

Hoi An Protocols<sup>93</sup> also identify several common issues that threaten heritage in the historic quarters of Asian cities:

1. *The loss of historic structures and replacement with new buildings as a result of economic pressures to develop valuable property.*
2. *Slow decay of structural fabric due to lack of maintenance, as a result of shortages of funding, lack of interest and failure of owner/occupiers to appreciate the value.*

---

<sup>92</sup> . Engelhardt, 1998b.

<sup>93</sup> . Hoi An Protocols, 2001.

3. *Steady onslaught of pollution, and damage from vibration and settlement, changes in water levels and moisture in the urban environment.*

4. *Heavy, uncontrolled traffic and polluting vehicles within and around historic urban areas.*

5. *The loss of traditional occupations and of the traditional economic – residential mix of the community which gave urban areas their authentic flavor. This includes the loss of artisan skills associated with traditional building construction and repair.*

## **2.10 Traditional Neighborhoods in Historic City Centers**

The historic urban centers are formed of traditional neighborhoods. The traditional urban neighborhoods become socio-culturally unique places from the complex sociocultural, religious and ethnic compositions. While Askew and Logan<sup>94</sup> describe tradition as "a collection of symbols and meanings chosen to represent the local cultural and social continuity in time and place inherited from the past", Anderson<sup>95</sup> finds tradition is itself problematic as a benchmark of authenticity and legitimacy, especially at the national level.

The traditional neighborhoods of historic urban quarters of Asian cities are complex interwoven socio-spatial systems, which have generated cultural values throughout their local histories. The built heritage attains its value from the local sociocultural activities. These values are embedded and integrated in local rituals, lifestyles, customs, social structures and events. Anthropologists Redfield and Singer<sup>96</sup> identify these as "'little tradition', characterized by popular customs, attitudes and practices

---

<sup>94</sup> . Askew and Logan, 1994, p 4.

<sup>95</sup> . Anderson, 1983.

<sup>96</sup> . Redfield and Singer, 1954, pp 53-73.

found in older localities amidst the spaces of the.....cities where it is embodied in the activities and everyday survival strategies of the inhabitants.”

The traditional communities develop their own cultural niche and values through continued association of place, sociocultural traditions, rituals and customs. Johnston<sup>97</sup> explains “Places differ in ...‘collective’ memory. For a variety of reasons....people’s responses to the problem of surviving collectively vary.” Johnston argues<sup>98</sup> that the collective response gradually becomes part of the local culture. It works as a store of knowledge for the people to draw from as they face the challenges of everyday survival. The store of knowledge is inherited through successive generations and transmitted “*inter-generationally* to others who will modify it as they in turn tackle problems old and new. Thus, cultures develop in places and are passed on in places.”<sup>99</sup>

The traditional neighborhoods of heritage value are particularly important in terms of conservation, as very little of the traditional urban fabric have been able to survive the onslaught of twentieth century modern developments having their unique *localness*, symbols, intangible assets, lifestyles, crafts and lived spaces intact. The problem is more serious in *living* communities.

Another important element of the traditional neighborhoods is their people. Clarke and Johnston<sup>100</sup> identify the importance of traditional places as they are “fundamental to the identity of the people.....a place to which people feel a need to return, to draw strength, to reconnect to their land and community.” What is significant and thus

---

<sup>97</sup> . Johnston, 1991.

<sup>98</sup> . Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> . Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> . Clarke and Johnston, 2003.

constitutes local heritage is related to the meanings attached to them by communities living in these historic enclaves. As Giddens<sup>101</sup> argues, "By place we refer to the meaning conferred on particular spaces by groups of people through sustained association at various levels."

The importance of identification and conservation of heritage in the historic quarters is becoming more evident in the face of globalization, which puts pressures on local cultures and often breaks them down. The built heritage is interwoven with the sociocultural legacies in the traditional neighborhoods. They emerge through subsequent generations and layers of history, and ultimately become the identity for the communities.

### **2.11 Case Studies of Urban Heritage Conservation in Historic Cities of Asia**

In this section, three case studies have been selected to demonstrate some of the contemporary problems and challenges that historic quarters of Asian cities are facing when it comes to heritage conservation. The case studies cover a wide range of issues like heritage conservation challenges and common problems and also innovative initiatives and possible alternatives. The first case Georgetown shows how achieving UNESCO's World Heritage status has led to the gentrification of the original inhabitants. The second case Lahore shows the conflict between enforcement of heritage conservation guidelines and living culture. The third case Lucknow shows the problem of conflicting legislations (to protect heritage) and loss of traditional craftsmen. The cases were selected in such a way that covers the most pertinent problems of urban heritage conservation in historic cities of Asia.

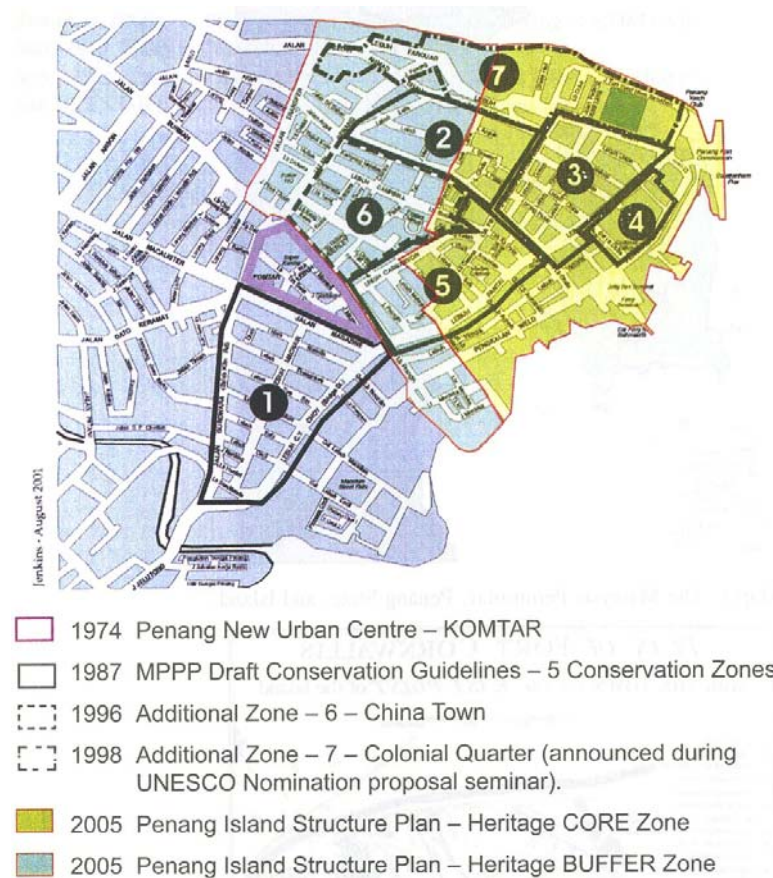
---

<sup>101</sup> . Giddens, 1990.

## 2.11.1 Georgetown, Penang

### Historical development

Georgetown is the capital of Penang. The strategic location at the northern tip of the Straits of Malacca had a deep influence on the history of Penang. The activities started in the form of a trading port between Indian and Chinese trade routes. The connection was later extended to Europe and Americas. It is trading that has over the years exposed Penang Island to extensive global influences, so evident in its heritage and urban fabric.



Map 1: Map of heritage conservation zones Georgetown from 1987 to 2005 – reflecting policy changes towards the historic city, source: Jenkins, 2008, p 282.

Penang's (see Map 1) history dates back to the days of the Malaccan Sultanate in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Later, Penang was a colony for the Portuguese, then the Dutch and eventually the British and the French. Georgetown, Penang was the first British settlement in South-East Asia founded by Captain Francis Light in 1786 on the north-eastern tip of the island. Together with Melaka and Singapore, Penang was the Crown Colony of the Straits Settlement from 1826 to 1946 (except during the Japanese occupation during WWII).

### **Heritage elements**

Penang's heritage is hybrid (see Figure 2), owing to its legacy of being a busy port, attracting traders and settlers from the archipelago, India, China, Arabia and Europe, who brought with them their religious and cultural beliefs and practices. Forged through immigrants, Penang's urban heritage is one of the most extensive and diversified in Southeast Asia. It dates back around late 18th century to the mid-20th century. The multicultural communities of many ethnicities are enclaves of living heritage. Established by the trading activities of the Malay, Chinese and Indians with the successful colonial settlers, Penang showcases some of the unique examples of multicultural heritage of architecture and urban form. The heritage reflects colonial influences with diversified Asian traditions (see Figure 2). Heritage, both tangible and intangible are rooted in the ethnic enclaves, religious buildings and different rituals, festivals and lifestyles. The heritage enclaves showcase a unique range of shophouses and townhouse, but mostly the unique heritage elements are reflected in the predominant pre-war two story shophouses. "Records show that there are about



10,000 pre-war buildings in Georgetown. The history of these heritage buildings dates back to between late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century.”<sup>102</sup>



Figure 2: Heritage elements in historic quarter of Penang, source: top row right: [simpleindulgence-learnmakeup.blogspot.com](http://simpleindulgence-learnmakeup.blogspot.com), middle row left: [tc.alivenotdead.com](http://tc.alivenotdead.com), bottom row left: [www.123rf.com](http://www.123rf.com), bottom row right: [travelony.wordpress.com](http://travelony.wordpress.com), other images: Siew, 2010. All websites accessed on 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2010.

### **Current condition**

The former colony Georgetown had flourished through trading connections, with foreign influences embossed in its historic urban fabric. The communities survived,

---

<sup>102</sup> . Mui, 2008, p 1.

with some fusion of identity and culture through intermarriage. Continual redefinition of the cultural identity is an integral part of Georgetown. The identity reconstruction at Georgetown followed the activities at the national level, especially during subsequent decades after the independence of Malaysia.

There was growing recognition of the importance of Georgetown's urban heritage and the efforts to conserve began in the early 1970s but without any significant achievements. Later, with the abolishment of Rent Control Act in 2000<sup>103</sup>, loss of heritage buildings and historical communities and the rapid developing economic activities, the historic enclave of George Town' was listed as one of the world's 100 most endangered sites on the World Monuments Watch in 2000 and 2002.<sup>104</sup> The inclusion in the list led to realization of the importance of the unique heritage value of the area and subsequently started the preparation of the application to include the area in UNESCO's World Cultural Heritage List (see Map 1). With a plethora of cultural and architectural heritage, George Town is unique. This helped it to qualify George Town<sup>105</sup>, together with Malacca, to be included in UNESCO's World Cultural Heritage List on 7 July 2008 as “the most complete surviving historic city centre on the Straits of Malacca, with a multi-cultural living heritage”<sup>106</sup>

### **Urban conservation context: challenges and issues**

Along with the UNESCO listing followed the “stringent protective measures that forbid new development and changes that may destroy the unique architecture culture

---

<sup>103</sup> . Mui, 2008.

<sup>104</sup> . See [www.wmf.org](http://www.wmf.org), accessed on 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2010.

<sup>105</sup> . The inner city of Georgetown is the core heritage area and the administrative zone Georgetown 1 is selected as UNESCO World Heritage site.

<sup>106</sup> . Siew, 2010.

and townscape.”<sup>107</sup> These led to conflicts of adapting to the new; for example, some of the commercial projects could not be executed as intended due to the new construction guidelines. With the rapid suburban development of Penang, many residents opted for a modern living and moved out of the heritage area, turning the once vibrant city into a declining state with many dilapidated buildings. The situation was further exacerbated by the previous zoning of conservation areas, with many owners losing interest in maintaining the heritage buildings due to lack of tenants, owing to the abolishment of the Rent Control Act. Another challenge is to survive the commodification and gentrification in different forms and the struggles by existing communities against them by continuing their traditional way of life. George Town’s historic inner city has thus been termed a “contested space.”<sup>108</sup>

One of the major problems is the rapidly growing cultural tourism that creates new businesses. This is leading to conversion of traditional residences and businesses into new uses like boutique hotels, restaurants, souvenir shops, etc. that ultimately displace the local residents. The very lifestyle, old trades, communities and traditional practices that have helped to achieve the UNESCO status are gradually being destroyed by this gentrification process.

Despite these realities, Penang has taken several important steps in identifying and maintaining the unique qualities of its cultural heritage. Srinivas<sup>109</sup> observes the initiatives in the form of studies and programs that are aimed to combine heritage conservation with the larger goal of local sustainability. He gives example of the

---

<sup>107</sup> . Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> . Jenkins, 2008.

<sup>109</sup> . Srinivas, 1999.

'Sustainable Penang' as a successful program, which has been incorporated into tourism plans and projects, with a focus on adding intrinsic value to the local economy; working toward the future. He argues that the initiative's economic sustainability is ensured by partnerships with the private sector in developing the tourism potential of Georgetown both for internal and external tourists. However, efforts by the Government are proving insufficient to protect the heritage. There is growing recognition of the importance of co-operation and participation of the local communities to save the heritage of Georgetown.<sup>110</sup>

Involving the community is a challenging issue as the local residents can not clearly decide whether to conserve the heritage or not. This is one reason behind the slow participation in the conservation effort by the local authorities. Considering the circumstances, there have been suggestions that for economic sustainability, one possible solution can be adaptive reuse, by turning the conservation area into a business district<sup>111</sup> with the residents living at the outskirts of the conservation areas.

### **2.11.2 Lahore Walled City**

#### **Historical development**

Lahore Walled City (see Map 2), locally known as “andaroon shehr”<sup>112</sup>, dates back nearly two millenniums. Probably founded before the seventh century<sup>113</sup>, it showcases cultural influences from three major periods, the Mughals, The British and the

---

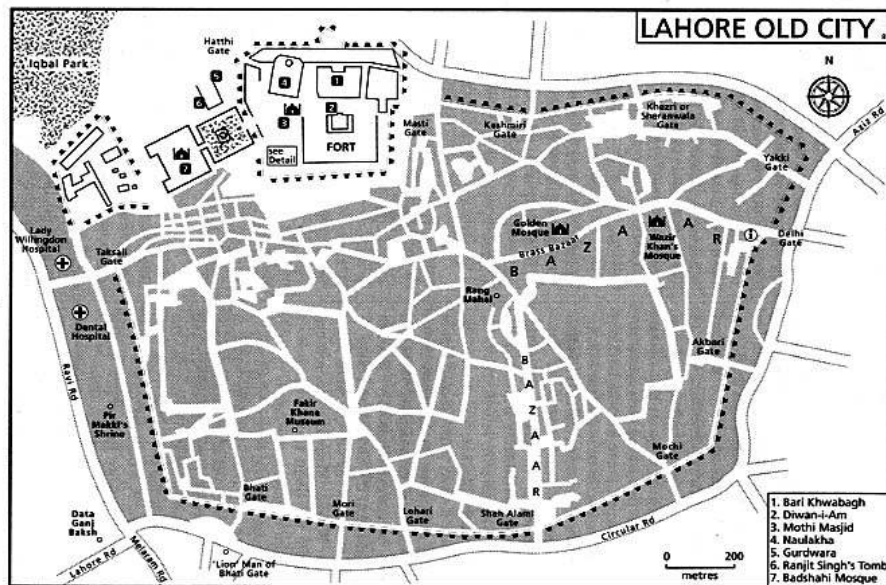
<sup>110</sup> . See Engelhardt, 1998a

<sup>111</sup> . See for example Mui, 2008, pp. 8-9, and Fisher, 2005, pp. 158-175.

<sup>112</sup> . Tirmizi, 2010, p 2.

<sup>113</sup> . Antoniou, 1981, p 74.

Independent Pakistan. Mumtaz <sup>114</sup> argues that every region has a particular environment that shapes the culture of the people within it. It happens through constant interaction between various groups of people which enriches all the cultures, as each group absorbs and adopts something of the others. These groups influences and are influenced by the cultures of the peoples adjoining their frontiers, as evident in the Lahore Walled City.



Map 2: Map of Lahore Walled City, Source: Tirmizi, 2010, p 2.

Mughal Emperor Akbar constructed the Lahore fort and the city walls (see Map 2 and Figure 3) in their present dimensions in 1605.<sup>115</sup> The city lost some of its major historical elements during the last two centuries owing to political changes. Several

<sup>114</sup> . Mumtaz, 1985, pp. 3-4.

<sup>115</sup> . Kron, 1996.

parts of the city wall were pulled down; the historic gates were rebuilt and modified with the moats around the walls were filled to create circular gardens.



Figure 3: Left - Model of Lahore Walled City, source: [www.defence.pk](http://www.defence.pk) and Aerial view of Lahore Walled City, source: [www.funonthenet.in](http://www.funonthenet.in). All websites accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2010.

The British chose to locate their defensive and residential quarters outside the walled city, and much of the city fortification was damaged or destroyed in the process. The great influx of population, who migrated during and after the independence, put enormous pressure on the historic urban fabric and gradually damaged most of it with many historic quarters rebuilt as markets (see Figure 3).

### **Heritage elements**

Along with the three major cultural influences mentioned, the city's position along a important trade route meant it was also influenced by lesser dominant cultures like the Afghan and the Chinese. City gates, forts, palatial residences, mosques and other monuments are the important heritage of Lahore Walled City (see Figure 4). The Mughal architecture, including mosques, grand city gateways, palaces, etc. dominates the walled city. Though built over a relatively shorter span of time, Mughal monuments in and around the Lahore Fort are some of the best examples of the

dynastic heritage. Furthermore, within the Walled City, there are numerous heritages of local and provincial styles.



Figure 4: Heritage of Lahore Walled City, Source - top row left: ruhanisatsangusa.org, top row right: farm1.static.flickr.com, middle row left top: pakistaniat.com, middle row left bottom: urfashions.com and daveliu.com, middle row right, bottom row left, right: Tirmizi, 2010, middle row middle: commons.wikimedia.org, bottom row middle (two): urbanpk.com., All websites accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2010.

Mumtaz<sup>116</sup> observes the heritage elements of Lahore Walled City that include “the glazed-tile mosaic, brick architecture of Lahore.....the mosques....several garden gates, pavilions and tombs. The more flamboyant, sculpturesque style of lower Punjab, with its use of patterned blue and white glazed tiles.....distinct styles of lower Sind, the one employing a trabeated structural system with richly curved limestone, and the other, glazed tilework with arcuated brick structures.” The *havelis* (residential palaces) within the walled city of Lahore represent some of the outstanding examples of *Sikh* domestic architecture in its grandeur. They have remarkable surface decoration in brick on the exterior surface and magnificent colorful frescoes internally.

Besides the architectural heritage, the cultural heritage of the Walled City plays a vital role in the socio-economic sphere of Lahore with the living culture and traditions, “an enduring continuation of and evolution from a much older way of life.”<sup>117</sup>

### **Current condition**

Lahore Walled City has about 20,000 buildings<sup>118</sup> with a network of streets of varying sizes. Once a bustling Mughal provincial capital city, the historic quarter nowadays is highly populated (nearly four million in 1992),<sup>119</sup> mostly by the urban poor. The area has some of the most important and highly valuable cultural and architectural heritage. Like many other older cities of Asia, rapid population growth is a major problem for the Lahore walled city. The population growth is accompanied by intensified

---

<sup>116</sup> . Mumtaz, 1985, p 195.

<sup>117</sup> . Kron, 1996.

<sup>118</sup> . Tirmizi, 2010.

<sup>119</sup> . Kron, 1996.



economic activities and vehicular growth. The uncontrolled traffic is aided by high levels of noise and air pollution that threatens the heritage buildings. Some of the main problems in the historic area are the degenerated state of basic services, poor legislative framework and negligence by the government, illegal encroachments, uncontrolled traffic, unplanned commercialization and poverty.

### **Urban conservation context: challenges and issues**

Lack of right conservation initiatives, neglect and efforts in wrong directions are some of the major problems for Lahore Walled City. The burgeoning new constructions between the heritage structures have led to their degradation. The high level of pollution is threatening the survival of the heritage. The influence of modern materials has led to alterations of the heritage buildings. Space scarcity led to illegal encroachment, extension and sub-division of the residences and havelis and loss of major open spaces.

Recognizing the vulnerability of the heritage, there has been several efforts by international agencies and the Pakistan government. The Lahore Development Authority's (LDA) formulated the *Conservation Plan for the Walled City of Lahore*.

<sup>120</sup> The document contained recommendations concerning the vulnerability and physical decay of heritage of the area. The Conservation plans for Lahore Walled City were prepared by the Pakistan Environmental Planning and Architectural Consultants (PEPAC) in 1986<sup>121</sup>. It assessed the characteristics and qualities and the historic area

---

<sup>120</sup> . LDA, 1980, cited in Tirmizi, 2010.

<sup>121</sup> . PEPAC, 1986, cited in Kron, 1996.

with listing 1,406 cultural properties. The PEPAC's proposal included adaptive reuse of monuments, relocation of street traders and focuses the conservation effort on specific areas of the historic city to best utilize the limited resources.

The PEPAC's project was an expansion of the "Lahore Urban Development and Traffic Study" (LUDTS) of 1979<sup>122</sup> undertaken by the Lahore Development Authority (LDA) and funded by the World Bank. It identified four areas for improvement:

- "1. Urban planning activities, leading to the production of a structure plan to provide a framework for action program within Lahore.*
- 2. Neighborhood upgrading and urban expansion projects, to provide substantial improvements in living conditions for lower income groups.*
- 3. Improvement of traffic conditions in congested parts of central Lahore.*
- 4. Improvements to living conditions within the walled city, by improving environmental sanitation and providing social support program."*

Despite these efforts, some of the major challenges for conservation remain. They include: authenticity of the historical records, inclusion of the social element in the physical, the definition of who should be labeled as 'encroacher' in relation to defining who is a resident, the conflict between enforcement of the guidelines and the living culture of pride, community and a sense of ownership among the local residents and ultimately the trend of conservation efforts being better successful in only the government owned properties.

### **2.11.3 Lucknow**

#### **Historical development**

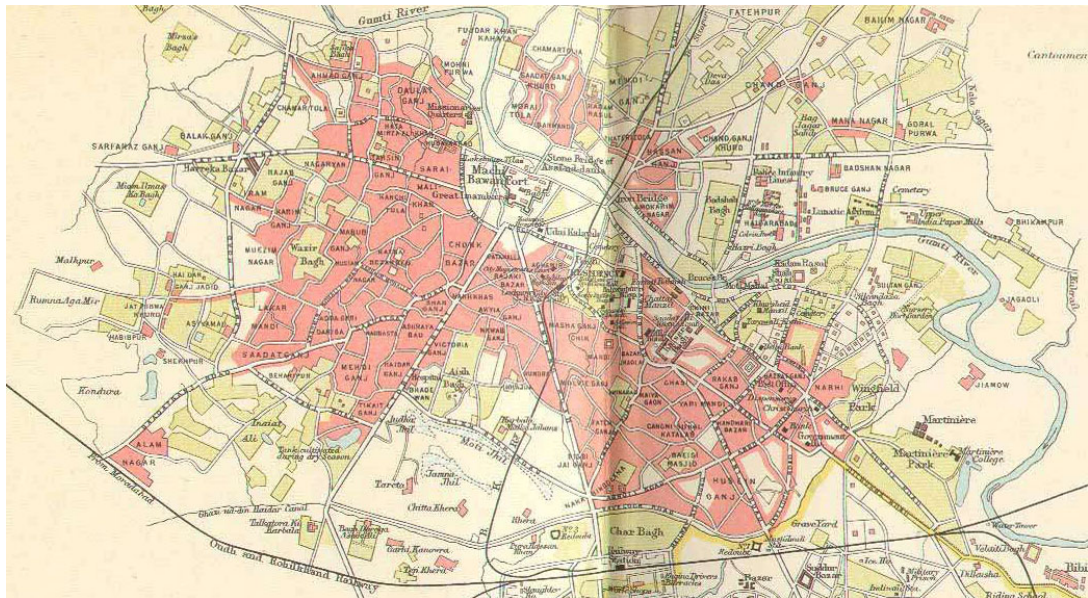
Legends trace the history of Lucknow back to the days of *Ramayana*, the Hindu religious script. The city used to be known as Lakshmanpur. However, the modern

---

<sup>122</sup> . LUDTS and the World Bank/IDA, 1980, cited in Kron, 1996.

history of Lucknow dates back to 1720<sup>123</sup>, as the city gained importance when Mughal emperors started appointing *Nawabs*<sup>124</sup> and by the 1730s Lucknow became a major province (see Map 3). Under the rule the Nawabs, Lucknow flourished in art, architecture, poetry, music, dance and an overall *Lucknow culture* was created during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Lucknow became the perfect combination of culture and architecture with a unique charm of its own. The city is synonymous with the *Nawabi* culture and still bears



Map 3: Map showing Lucknow heritage area, source: [www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00maplinks/colonial/constable1893/xlucknowmap.jpg](http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00maplinks/colonial/constable1893/xlucknowmap.jpg), accessed on 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2010.

a major part of the original imperial splendor (see Map 3). Several of the monuments of the era still survive and constitute a major part of the city's heritage. A major blow for the Lucknow heritage came in the form of the demolition of parts of the city by

<sup>123</sup> . [www.lucknow.org.uk/history.html](http://www.lucknow.org.uk/history.html)  
<sup>124</sup> . Provincial administrators under Mughal rule.

the British rulers before and after the mutiny and war in 1857.<sup>125</sup> Both to facilitate the unhindered movement of the army and as an act of revenge, the British colonial rulers demolished hundreds of inhabited neighborhoods, thousands of monuments and grand heritage buildings, doing irreparable damage to the Lucknow heritage. The rest of the Lucknow heritage survives to represent the city's great past.

### **Heritage elements**

Lucknow architecture is hybrid, owing to several influences. The hybridity originating from influences of different parts of the world combined with the local indigenous traditions, actually showcases the rich history and evolution of the city. The architecture is primarily of Indo-Islamic regional style, but was also influenced by the European colonial, Persian and Egyptian styles (see Figure 5). The two prominent styles that stand out are the Indo-Islamic and Indo-European architecture. Unlike the other Mughal cities, stone was not easily available. Bricks and Lime plaster were used as primary building materials by the *Nawabs*. Lucknow is famous for its lime plaster ornamentation<sup>126</sup> and has nearly a hundred heritage buildings of various typologies (dating back to 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century) of the style, showing excellent craftsmanship (see Figure 5). The lack of variety of stone was compensated by the highly intricate lime plaster ornamentation.

---

<sup>125</sup> . Chandra and Taqui, 2006, p 1.

<sup>126</sup> . Referred to as 'Stucco' by several authors, source: Khan, 2010.

The stone ornamentation style of the Mughal-Persian and European artists and craftsmen were imitated in lime plaster ornamentation. This was gradually developed and refined as an important art and craft, often referred to as the *Lucknow style*.



Figure 5: Heritage of Lucknow, Source - top row left: [photo.outlookindia.com](http://photo.outlookindia.com), top row right: [farm4.static.flickr.com](http://farm4.static.flickr.com), second row left: [cache.virtualtourist.com](http://cache.virtualtourist.com), second row middle: [mdb1.ibibo.com](http://mdb1.ibibo.com), second row right: [farm3.static.flickr.com](http://farm3.static.flickr.com), third row second left: [3.bp.blogspot.com](http://3.bp.blogspot.com), third row second right: [thumbs.dreamstime.com](http://thumbs.dreamstime.com), third row right: [img181.imageshack.us](http://img181.imageshack.us), bottom row left, right: Chandra & Taqui, 2006, p 191, 209, bottom row middle: [farm5.static.flickr.com](http://farm5.static.flickr.com)., All websites accessed on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2010.

### **Current condition**

There are several types of ownership of the heritage buildings<sup>127</sup>, ranging from Governmental agencies (ASI, SAD, others), Hussainabad Trust and private. The varying types of ownerships make conservation efforts more challenging. According to a list of monuments maintained by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Uttar Pradesh of India has a total of 741 monuments, 365 of which fall within the Lucknow circle.<sup>128</sup> The last few decades saw a general lack of proper planning by the authorities, poor enforcement and loopholes in the existing laws. Other major problems include rapid urban development and unauthorized construction in the vicinity of the architectural heritage and monuments, human vandalism, lack of maintenance, etc. These have led the Lucknow heritage into a vulnerable state. The original cultural fabric of the city has been distorted to a certain degree and this trend has continued.

### **Urban conservation context: challenges and issues**

Making general problems of the city's heritage worse, along with external challenges and threats of private sectors, there is a great disparity even within the laws set by the authorities. As Mathur<sup>129</sup> observes, the bylaws of Lucknow Master Plan (LMP) 2021 developed by the Lucknow Development Authority (LDA) directly conflicts the laws set by the Central Government of India. While the stringent Archaeological Sites and Remains Amendment and Validation Ordinance (AMASRO) of 2010 makes "alterations, repairs or additions in existing properties a tedious process, with

---

<sup>127</sup> . Khan, 2010.

<sup>128</sup> . Mathur, 2010.

<sup>129</sup> . Ibid.

offenders liable to pay hefty fines or can even face jail terms. On the other, the Lucknow Master Plan 2021 has not only adopted a lenient stance towards heritage conservation, but also contradicts the tenets of AMASRO. The author quotes city-based architect Vipul Varshney ‘The Ordinance definitely comes as a boon for heritage sites in the city. However, to prevent misuse of its provisions, all possibilities of ambiguity must be dealt with, especially in defining terms like other important monuments’.<sup>130</sup>

Another challenge is the dwindling number of competent artisans who know the craft of lime plaster ornamentation. Their depletion puts the conservation and authenticity of the city’s heritage under serious threat. The traditional knowledge has been carried on through the generations by the system of apprenticeships where the younger generations learn from their masters and subsequently pass on their knowledge. The reasons behind their depletion include lack of jobs, shifting to other more lucrative professions, the diminished popularity of the craft in a losing battle with the modern glass-concrete construction, etc. This important craft needs to be revitalized for the very survival of the city’s heritage. Though several important monuments have been conserved, most of the heritage buildings are at different stages of deterioration and decay or even extinct. Despite the existing laws, the important heritage buildings are struggling to survive in their authentic grandeur due to poor enforcement. They require immediate conservation efforts.

---

<sup>130</sup> . Ibid.

## **2.12 Chapter Conclusion**

Asian urban heritage is diversified and often hybrid due to colonial influences. There is a growing recognition of the importance of heritage conservation and also the shared responsibility of all interested groups. Heritage here is very much part of the lives and value systems of the local communities in the traditional enclaves. Urban heritage has been recognized as an important part of urban identity and essential for continuity into the future. Many historic quarters are in a highly vulnerable state and on verge of disappearing with the onslaught of rapid economic growth and modernization. Other problems include the changing mindset and lifestyle of the population opting to abandon the heritage, conflicting and ambiguous laws for protection of heritage, illegal encroachments, etc. To save the architectural heritage will require more coordinated efforts and immediate steps have to be taken in several cases.

Heritage, especially living heritage, is part of the everyday life of the communities. While it is important to recognize their place in the overall urban development, their social value should also be given equal importance. But it is also true that the fate of heritage is not always easy to decide, and it may involve regeneration, reuse or redevelopment in cases. It is also essential to identify their place in the larger spectrum of the city as a whole.



## Chapter 3

### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND INFORMAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

#### 3.1 History and Concepts of Public Participation

##### 3.1.1 The Concept and Development of Public Participation

During the later part of the 1960s, there was a growing recognition of society's ills and inequalities in different parts of the world. A group of insightful observers identified the need for peoples' capacity to participate meaningfully in the process of decision-making for substantial social benefits in the process, especially for 'the public' at-large and for disadvantaged groups in particular often referred to as the 'have not's'. Among them were Richard Bolan, a planning educator and Sherry Arnstein<sup>131</sup>. Bolan identified three crucial factors for public participation to become successful: motivation, opportunity, skills. Arnstein promoted the importance of the real influence of citizen participation and the fear of becoming "citizen therapy" if not implemented properly. Arnstein categorized the different types of citizen participation in the form of eight rungs on a *ladder of citizen participation*. Since then, many have expressed similar views highlighting different aspects and importance of public participation.

---

<sup>131</sup> . Briggs, 2003b, pp. 17-18.

Arnstein<sup>132</sup> came up with one of the most effective typology of public participation illustrated in the form of a ladder (see figure 6), where each rung represents the level of citizens' power to influence the end product. The lower two rungs are: (1) Manipulation and (2) Therapy, which correspond with "non-participation" and are basically used as tools (of power holders) to "educate" or "cure" the participants. The Rungs 3 to 5 provide a slightly improved level of participation termed "tokenism", which includes (3) Informing and (4) Consultation, and thus having a voice for the have-nots. These levels do not actually enable real participation in the decision making process and are rather restricted in nature. Rung (5) Placation, only goes a little further by allowing the have-nots to advise, but they have no actual say in the decision making process.

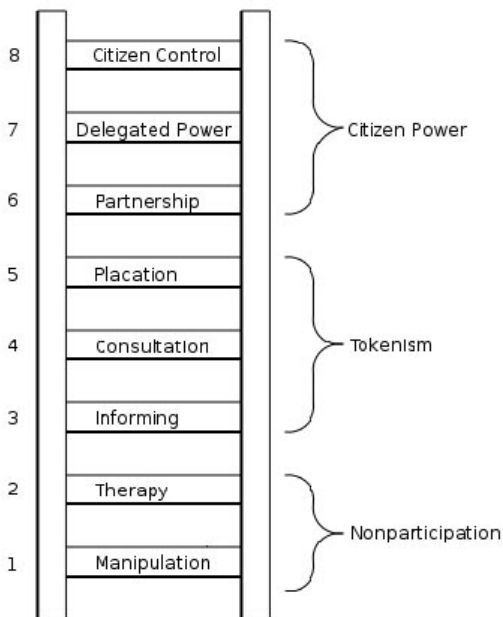


Figure 6: Eight rungs on the ladder of citizen participation,  
Source: Arnstein, 1969, p 217.

The top three levels of the ladder are real levels of citizen power with varying degree of involvements and decision making power. They are: (6) Partnership, that can

<sup>132</sup> . Arnstein, *opcit*, pp. 216-224.

enable the public to negotiate and even engage in actual bargain and trade-offs with traditional power holders. The two highest rungs, (7) Delegated Power and (8) Citizen Control, are the levels where the public or citizen obtain the real decision making power and even obtain the majority of decision-making seats, and/or ultimate full managerial power, achieving the greatest stage of public participation.

Kretzmann and McKnight<sup>133</sup> states: “collective action around important issues should identify and build on the assets of a community or group.” The concept of Public participation is not universally accepted yet, but there is an ever growing recognition and demand for wider stakeholder involvement in the contemporary idea of problem-solving and decision-making, for the simple reason that it can produce better substantive ideas that have a greater chance of being accepted by the public. Briggs<sup>134</sup> finds that: “over the past few decades, most fields of policy and practice have seen increased demand for less 'top-down' decision-making and action, for a wider engagement of stakeholders in setting directions..... and shaping other kinds of decisions that matter in their lives.”

Creighton<sup>135</sup> states that “participation is best understood as a continuum” (Figure 7).

Out of an infinite number of points along the scale, he chooses four major categories:

1. Inform the public.
2. Listen to the public.
3. Engage in problem solving.
4. Develop agreements.

---

<sup>133</sup> . Kretzmann and McKnight in *The asset-based community development institute* retrieved from <http://www.abcdinstitute.org>, accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> November, 2010.

<sup>134</sup> . Briggs, 2003b, p 5.

<sup>135</sup> . Creighton, 2005, pp. 8-9.

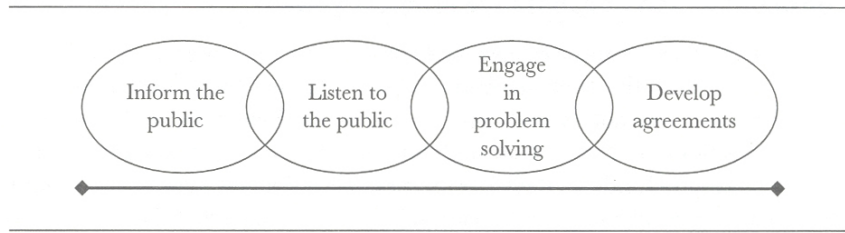


Figure 7: Continuum of Participation, source: Creighton, 2005, p 9.

In other cases like in South Lanarkshire of UK <sup>136</sup>, public participation was implemented and the practice revealed four clear stages (see Figure 8) of public participation namely: Information, Consultation, Participation and Empowerment as shown in the following wheel:

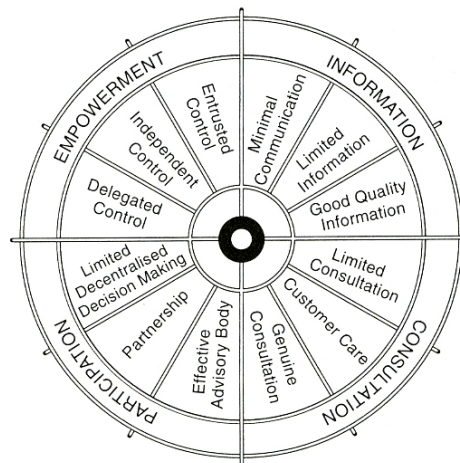


Figure 8: South Lanarkshire's wheel of participation, source: Cullingworth, 1999, p 193.

Public participation starts with the conviction that people's involvement is an essential condition for problem solving in a democratic manner, taking the positive contribution of each member of public as fundamental. Often citizens do not

<sup>136</sup>. Cullingworth, 1999, p 193.

understand their rights and responsibilities and therefore are not able to express their opinions and concerns. Public participation increases transparency in the decision-making process. When citizens are involved in the policy development, they are able to make government officials more accountable for their decisions. Also “experts cannot make decisions without assigning a weight or priorities of competing values that society believes are good.”<sup>137</sup> The concept of public participation starts with accepting the fact that no single stakeholder or authority can have absolute control over a process. Arnstein<sup>138</sup> recognizes: “citizen participation is a categorical term for citizen power. It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future.” However, there is a vast difference between participation for the sake of it and the real power, power that has effects on the planning and outcome of processes<sup>139</sup>.

A study of public participation cases<sup>140</sup> in the last few decades shows that the quality, scope and quantity of information exchanged with public and opportunities for consultation and feedback have increased significantly. Comparatively, active participation and engaging the people in real partnership in policy-making are still rather rare.

---

<sup>137</sup> . Creighton, 2005, p 15.

<sup>138</sup> . Arnstein, 1969, p 216.

<sup>139</sup> . Several authors like Arnstein (1969) recognize that this is exactly what happens in most of the cases where there is no ‘real power’ in the public participation.

<sup>140</sup> . See for example, Austin and Lowe (1994), Briggs (2003 a, b), Citizenship DRC (2007), Creighton (2005), Cullingworth (1999), Fung and Wright (2003), Kothari, (1996), Kretzmann and McKnight, OECD (2001), [www.abcdinstitute.org](http://www.abcdinstitute.org), Zipfel and Gaventa (2007).

### 3.1.2 Essential Elements and Procedures of Public Participation

Public participation is diverse in nature and there are no standard procedures. Still there are some common elements that Creighton<sup>141</sup> finds most public participation shares:

1. Public participation applies to administrative decisions of agencies and sometimes by private organizations.
2. Public participation is not just providing information and is interactive.
3. There is an organized process for involving the public.
4. The participants have some level of impact or influence on the decision being made.

One of the most comprehensive definitions of public participation is described in the Exhibit 1.1<sup>142</sup> of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2). It states the core values for the practice of public participation as follows:

- The public should have a say in decisions about actions that affect their lives.
- Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
- The public participation process communicates the interests and meets the process needs of all participants.
- The public participation process seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected.
- The public participation process involves participants in defining how they participate.
- The public participation process provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.

---

<sup>141</sup> . Creighton, 2005, p 6.

<sup>142</sup> . Source: International Association for Public Participation, from <http://iap2.org/practitionertools/index>, accessed on 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2010.

- The public participation process communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

Stakeholders are the different parties involved in the participation process. On the issue of identifying the role of different stakeholders in the participation process, Bill Potapchuk<sup>143</sup> of the *Community Building Institute* recommends that it is beneficial to distinguish between:

“• *Primary stakeholders*, who participate as a “core group” intensively engaged in learning, discussion, and even formal facilitated consensus building or dispute resolution.

- *Secondary stakeholders*, who engage episodically through some form of public involvement, such as open community meetings; and

• The *public(s) at-large*, for whom public education is needed and appropriate.”

Holdar and Zakharchenko<sup>144</sup> state the necessary elements for constructive citizen participation:

1. Initiative and desire to make a difference, dedication to the issue.
2. Awareness and education: knowledge of citizen participation methods
3. Cooperation with the Local Authorities
4. Each Stakeholder Has to Benefit
5. Planning and Implementation
6. Transparency and Flexibility
7. Using Experts

They also set-out some of the obstacles like: “Lack of cooperation between the stakeholders, lack of information and knowledge, limited or nonexistent structures,

---

<sup>143</sup> . See <http://communitybuildinginstitute.org/archives/author/billpotap>, accessed on 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2010.

<sup>144</sup> . Holdar and Zakharchenko, 2002, p 16-18.

lack of experience in this field, lack of resources, Unrealistic levels of expectation, the focus is on a minute issue rather than broader issues, etc.” They also suggest some remedies like: “civic education and training, public awareness campaigns and networking, sharing experiences, partnerships and twinning, introducing volunteerism, etc.”

### **3.1.3 Public Participation: Factors that Work For (or Against) it**

Over the past few decades, there has been a growing interest in more participatory forms of decision-making, with demands from citizens to have more say in decisions that concern them. “Citizens should be ‘makers and shapers’ of policy and practice rather than merely ‘users and choosers’ of public services. They should also be encouraged to speak and act as part of a community, as well as exercise the freedom to make their voices heard as individuals.”<sup>145</sup>

The authorities also recognize that community involvement is crucial to building stronger communities, revitalizing democracy and better decision-making.<sup>146</sup> Community involvement has been identified as the key to sustainable change and essential for revitalizing democracy, improving service delivery, tackling poverty and building strong, resourceful communities. Contrary to being an optional extra, it is essential to achieve meaningful and sustainable outcomes for people and society.<sup>147</sup>

---

<sup>145</sup> . Citizenship DRC, 2007, p 3.

<sup>146</sup> . Zipfel and Gaventa, 2007.

<sup>147</sup> . Citizenship DRC, 2007, p 3.



Public participation more often than not helps in taking a better decision. Creighton<sup>148</sup> states that “the process of consulting with the public often helps to clarify the objectives and requirements of a project or policy. The public can force rethinking of hidden assumptions that might prevent seeing the most effective solution. Public participation often results in considering new alternatives, beyond the time honored, and possibly timeworn, approaches that have been used in the past.” Public participation also gives the public a sense of ownership as they participate in the decision making and they want to see it work, making the implementation easier.

On the other hand, many argue that due to public participation’s basic nature of inviting deliberation, it often consumes greater resources in the form of time and money. Apparently it seems that public participation does take time, as Figure 9 shows the various time lengths in the decision making and implementation stages with arrows (black squares show various stages):

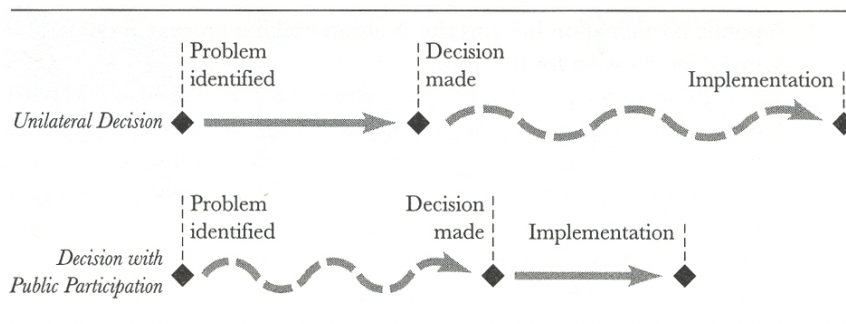


Figure 9: Comparison of length of time: Unilateral decision versus public participation, source: Creighton, 2005, p 18.

But when the public participation is initially integrated in the decision-making process, the timeframe reduces significantly. The unilateral decisions are generally taken comparatively faster, but on the negative side they often prove expensive to

<sup>148</sup> . Creighton, 2005, pp. 18-19.

implement and face greater resistance from public. Also the process and quality of decision making needs to be considered. Creighton<sup>149</sup> argues: “if decision making is quick but alienates interested individuals and groups, it may have been very expensive in the long run.”

Having several pitfalls, in general the process of public participation addresses the following issues as Creighton<sup>150</sup> identifies:

1. Improved quality of decisions.
2. Minimizing cost and delay
3. Consensus building
4. Increased ease of implementation
5. Avoiding worst-case confrontations
6. Maintaining credibility and legitimacy
7. Anticipating public concerns and attitudes.
8. Developing civil society.

There are several factors that may help the process of participation to be successful. John McKnight<sup>151</sup> identified a number of key elements to successful citizen participation: “continuously widen the circle of participation, ensuring ever more people are invited to engage in citizen driven initiatives..... citizens are.....each other’s best teacher and democracy is the shell that creates the safe environment within which that can happen.” In the important work, *Deepening Democracy* (2003), Fung and Wright<sup>152</sup> place some important questions that can define the success of a public participation process:

---

<sup>149</sup> . Creighton, 2005, p 18.

<sup>150</sup> . Ibid, pp. 18-19.

<sup>151</sup> . See <http://www.abcdinstitute.org.>, accessed on 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2010.

<sup>152</sup> . Fung and Wright, 2003.

- Does the project promote and realize democratic values of *effective* and *fair* public action? Does it do so *better* than structures that were in place before? Does the effort promote new civic *engagement*?
- Is the effort able to achieve its goals even under conditions of social and economic *inequality* and *diversity*? Does it draw in previously marginalized or uninvolved groups?
- Are the decision-making processes *transparent* (clear, visible) and *comprehensible* to all involved? Are there sufficient resources to act on plans or decisions?

Public participation is useful when it gains the required trust that helps to build social capital and enables taking action together. It promotes stronger community institutions, get across old divisions in society and several other intangible benefits. But Public participation is not without its pitfalls; in some cases the pitfalls become evident as the process of participation becomes a mere ‘ritual’. There have been several arguments against<sup>153</sup> the concept of public participation and community control, questioning their effectiveness under different circumstances. Arguments like they are more time consuming, less efficient and more costly is at the forefront. Others include: the process supports separatist movements, promotes minority groups to take an unfair opportunity spearheaded by few taking the actual advantage, “creates Balkanization of public services”<sup>154</sup>. Even after accepting these possibilities (or shortcomings) of public participation going the wrong way, there is no denying that it reduces victimization and promotes empowerment. The benefits is generally more

---

<sup>153</sup> . The arguments against public participation are discussed by several authors. See for example: Arnstein (1969), Creighton (2005), Cullingworth (1999), OECD (2001).

<sup>154</sup> . Arnstein, 1969, p 224.

accepted in many disciplines like planning and heritage conservation and are gradually working their way into the process.

### **3.2 Types of Public Participation**

Public participation is a broad and contested issue. Its scope, being diverse and culturally specific, has taken different forms in different contexts. But generally, they can be broadly categorized into two types: Formal (often termed as staged) public participation and Informal public participation. This section elaborates on these issues along with discussion of relevant concepts like the role of facilitators and civil society.

#### **3.2.1 Formal Public Participation**

Formal public participation in most cases is staged or procedural where authorities set the stage for public participation to happen. Creighton <sup>155</sup> identifies, “Public participation creates a new direct link between the public and the decision makers in the bureaucracy. At its most basic level, public participation is a way of ensuring that those who make decisions that affect people’s lives have a dialogue with that public before making those decisions.” This is done because trend shows that the government agencies generally have considerably greater success working collaboratively with the public, with the support of a high a level of consensus. However, they may not always get a consensus and they reserve the right to make a final decision without one, if a consensus is not reached.<sup>156</sup>

---

<sup>155</sup> . Creighton, 2005, p 17.

<sup>156</sup> . Creighton, 1992.

Cullingworth<sup>157</sup> describes the nature of formal or staged participation: “Citizens have the right to attend and make public comment upon plans and planning decisions.... the right is generally to be heard, hopefully influencing the decision in the political area, rather than to participate as a direct stakeholder with power to affect, let alone veto, a government planning or development outcome.”

Consulting the public is often a two-way process where the public provide feedback to the authorities while the authorities inform the public of the future steps and processes. “Public participation provides decision makers with information about the relative importance the public assigns to the value choices that underlie a particular decision.”<sup>158</sup>

In the case of staged public participation, authorities (in most cases governments) pre-decide the issues on which public views will be sought. The authorities manage the agenda and the process of consultation, the place, type of questions, limits. The public is invited to express their views and opinions, once the stage is created by the authorities. Often politically motivated, this type of participation is selective, structured and controlled. For many countries, the process is still evolving.

OECD<sup>159</sup> describes a higher level of staged participation as *active participation*, “Active participation is regarded as a relation based on partnership with government, in which citizens actively engage in defining the process and content of policy-making. It acknowledges an equal standing for citizens in setting the agenda,

---

<sup>157</sup> . Cullingworth, 1999, p 273.

<sup>158</sup> . Creighton, 2005, p 17.

<sup>159</sup> . OECD, 2001, p 12.

proposing policy options and shaping the policy dialogue – although the responsibility for the final decision of policy formulation rests with government.”

On the other hand, the lowest form of formal public participation has been referred to as “procedural” public participation or even “checklist” public participation<sup>160</sup>. They can involve a public hearing where the public can comment on the proposed course of action or greater access to information for the public. Creighton states: “They serve an important function - in the absence of other kinds of public participation - because they force a certain degree of openness and create a legal record on which decisions can be based .... But they can become simply a procedural hoop through which the agency must jump, without having much impact on the decision and no chance for collaborative problem solving.”<sup>161</sup>

Creighton<sup>162</sup> warns about the loophole of the extremity of a staged participation, as a "bogus participatory process" not only destroys the present event, but also destroys the credibility of all possible attempts to stage genuine participation on the other issues. Bleiker and Bleiker<sup>163</sup> have used the term *informed consent* to describe this level of participation. They state, “We define ‘informed consent’ as: the grudging willingness of opponents to (grudgingly) ‘go along’ with a course of action that they—actually—are opposed to.”

---

<sup>160</sup> . Creighton, 2005, p 9.

<sup>161</sup> . Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> . Creighton, 2005, p 11.

<sup>163</sup> . Bleiker and Bleiker, 1994, pp. I-7.

### ***a. Role of Facilitators and Authorities***

Informal public participation, the stage is set for the public and community institutions to successfully participate and express their views. The role of authorities ideally is that of *Facilitators*, not controllers. As the process of participation does not define or sell itself, facilitating is often crucial for motivating and enable decision-making by public. Generally a group or individual facilitators help the community by shaping their ideas, but on rare occasions, the public can seek help of such facilitators to help them organize.

Facilitating does not mean decision making. Facilitator(s), be it from government, local authorities or NGOs, ideally should be influential about how the public participation will take place, but does not have the authority to make substantive decisions for the group, i.e. public. They develop and define collective goals in the public participation, often converting varied private opinions into focused public issues on which the public can act together. Facilitating as a skill can be acquired, learned and practiced.

Facilitating involves proposing, suggesting, invitation and consultation with participants at varying degree about the major process decisions. They facilitate the stakeholders' involvements to reach common decisions through the process of deliberation. The facilitator should ensure that everyone feels included and their opinions are accepted. Opinion of all stakeholders involved should be given equal importance with no 'expert opinion' dominating the process. It is the facilitator's role to "create a climate of mutual respect and psychological safety that makes it possible

for people to consider creative new solutions and move from preconceived positions.”<sup>164</sup>

Unfortunately, the formal public participation process is often politically motivated. In such cases, though the opinion is the public's, the execution is done by the authorities, generally leaving a gap between what was originally intended and what is ultimately implemented. This creates a fundamental contradiction with the original intention of public participation. This happens due to varying levels of influence exerted by the authorities. In many cases, facilitating becomes a synonym for advocacy and outreach, propagating a particular ideology rather than participation. The facilitators become decision-makers and the participatory process ultimately fails.

### ***b. Role of Civil Society***

Civil society is an important part of the public participation process, working as an intermediary between the authorities and the public. The term “civil society” has been described as a relatively ambiguous reality made of “a group of free voluntary organizations which occupy the public space between family and State in order to achieve the interests of individuals, committed in that endeavor to the values and standards of respect, mutual consent, tolerance and peaceful management of diversity and difference.”<sup>165</sup> United Nations Research Institute for Sustainable Development<sup>166</sup> describes civil society organizations (CSOs) as “groupings of individuals and associations, formal and informal, which belong neither to the public sector nor to the

---

<sup>164</sup> . Creighton, 2005, p 169.

<sup>165</sup> . Ibrahim, 1997.

<sup>166</sup> . UNRISD, 2002, p. 93.



profit-making private sector.” This clearly shows the intermediary nature of civil society.

Creighton states the importance of civil society: “One of the benefits of public participation is better educated people. Participants not only learn about the subject matter, but they also learn how decisions are made by their government and why. ... As citizens become involved in the public participation programs, they learn how to influence others and how to build coalitions.”<sup>167</sup> Civil society plays an important role in the process of public involvement in decision-making by authorities. ADB recognizes<sup>168</sup>: “Civil society is assuming increasingly greater prominence as the role of the state is being redefined and public accountability becomes more important.”

Civil societies mostly work to protect the rights of the individuals or groups with voluntary social work. In the process they often contribute to good governance. On the role of civil society, ADB states: “Civil society can serve either as a partner in reform or in challenging the reform process, although it is difficult to play both roles well. The range of partnership roles includes information-sharing, consultation, participating in project implementation, and being involved in project appraisal.”<sup>169</sup> Some of the important contributions of civil society as recognized by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia<sup>170</sup> are:

- Stimulating citizenship and promoting civil culture; Influencing decisions and public policies and monitoring the Government;

---

<sup>167</sup> . Creighton, 2005, p 19.

<sup>168</sup> . ADB, 2010.

<sup>169</sup> . Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> . See ESCWA, 2009 and ESCWA, 2010.

- Raising public concern for development issues; participating in the provision of services and the organization of awareness, advocacy and defense campaigns;
- Building institutional capacity, managing development programs and disseminating information; developing coordination and networking relationships.
- Combating poverty and providing means for living support and small credits;
- Promoting the advancement, status and participation of women and supporting marginalized and vulnerable groups; reversing negative trends and conducts.
- Protecting the environment and rationalizing the use of resources.
- Releasing and disseminating information and exchanging experiences.

Civil societies have to be aware of the changes and incentives of change in terms relevant to their context. To contribute to effective participation, they should know why the participation is taking place, which may happen due to socio-political changes or as a mode of rebuilding decaying trust on the authorities (by ensuring transparency).

### **3.2.2 Informal Public Participation**

Public participation is not always formal or limited to government agencies (to arrange). While in some cases, it is the state governed participation of the local community; in other cases, it is spontaneous informal public participation organized by the local community themselves. This study focuses on the later form. In most cases, the informal public participation is not a recent idea; rather it has been continuing even before the concept of formal public participation was recognized in

the later half of the twentieth century. Thus its significance has been realized more recently. Actually this form of public participation has been an integral part of the sociocultural process in the historic urban quarters for centuries.

The culture of informal public participation is not widespread; it is spontaneous, rising to solve the everyday problems and issues of the local communities. Unlike formal public participation, the community members are direct stakeholders in an informal public participation scenario. Here the 'power' is really in the hands of the community member. Here all the inhabitants of the community are indispensable partners, stakeholders or actors in some form and take part in the local decision making process. They prepare, plan, evaluate and implement. They simultaneously play the role of organizers, facilitators, managers, stakeholders and decision makers. They have the power to decide and execute the decisions taken. The system is more coherent as there are no bureaucratic loopholes.

Cullingworth<sup>171</sup> identifies one major problem of the formal public participation: "the 'community' identified by the planning authority – usually the population within the geographical area for which a plan is being prepared – may not fit with the sense of community as experienced by residents." He also states that "the 1990s have seen a shift towards a new urban governance, in which the emphasis is on bringing together a range of 'stakeholders' to build local policy and to forge the conditions for action on that policy." Besides the formal approaches to public participation, there is a growing recognition of "the need to enhance the capacity of the local people and build strong community networks which include a representative and accountable community

---

<sup>171</sup> . Cullingworth, 1999, p. 193.

structure. A range of opportunities to accommodate different levels of involvement is needed.”<sup>172</sup>

Informal public participation has a more flexible agenda and the decision making process is more dynamic. As there is no formal authority involved in the process ‘to dictate the terms’, the community members are free to express their opinions and views on any relevant issues. The structure of public involvement is not formatted and more open in nature.

### **3.3 Definitions of Relevant Terms**

The concepts related to heritage conservation are often broad, culture specific and contested. They vary with specific regions, cultures, places and peoples, etc. Thus it is difficult to commonly agree upon when it comes to defining relevant terms. For the purpose of this study, the scope of the relevant terms is defined in this section.

#### ***3.3.1 Informal Heritage Management***

For the purpose of this study, informal heritage management will be referred to as all acts of protection and routine maintenance to safeguard the continuity of heritage. The approach does not involve formal authorities and the heritage is managed by the local community, often represented by the *informal community bodies*. In such cases, the community’s traditional wisdom about local craft, construction techniques and most

---

<sup>172</sup> . Cullingworth, 1999, p 193.

importantly, the intangible *living* cultural practices are manifested in heritage management in ways that the formal conservation approach often fails to take notice. In many cases, this process of informal heritage management is not a contemporary phenomenon, though their significance has been realized more recently. This type of public participation in heritage conservation is directly associated with people's livelihood in the form of traditional crafts and construction methods in the urban historic quarters.

### **3.3.2 Public**

The *Public* in public participation is the different stakeholders. Stakeholders are “individuals and groups that are involved in the process of influencing decision-making”<sup>173</sup> They are the part of the population that has an interest in the decision-making and want to express their opinions. In the process of public participation various individuals or groups come together to influence the decision-making process. The involvement of the public is crucial in a democratic process; their opinion should be considered in the policy-making process as it will impact them. A greater number of public ensures a better outcome of the public participation process.

### **3.3.3 Public Participation**

The conceptual development and practices of public participation has been described in the earlier sections. Public participation can occur formally or informally, can be undertaken under special circumstances or as a routine of everyday life. It is peoples' right and responsibility to participate in the decision-making process. “Citizen

---

<sup>173</sup> . Holdar and Zakharchenko, 2002, p 15.

Participation is a community based process, where citizens organize themselves and their goals at the grassroots level and work together through nongovernmental community organizations to influence the decision-making process. Citizens get most involved in this process when the issue at stake relates directly to them. Furthermore, citizen participation occurs when all the stakeholders cooperate to implement changes.”<sup>174</sup> Particularly for the purpose of this study, public participation will refer to all acts involving the local community members of the traditional neighborhoods to safeguard the continuity of local cultural element and heritage.

### ***3.3.4 Community***

Communities are “urban groups surviving in urban areas where old patterns of allegiance and identity still help such groups persist.”<sup>175</sup> Community enables the prodigious and richly textured interconnections between place and history. It is the people and their social and cultural activities that shape the highest heritage values over time. A sense of common history (often reflected through heritage) provides the links to hold together people in the traditional communities.

The community has been defined in different ways. Generally three elements stand out in most definitions of community: 1) Common memory and social ties, 2) Social interaction and 3) Place. In this sense, a community is a connected and interacting group of people anchored in place who share common characteristics, rituals and beliefs, cultural resources and preferences and form a common identity with a degree

---

<sup>174</sup> . Holdar and Zakharchenko, 2002, p 15.

<sup>175</sup> . Askew and Logan, 1994, p 4.

of cohesiveness. Cohen<sup>176</sup> defines community as: “that entity to which one belongs, greater than kinship but more immediately than the abstraction we call ‘society’. It is the arena in which people acquire their most fundamental and most substantial experience of social life outside the confines of the home.....Community, therefore is where one learns and continues to practice how to ‘be social’. At the risk of substituting one indefinable category for another, we could say it is where one acquires ‘culture’.”

Communities, especially traditional ones in the historic urban fabrics share their uniqueness and indigenous distinctness in the traditional enclaves. They have their own set of customs, crafts, sociocultural values, skills and shared memories rooted in the historic places. Cohen<sup>177</sup> explains this: “an entity, a reality, invested with all the sentiment attached to kinship, friendship, neighboring, rivalry, familiarity, jealousy, as they inform the social process of everyday life.....the consciousness of community is...encapsulated in perception of its boundaries.....which are themselves largely constituted by people in interaction.”

### ***3.3.5 Informal Community Bodies***

The issues of social and urban management are highly dependent on the local communities in the traditional neighborhoods. Most of these communities have traditional informal community management bodies. Generally, these informal community bodies with all the local stakeholders reside within a recognizable geographical area, such as a neighborhood or a small district. The nature of the

---

<sup>176</sup> . Cohen, 1985, p 15.

<sup>177</sup> . Ibid, p 13.

organization is autonomous and voluntary in nature, with contributions in the form of knowledge, finance, labor and material resources of the members. Participation is spontaneous. The informal community bodies are part of Informal social management system in traditional neighborhoods (for this study, the case study area of old Dhaka). These types of community institutions are not planned, rather they are developed by the community itself through which the local community participates. The neighborhood committee is formed by the local community to autonomously address and manage community issues and conflicts<sup>178</sup>. They are also actively involved in heritage management. The origin of the informal community bodies in the traditional neighborhoods of old Dhaka can be traced back to mid eighteenth century. One such prominent informal community body in old Dhaka is the *panchayet*.

### **3.4 Heritage, Meaning and Collective Memory**

It was only during the later part of the twentieth century that the importance of association of heritage with community and place was recognized in different charters of heritage conservation.<sup>179</sup> The built heritages are inseparable from the place they belong. The stories and meanings are formed together and are intermingled with the place. As Clarke and Johnston<sup>180</sup> observe: “Inspirational landscapes are places that inspire emotional, spiritual and/or intellectual responses or actions because of their physical qualities as well as their meanings, associations, stories and history.”

---

<sup>178</sup>. Arnstein (1969, p 224) recognizes that “a neighborhood corporation with no intermediaries between it and the source of funds is the model most frequently advocated” to be the closest thing to citizen control, i.e. the highest level of public participation.

<sup>179</sup>. Promoted in Burra Charter, 1999 and Nara Document on Authenticity, 1994.

<sup>180</sup>. Clarke and Johnston, 2003.



One of the most important issues in heritage conservation is the meaning associated to heritage by the local community who are using them. The meaning associated with the local people to heritage is expressed in customs, beliefs and practices, symbolism, stories, historical interpretation and the uses of everyday space. Meaning is not static and evolves over time as a combination of collective memories and experiences, cultural values and lifestyles of the past leading to present, and also the *character* of the place that make it different from the others.

Memory is an integral part of the identity of any heritage. It is from a memory association through the generations that any heritage gains its value. Clarke and Johnston<sup>181</sup> state: “Memory is the past in the present; it is nurtured and passed on, shaped and added to by each generation. Memory is transmitted in many different ways..... Some communities rely on oral traditions, and some on the written word. The idea of conserving the intangible values of memory and experience also asks us to re-consider the way time and time-depth has been privileged in assigning scientific and historical significance.”

Memory is constructed through the association of place, time and people. People’s memory, often cultural in nature, is associated with the past rooted in place. There is a sense of belonging to a specific culture and context, longing its continuity in the living cultures. This memory association and meaning that people associate with a particular place in the continuity of time creates a uniqueness that in turn establishes the heritage value. This quality is critical and should be the starting point in any

---

<sup>181</sup> . Ibid.

conservation effort. There are numerous examples of ‘conservation’ efforts that ignore this deep rooted relationship and eventually leave the heritage *soulless*.

The Eurocentric and western norms of heritage conservation divide the intangible from tangible part of heritage and in the process often lose the spirit of the heritage. The communities in the traditional neighborhoods do not separate the heritage from their cultural practices in their living environments.

In the general report of the ICOMOS<sup>182</sup> *Symposium on “Place – memory – meaning: preserving intangible values in monuments and sites”*, the importance of people’s connection to their heritage was identified as: “a response to a collective recognition of a critical gap in mainstream heritage practice – that people’s connection to place, through their cultural and social traditions and through their individual and collective practices of remembrance is integral to better understanding the role of heritage in our society.”

Any heritage place is not an isolated entity and should be considered for conservation with their fabric and related sociocultural intangible elements. Clarke and Johnston<sup>183</sup> recognize the limitations of documenting heritage places in isolation from each other, for the integrity of their fabric and assessed in terms of historical associations: “The response has been increasing recognition that heritage places are located in cultural landscapes in association with other places, and that these landscapes are made meaningful by people through the processes of memory, traditions, and attachments through personal and community experiences.”

---

<sup>182</sup> . ICOMOS, 2003.

<sup>183</sup> . Clarke and Johnston, 2003.

Other than the selected state governed monuments or civil building, heritage in the historic quarters have meaning associated with community that goes beyond their tangible merits. A positive attitude toward the heritage and continuity of past in living traditions is essentially based on how people decode the meaning and value the heritage in their sociocultural sphere. The Nara Document<sup>184</sup> also identifies: “Conservation of cultural heritage in all its forms and historical periods is rooted in the values attributed to the heritage.”

Cultural resources and local identity are intangible elements; often interrelated, and are important to conserve along with the built environment. One of the principles of Conserving Historic built heritage<sup>185</sup> states: “The conservation process succeeds when histories are revealed, traditions revived and meanings recovered in a palimpsest of knowledge.”

### **3.5 Community Identity and Cultural Continuity**

One of the common challenges of heritage conservation in developing countries is to adapt and find ways to appreciate and incorporate local community attachment and social meaning associated with heritage, in the conservation process. These intangible qualities are not instant; they are gained across the generations through historical association, lived traditions and peoples’ common memories. Schudson<sup>186</sup> points out that “at least in liberal pluralistic societies, the collective memory is always provisional, always open to contestation and often actually contested.” Thus, it is

---

<sup>184</sup> . The Nara Document on Authenticity, 1994, p 2.

<sup>185</sup> . Principle 4 for UNESCO award for the Asia-Pacific region, UNESCO (2007, p 3).

<sup>186</sup> . Schudson, 1995, pp 360-1.

important that the community should decide the significance of *what are heritage elements* and all the local stakeholders should be involved in the conservation process.

Heritage in the historic enclaves is a critical part of the community identity. Birgit Meyer and Peter Geschiere<sup>187</sup> define *identity* as "an overall process of *uniformization* but that it is, rather, a process that reinforces cultural difference." The local cultural identity is an integral part of any heritage conservation.<sup>188</sup> Heritage conservation is very much related to *Identity*, memory and association of people and their desire to retain it. The psychological association with the past and aspect of desire for permanence and its relation to the past strengthens peoples' need to retain their heritage. As Lowenthal<sup>189</sup> states: "Familiarity with the past enables us to achieve a keener sense of our own individual and collective selves."

The local communities find their heritage familiar and have personal connections that give a sense of security and continuity as Lowenthal<sup>190</sup> recognizes the importance of personal connection in terms of the stress caused by the swift and massive environmental replacement. People seek surcease as they try to anchor themselves to the familiar worlds. They tend to cling to whatever has survived from the replacement that reminds them of the past. He recognizes the importance of indulging memory out of peoples' rational need for security in a world that is perilously unstable.

---

<sup>187</sup> . Meyer and Geschiere, 1999.

<sup>188</sup> . MacManamon & Hatton, 2000.

<sup>189</sup> . Lowenthal, 1993, p 183.

<sup>190</sup> . Ibid.

### 3.6 Social Value of Heritage

The value of a heritage “reflects the judgment of a particular person or group at a particular point of time.”<sup>191</sup> Most of the formal heritage legislations and acts recognize the importance of four key issues related to the appraisal of heritage value. They are: Historic, Aesthetic, Scientific and Social value. Lung<sup>192</sup> defines these values as shown in Table 4:

Table 4: Different Heritage Values

Historic Value	What the site has to tell us about the course of human history, or the history of a group or culture. The site may conserve important physical fabric or other evidence of the past. It may be associated with important events and developments of people.
Aesthetic and Artistic Value	The intellectual or emotional impact of a place. This may be the emotional association or the mood of a site. It may also be a demonstration of a particular design, style, artistic development or high level of craftsmanship.
Scientific and Research Value	The capacity of place to provide significant knowledge of value to humanity.
Social Value	The degree and the way in which a place is now or was in the past a focus of spiritual, political, national or other cultural activity to a majority or minority groups.

Source: Lung, 2007, p 23.

Among these, the social value of heritage and the importance of people’s association and attachment to heritage places have been recognized and assessed more recently compared to others. The social value of heritage is actually a very critical issue and it

---

<sup>191</sup> . Lung, 2007, p 21.

<sup>192</sup> . Ibid.

is created through passage of time across generations, by direct experience and cultural memory and history. The Burra charter<sup>193</sup> identifies the importance of the association of local populations with their heritage in the following:

*“24.1 Significant associations between people and a place should be respected, retained and not obscured. Opportunities for interpretation for interpretation, commemoration and celebration of these associations should be investigated and implemented.*

*24.2. Significant meanings, including spiritual values, of a place should be respected. Opportunities for the continuation or revival of these meanings should be investigated and implemented.”*

Lung<sup>194</sup> states, “The conservation of built heritage begins with finding out the facts and understanding the meaning of a place. Interpretation of telling the story of a place moves beyond a straightforward narration of the facts..... good interpretation sensitively relates to the cultural values of the present community..... many cases of interpretation are indifferent to the interests and needs of the community, or, worse, insensitive to the underlying significance of the place. This is often the case when there is a lack of community involvement in the interpretative process.”

Cohen<sup>195</sup> proposes to understand ‘community’ “by seeking to capture members’ experience of it. Instead of asking ‘what does it look like to us? What are its theoretical implications? We ask, ‘What does it appear to mean to its members?’” In the last few decades, the social value and community attachment to the built heritage are recognized to be an important element in heritage conservation.

---

<sup>193</sup> . The Burra Charter, 1999.

<sup>194</sup> . Lung, 2007, p 21.

<sup>195</sup> . Cohen, 1985, p 20.

### **3.7 Importance of Public Participation in Heritage Conservation**

The urban heritage is rooted in its 'place' and 'people', and cannot survive without either of them. It is recognized in several heritage charters and contemporary heritage awards for the best practices in conservation that, heritage conservation should encompass conservation of the built heritage along with the beliefs, crafts, values and lifestyles of the local community. The contemporary concept of heritage conservation is not linear, but complex and pluralist. It encompasses tangible elements and intangible cultural values, memory association and attachment (by communities), meaning conferred by the people, community values and interests, sociocultural, political and economic realities, etc., among many.

The complexity of the collective memory of the place and heritage forms the intricate social bond of the community. Heritage anchors the local community to the place and presents a link between the past to present and help carry the local community to the future. The heritages in the traditional urban neighborhoods represent the 'cultural identity' of the local communities rooted in place and time. Thus, the conservation of the lived and livable past in the traditional neighborhoods of historic urban quarters must be in line with the needs and aspirations of the local community who are deeply attached to the heritage and are actually living in the environments.

Community involvement also creates economic benefits, especially for highly vulnerable heritage places. Community involvement and empowerment means less dependence on the authorities and more self-sufficiency through the self-help process. It also helps to revive dying crafts and other traditional business, breathing new life into the community. For the community to successfully participate in the heritage conservation process, economic regeneration (through self-help and capacity building)

is vital. UNESCO<sup>196</sup> promotes this view: “Community involvement and capacity-building have a catalytic effect on local restoration and conservation efforts. The process of conservation consolidates important structures while at the same time returning the buildings, which are significant either by themselves as part of an urban ensemble, to their place of pride within local communities.”

### **3.8 Contemporary Concepts of Participatory Heritage Conservation**

Compared to other fields, recognition of the importance of peoples’ participation in the heritage conservation process is relatively contemporary. UNESCO<sup>197</sup> recognizes: “The representation of diverse interests has become critical for the sustainability of any conservation effort. In addition to the public sector, the private sector, including local residents, commercial establishments, corporations, traditional caretakers and homeowners, has emerged as an important stakeholder in the conservation and utilization of cultural heritage in all its diverse manifestations.” This section will elaborate on the contemporary ideas of public participation in heritage conservation and some common elements of participatory conservation.

#### **3.8.1 Contemporary Ideas and Public Participation in Heritage Conservation**

Until recently, heritage conservation, be it of a single built form or entire urban fabrics, assumed that, for a successful conservation process, the community should be excluded from the built forms or urban fabrics; to save them in their *pristine* condition. Even the UNESCO 1972 World Heritage Convention<sup>198</sup>, which is considered an

---

<sup>196</sup> . UNESCO, 2007, p 3.

<sup>197</sup> . Ibid, p i.

<sup>198</sup> . UNESCO, 1972.



important benchmark of cultural heritage authentication, defines cultural heritage in very tangible terms; including monuments, and groups of buildings of “... outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art, science.” It also goes on to include sites of “... outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view.”

It can be noted that the convention gives very little emphasis to or acknowledges the important role of local communities and their close relationship with the cultural heritage sites. This was (and still is) widely reflected in the common practice of heritage conservation where the community has often been excluded. This exclusion happens either forcefully or by the slow process of gentrification.<sup>199</sup> The ineffectiveness of the approach was becoming evident in the findings of several studies and conferences. With the growing recognition for the need for an alternative approach, since the mid-1970s, public participation in the heritage conservation became a new movement both in the form of expression of opinions and active involvement of the local people in the heritage management process. Since then, this "participation paradigm" has been executed in several forms.

Recently, both UNESCO and ICOMOS have begun promoting a general policy which aims to give heritage a function in the life of the community and link heritage conservation to living traditions. The community has the most important role to play in the conservation process. As the Nara Document<sup>200</sup> asserts: “Responsibility for cultural heritage and the management of it belongs, in the first place, to the cultural community that has generated it, and subsequently to that which cares for it.”

---

<sup>199</sup> . See for example, Shaw & Jones, 1997, Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996 and Ugochukwu, 2006.

<sup>200</sup> . The Nara Document on Authenticity, 1994.

The rapid pace of modern development has seen many communities on the verge of disappearing. There is little effort in considering the impact it has on the communities and their living heritage. In view of this, organizations like World Bank implemented social and economic policies that are highly significant: they allow local initiatives to protect urban heritage to be re-conceived and valued as community building.<sup>201</sup>

UNESCO’s LEAP Program (Local Effort in Asia and the Pacific)<sup>202</sup> is another similar approach that recognizes the importance of community involvement in safeguarding the living traditions. It promotes the view that when a site loses the involvement of its community, the problems related to conservation increases. It is essential to restore community involvement and enable the community to benefit from conservation works while maintaining social and spiritual traditions.<sup>203</sup> There are others who express similar views. Briggs<sup>204</sup> identifies the differences between the conventional and participatory approach as shown in Table 5:

Table 5: Promoting Deliberation

Conventional approach	Participatory approach
The fastest thinkers and most articulate speakers get more “air time.”	Everyone participates, not just the vocal few.
Differences of opinion are treated as conflict that must either be stifled or “solved”	Opposing viewpoints are allowed to co-exist.
People with discordant, minority perspectives are commonly discouraged from speaking out.	Even in the face of opposition from the person in charge, people are encouraged to stand up for their beliefs.

Source: Briggs, 2003, p 22.

<sup>201</sup> . Serageldin, 1999.

<sup>202</sup> . Engelhardt, 1998b.

<sup>203</sup> . Martin-Brown, 1999.

<sup>204</sup> . Briggs, 2003b.

There has been a common tendency to prioritize conservation of ‘important’ buildings like religious buildings, palaces, civil buildings, etc.; especially by the formal authorities. Mostly ignored (or low in priority) is the heritage of the traditional neighborhoods, often safeguarded and used by the local communities, that actually embody the local identity and cultural essence in both tangible and intangible forms. *Living* communities continue to evolve in their traditional lifestyles and in many cases the heritage also evolves. Authenticity lies in the inherent cultural quality of the place. They are in high contrast to state conserved heritages that are mostly ‘frozen’ in the assumed ‘ideal’ state and often become soulless and devoid of community contact. Active community involvement in any heritage management or conservation ensures that heritage continues to be used. Heritage conservation in turn ensures revival of local crafts and economy and helps the communities sustain. Howe<sup>205</sup> describes: “Protection of the cultural heritage of communities, particularly the heritage that is represented in the built environment, is an important – indeed (it can be argued) essential – element needed to assure the sustainability of urban societies.”

### **3.8.2 Elements of Participatory Heritage Conservation**

People in local communities are most knowledgeable about their heritage; this is because traditional knowledge about the local crafts and construction techniques are passed on to subsequent generations along with the intangible elements like local customs and traditions, oral history, social values, stories and myths. Thus, People’s active involvement adds some distinct elements in the heritage conservation process. Some of these are:

---

<sup>205</sup> . Howe, 2002, p. 246.

Cumulative knowledge: When properly engaged, the community members get to express their views and ideas about the heritage and are actively involved in the conservation process. Through common agreement, the actual problems are better identified and solved. Where the ideas of a few may fail to identify the critical challenges for a specific heritage site, the traditional knowledge of many from the local community becomes useful.

Jim Adams<sup>206</sup> explains, “the last few decades have spawned a wealth of techniques for managing or facilitating group problem solving so as to enrich the ideas generated. A more cautionary way of saying this is that thousands of hours of unproductive, or even counterproductive, meetings have led us to recognize that *two heads can be—but be not always—better than one! There is huge ‘upside’* potential, but realizing that potential takes expertise, effort, and more than a little patience.”

Equal involvement: Going a step further than cumulative ideas, in a true participatory environment the common member of the community gets to express his/her views and all the stakeholders are *actually* involved in the process. This helps to build a common idea and support for the heritage conservation process. It is more likely that a community will accept and actively support a heritage conservation process when they are actively involved. As Howard Raiffa<sup>207</sup> notes, “mountains of evidence on our emotions and behavior tell us that human beings are much more likely to accept as fair, and even to actively support, decisions on which they have been consulted.” In many communities, this process is already in practice in different informal forms.

---

<sup>206</sup> . See *Conceptual Blockbusting* (Adams, 2001).

<sup>207</sup> . See *The art and science of negotiation*, (Raiffa, 1982).

*The community is most knowledgeable:* It is only natural that not all the crafts and traditional construction techniques (especially the vernacular type) can be learned in the classrooms. As the heritages have been a part of local communities for several generations, community is naturally the most knowledgeable about them. The community's traditional knowledge about their heritage is rooted in time and place. Compared to the conventional *top down* approach, a solution in the heritage conservation process may be more readily available from the local community.

*Sense of belonging:* For a community member, there is an invisible common ownership of the heritage and the cultural elements that they inherit by generation. There is a belonging and attachment to the place and heritage that grows with time. There is a common perception that *this is ours*. This enables better care and maintenance for the heritage, as people are more careful about what they 'own'. This often works in favor of the conservation cause as the reverse situation is observed by Piven and Cloward<sup>208</sup>: "Ownership or 'buy-in' without a genuine commitment to opening up the process may be seen as manipulative, a way to 'manage consent.' "

### **3.8.3 Steps and processes of Participatory Heritage Conservation**

Public participation as an approach can be effective at times and may not be so at others, considering it involves adding pressure on (often limited) resources. Thus, when public participation in heritage conservation is undertaken (by an authority or the community itself; informally), it is important to identify whether the participatory

---

<sup>208</sup> . See *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail*, (Piven & Cloward, 1979).

conservation is the right approach for a particular project before the actual execution.

This can be tested by answering certain questions as shown in Table 6:

Table 6: Five essential questions to be answered in participatory conservation process

<b>Question</b>	<b>Relevant issues</b>
Why	The purpose of the conservation in a given time-place context to establish the feasibility of the project.
Who	Define the stakeholders or the community people who are most involved with their respective roles in the conservation process.
What	Clearly identify the issues and strategies for conservation.
How	Scope, phasing, tactics, agenda, process of deliberating and deciding.
When	The timing of the critical decisions and their implementation.

Source: Author

Once the questions discussed above have been answered and the undertaking of participatory conservation is justified, there are generally some common steps that are followed in the participatory conservation process. A study of several successful heritage conservation projects where the local community was actively involved<sup>209</sup> reveals a few of the common steps:

1. Consultation with the local community, representing all relevant stakeholders.
2. Encourage and develop a sense of ownership within the community in the conservation process.
3. Ensure involvement through collaborative partnerships, existing or promoted.
4. Gather and share relevant data involving the community by arranging workshops, discussions, interviews, etc. This is a two way process.
5. Use the self-help approach to encourage voluntary contributions of labor and funding.

---

<sup>209</sup>. See for example, UNESCO, 2007.

Public participation is facilitated, not governed. The *facilitators* in the participatory approach, public or private, should work to encourage complete participation. Their role is to coordinate and organize different stakeholders including concerned officials, professionals, and especially the local residents to uncover assumptions and information gaps, promote learning, and generate consensus and more. According to Briggs<sup>210</sup>, the process of public participation (in any area, including heritage conservation) can be summarized by the following five steps:

### ***1. Organizing issues and participants***

The local residents are helped to define their interests in key issue in the conservation process. Public participation is facilitated with workshops to give the local residents a clear understanding of a place and build an agenda for collective attention and to build *local leadership*.

Possible steps: Public is notified of the intention to develop a conservation strategy or plan. Public meetings and workshops are held to clarify issues.

### ***2. Building a common knowledge base and analyzing opportunities and problems***

The public, especially the local residents, are engaged in education and cultural understanding. Information requirements, available resources; ‘community assets’, needs and deficiencies are identified, to come up with more viable action ideas.

Possible steps: Educational and other institutes may initiate research and documentation and help in building the knowledge base and the analyzing process.

### ***3. Presenting and giving feedback to the residents***

Ideas are communicated with words, pictures, numbers, etc. by all stakeholders involved. The local community is involved (by incorporating their lifestyle and local

---

<sup>210</sup>. See Briggs, 2003b, p 20.

craft) in formulating the conservation strategy with their feedback. The modes can be public meetings, community surveys, charrettes, workshops, etc.

Possible steps: Public is notified of draft conservation strategies and public comments are invited on the drafts. Submissions can be received in writing and in oral format at public meetings.

#### ***4. Discussion and deliberation***

Dialogue (not just a debate) is encouraged for positive learning to work towards community based consensus on conservation strategies. The discussion makes the decision making process more efficient, democratic and accountable.

Possible steps: Written and verbal comments are summarized and the draft conservation strategy is revised and refined.

#### ***5. Decision-making***

Decision making is the final process and it preferably should be creative. The Decision is taken after weighing the pros and cons. Priority is given to valid conservation ideas of the local participants. While for simpler issues voting is used, for other more critical issues, creative group processes and more time is required.

Possible steps: The conservation strategy is finalized after due consideration and approval of the stakeholders involved.

### **3.9 Informal Heritage Management**

In traditional neighborhoods, communities may have lived for generations, in some cases for hundreds of years. Over the course of time, they form a deep sense of belonging to the place. This deep attachment to place is directly related to heritage and comes through in different forms in heritage conservation. The importance of this



*belonging* and *attachment* is increasingly recognized in the heritage conservation process. In other cases, this attachment to the local heritage is contested and the meaning associated with heritage diverse, which formal conservation effort often fails to take into consideration. This in turn makes the heritage ‘lifeless’, even if it is conserved.

The benefit of this attachment is evident in cases where the community is directly involved in heritage management. Active involvement and support of the community in the heritage management process ensures that the heritage enclaves are protected from dislocation, demolition, and unplanned development. Engelhardt<sup>211</sup> stressed the importance: “...with the loss of its traditional caretakers, a site becomes an increased burden on the state or is left at the mercy of land speculators who have no long-term commitment to the site and therefore no interest in preserving the site for sustainable development.”

The community involvement in the heritage management process is critical, especially for the survival of the intangible elements, as they are carried on by the community. Continuity of the social structure ensures the continuity of heritage. The Nara Document<sup>212</sup> asserts: “Particularly important are efforts to ensure that attributed values are respected, and that their determination included efforts to build, as far as possible, a multidisciplinary and community consensus concerning these values.”

The cultural landscapes in the historic quarters are complex, with many interwoven sociocultural values in multiple layers like a palimpsest. While some of these values are well-expressed, others do not find clear expression. Clarke and Johnston<sup>213</sup> state:

---

<sup>211</sup> . Engelhardt, 1998, p 5.

<sup>212</sup> . The Nara Document on Authenticity, 1994.

<sup>213</sup> . Clarke and Johnston, 2003.

“Giving a voice to these unspoken values will be very important. And finding ways to bring these voices into the management processes is another challenge.”

Exceptions have seen the living heritages turn into ‘museum’-like places. Many contemporary conservation efforts have seen the success of a participatory ‘bottom up’ approach involving the community. Of the different stakeholders involved, the community should have the priority when it comes to what is of heritage value and thus conserved. In many of the traditional neighborhoods, the community actively participates in the heritage management process, albeit informally.

In the developing countries of Asia, the conservation milieu is still top-down in most cases. This makes it important to study and understand the informal heritage management approaches used in the traditional neighborhoods. Over the last few decades, there has been a clear shift in ideas in contemporary heritage management approaches, compared to what may be called ‘traditional’ management approaches<sup>214</sup> as shown in Table 7:

Table 7: Traditional and contemporary management approaches

	Traditional approaches	Contemporary approaches
Scale	Small, decided by size, small extent	Large, set by a range of processes, large extent
Management	Passive or limited management; referred to as “Benign neglect”	The nature of management is more active, both in processes and structure
Emphasis	Structural completeness and stability and persistence of objects	Historical contingency, structural context and dynamic processes.
Partnership	Cooperation not emphasized, competitive or isolated “party lines”	Promotes interdisciplinary communication and cooperation

Source: Table prepared by author, information adapted from Barrett & Barrett<sup>215</sup>

<sup>214</sup> . See Barrett and Barrett, 1997.

<sup>215</sup> . Ibid, 1997, pp 236-251.

The shift (from traditional to contemporary) in management approaches is evident in the contemporary successful heritage management and conservation examples recognized by numerous heritage awards (e.g. the Krishan temple conservation project received the *UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Award of Distinction* in 2001<sup>216</sup>). The shift of preference is evident in the form of small to larger scale, passive to active engagement, structural completeness to dynamic processes, etc. Barrett and Barrett<sup>217</sup> identify several of these issues. As several of these are directly related to the ideas of informal heritage management, they were summarized in Table 7.

### **3.10 Case Studies of Community Heritage Conservation**

A successful conservation effort must be “culturally owned.”<sup>218</sup> There has to be a close cultural relationship between the implementers and the end users of the heritage. This in turn ensures that the heritage remains a part of the local identity, a sense of place is maintained and most importantly, authenticity as deemed suitable by the local culture. Jenkins<sup>219</sup> finds that there can be three loose categories among the cases where this cultural relationship has been retained successfully, or not. The categories are: *cultural discord*, *cultural contestation* (where sustainability is challenged) and *sustainable conservation*. This happens due to varying degree of public participation in heritage conservation. In this section, two case studies will be discussed where public participation and community involvement was successfully used in heritage conservation. While in the case of Kishan temple, the community participation is informal and self-initiated; the conservation of Astana of Syed Mir Muhammad shows a staged public participation, where the community is involved after the project was initiated by a formal agency.

---

<sup>216</sup> . UNESCO, 2007, p 141.

<sup>217</sup> . Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> . Jenkins, 2008, p xxi.

<sup>219</sup> . Ibid.

### 3.10.1 Case Study: Krishan Temple, India

#### Context and History

Krishan temple (see Figure 10) is located in the village Kishankot, Punjab, India; it was built in the 1830s.<sup>220</sup> Locally known as the Krishan *Mandir* (Hindu God Krishna's temple), it is a Hindu shrine with some of the most remarkable wall painting of Hindu and Sikh themes that belong to the *Kangra* tradition and Sikh school of art.<sup>221</sup> With around 650 people, the small multicultural community of Kishankot mainly consists of Sikhs, Arya Hindus and Christians. Most of the population is low to middle income that is landless and rely on jobs.



Figure 10: Location map, plan and section of Krishan temple, source: <http://maps.google.com> and UNESCO, 2007, pp. 142-145.

The temple was in a dilapidated state and in a serious state of deterioration before conservation, due to lack of maintenance. During the 1980s, the temple was used improperly as a police post and later a local landlord purchased the land and planned to demolish it. UNESCO<sup>222</sup> states the general condition of conservation of such structures: “Two pieces of legislation serve to protect the ancient structure in India: the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (1958) and the

<sup>220</sup> . UNESCO, 2007, p 142.

<sup>221</sup> . Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> . Ibid.

Ancient Monuments Preservation Act (1904). Such legislation is often not effective, however, as few are penalized for flouting it.” To save the structure, the local community set up an organization, the *Krishan Mandir Temple Trust* (KMTT) and a community led court case ultimately saved the structure. Subsequently, through a skilled and unified community initiated and participated conservation project was undertaken (see Figure 11).

### **Public Participation in Conservation**

The temple’s importance in the social life of the community was identified early and from the beginning, the temple was seen as a place to restore social functions, rather than be preserved as an artifact. The conservation was undertaken to enable the community members to address their social problems and as a means of building capacity, and ultimately enhance collective unity through working together. Eventually, the project worked as a social process to bring the multicultural community together, which used to face several social problems (e.g. alcohol addiction and gambling).

The conservation of the temple (see Figure 11) also intended to revive interest and pride in the community’s history and culture, which it successfully achieved. This was possible as the project opted for an interpretive and social methodology actively involving the community in place of the conventional methodology of preserving the physical fabric, as done in monuments.

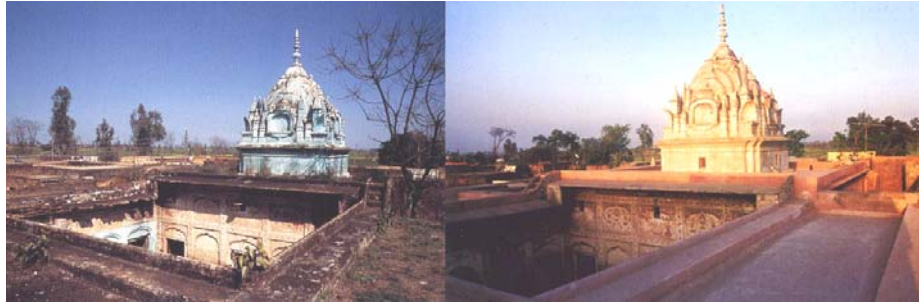


Figure 11: Krishan temple – before and after restoration, source: UNESCO, 2007, p 143.

This was important as UNESCO project team states: “Restoration is a science of the future. It has three aspects: recovery, preservation and conservation. The first aspect concerns the memories of the past and healing injuries from them. The second aspect concerns the preservation of the *recovered selves* of the people. It requires measures that prevent the dissipation of skills and cultural reserves that have been recovered with memories. The third concerns sustainability.”<sup>223</sup>

The Kishankot community not only undertook and supported the conservation project, they were also actively involved in hand-on community participation in the project (see Figure 12).



Figure 12: Community participation in conservation of Krishan temple, source: UNESCO, 2007, p 144.

<sup>223</sup> . The project received UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation, Award of Distinction: 2001, source: UNESCO, 2007, p 144.

Along with ideas and feedback, the local community helped in the form of *seva*<sup>224</sup> (service without payment) and waged labor.

## **Findings**

The process of restoration involves partnership between the experts and the community for it to become a social process. This makes the search for elements of past and present that make up the sociocultural reserves successful. The community finds the restoration process as a mode of survival during times of crisis. The successful partnership enables mutual learning and gaining knowledge from each other and also recognizing heritage as the important social spaces in everyday life. The project successfully demonstrates the pivotal role of community's participation in the conservation process and the importance of restoring the role of a building in the social context of a community. An integral part of a participatory conservation effort is to involve the community by improving their understanding of local heritage and also equip them with appropriate skills to maintain the structure. The process improves social cohesion, improves the pride in the community and facilitates them to work closely as a community through the continued existence of social spaces. The spontaneous conservation and maintenance of heritage by community management ensures both the continuity of the heritage and community.

---

<sup>224</sup> . *Seva* means service without payment, an offering of the *self*. It is an act of faith, source: UNESCO, 2007, p 146.

### 3.10.2 Case Study: Astana of Syed Mir Muhammad, Pakistan

#### Context and History

The Astana (tomb) of Syed Mir Muhammad is located in the Khanqah settlement (see Figure 13), one of the eight historic settlements in the town of Khaplu situated in northern Pakistan.<sup>225</sup> The region is rich in architectural and cultural heritage. Astanas (tomb) are the eternal resting places of saintly persons and are held in high reverence by the community and visited frequently.

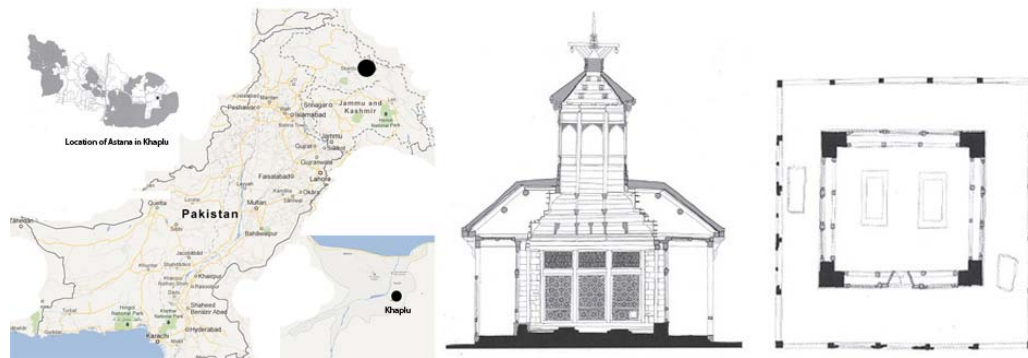


Figure 13: Location map, section and plan of Astana of Syed Mir Muhammad, source: <http://maps.google.com> and UNESCO, 2007, pp. 266-269.

The Astana of Syed Mir Muhammad was built nearly 300 years ago by the local community with the help of his descendants<sup>226</sup> and is one of the finest examples of the wood craftsmanship in the region. The local artisans and craftsmen came from the regions of Kashmir and other parts of Asia to settle here in the fourteenth century. The remarkable elements are the inner chamber enclosed by wooden *jallis* (carved latticework screens) of *Dhaji Devari* construction style of Kashmir with geometrically

<sup>225</sup> . UNESCO, 2007, p 266.

<sup>226</sup> . [www.paklinks.com](http://www.paklinks.com), accessed on 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2010.





Figure 14: Astana of Syed Mir Muhammad before and after stabilization and restoration, right: Delicate geometry of the wooden lattice screens, source: UNESCO, 2007, pp. 267-268.

shaped perforations.<sup>227</sup> The well-defined community has about 40 households, but recently faced the loss of social cohesion due to changing lifestyle. More pressure for modern space and services and the declining popularity of compact villages has put high pressure of development on the historic structures. Many traditional wooden structures were unfortunately torn down and replaced by modern concrete structures. Though Pakistan's 1975 Antiquities Act (amended in 1991)<sup>228</sup> is supposed to protect the listed sites, conflict of authority of different agencies concerning land-use laws and development makes it rarely possible. Though religiously significant, due to lack of maintenance over the years, the structure was in a dilapidated state (see Figure 14).

### **Public Participation in Conservation**

Aga Khan Cultural Service Pakistan (AKCSP)<sup>229</sup> initiated the conservation project in 1999 to save the vulnerable structure. AKCSP promotes conservation and upgrading of community based buildings and in the process foster pride in the traditional way of life. The project not only aimed to stabilize and restore the heritage structure, it also

<sup>227</sup> . UNESCO, 2007, p 266.

<sup>228</sup> . Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> . [www.paklinks.com](http://www.paklinks.com), accessed on 23<sup>rd</sup> of November, 2010.



Figure 15: Reconstruction and community involvement in conservation of Astana of Syed Mir Muhammad, source: UNESCO, 2007, pp. 270-272.

“aimed to revive and develop traditional skills and improve the capacity of the community to successfully manage their cultural heritage, local materials were used....and artisans were trained in traditional skills.”<sup>230</sup> Once initiated by AKCSP, the conservation triggered community interest in the restoration process. Guided by the organization, the community members took several responsibilities and actively participated by donating unskilled labor and traditional materials (see Figure 15), by arranging transportation, from reverence to their religious leader.

### Findings

“Ever since the completion of the project in 2000, it has triggered a community-oriented process in Khaplu to upgrade and improve individual building in the surrounding of traditional settlements.”<sup>231</sup> The AKCSP initiated project fostered a sense of pride and ownership in the local Khanqah community and in the conservation process helped to learn about the wealth of local heritage and traditional knowledge. Among other achievements, the project also revived the declining wood craftsmanship in the area and a workshop was established to train the new generation of apprentices in the wood carving and *jalli* making skills. The project successfully

<sup>230</sup> . UNESCO, 2007, p 268.

<sup>231</sup> . [www.paklinks.com](http://www.paklinks.com), accessed on 23<sup>rd</sup> of November, 2010.

demonstrates public participation initiated by an organization, reviving and revitalizing declining traditional construction techniques, handicraft traditions and use of materials, created employment opportunities, and ultimately became an example of articulation of heritage value to the local community from which other communities were also inspired.

### **3.11 General Observations**

The heritages of the historical quarters are of profound significance to local communities. Heritage connects to the community's past, and ensures the continuity into the future. They are their identity and product of many generations, created and carried through shared experiences and stories. They symbolize the peoples' values, ensures continuity of their traditional way of life and sociocultural practices and connection to place. The continuity of heritage ensures this significant connection and reinforces it. Conserving the shared values of the local community is an integral part of heritage conservation. It is essential to recognize the shared identity and social values early, to prioritize them in the heritage conservation process. This can be ensured by the continuity of living traditions, rituals, cultural values, celebration of their common memories and stories.

To keep heritage *alive*, it is also important to allow the community to continue to use the heritage, and most importantly, enable them to voice their opinion and actively participate in the heritage management. Many unfortunate attempts at heritage conservation have devalued this in the not too remote past (or even in the present), and in turn excluded the local community from the conservation process to save the heritage in 'pristine and authentic' condition. This has led to the exclusion of the local communities from their heritage. Enduring the onslaught of modern urban

development, very few of the traditional historic places survive with their unique heritage value. They still successfully *resist* from being devoured by urban pressure. It is crucial to identify the elements that help the resistance and survival of some communities while others ‘give way’ and disappear. It is the same ‘local’ forces that counter balance the pressures of modern urban development that also sustain the heritage and place. Thus for any conservation effort in the historic quarters, it is essential to identify these elements.

### **3.12 Chapter Conclusion**

It is a great challenge to save the intangible elements of heritage while conserving tangible heritage. Though the importance has been identified and accepted in numerous charters, conferences, legislations, etc. and overall understanding has increased, unfortunately in reality, mainstream heritage practice seldom takes this into notice and is almost never actively promotes the conservation of intangible heritage elements. It is not sufficient anymore to be content with accepting the idea that protecting heritage is the Government’s responsibility alone. Increasingly conservation is accepted as a shared responsibility of the community and civil society.

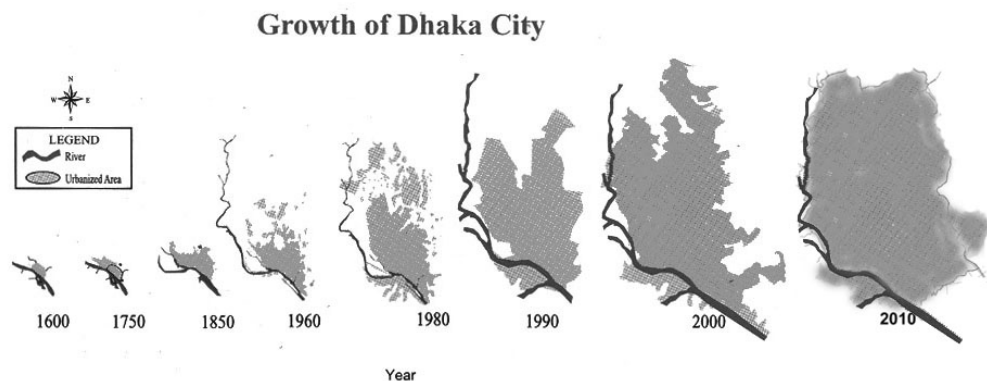
There is no denying that it is not easy to understand and incorporate the local sociocultural values and peoples’ association with the heritage, and more importantly working with people in the heritage conservation process. It is a complex task that requires great economic resources and time. Another challenge is the collaboration among different stakeholders, skilled heritage professionals, traditional craftsmen and the overall community. Community support and engagement is crucial, as the success depends on their active involvement in the heritage conservation process.

## Chapter 4

### URBANISM AND HERITAGE OF OLD DHAKA

#### 4.1 History and Overview of Dhaka city

Dhaka was founded as a Mughal Provincial capital of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in 1608 A.D (see Map 4) during the Mughal emperor Jahangir and was renamed *Jahangirnagar*. Though Dhaka existed as an urban area several centuries before that, the most important heritage elements of the city dates back to the Mughal period. After losing importance during the early British rule, Dhaka once again became a capital in 1905 of the new province, comprising East Bengal and Assam. After the partition of the Indian subcontinent, Dhaka became a provincial capital of the then East Pakistan as part of the newly independent Pakistan. Dhaka was the center of the historic political movements that led to the war of Liberation in 1971, which saw the Independence of Bangladesh as a new country, as Dhaka became the capital.



Map 4: Map showing growth of Dhaka over 400 years, source: prepared by the author, map source: [www.dhakacity.org](http://www.dhakacity.org), accessed on 1st December, 2010.

The urban development of Dhaka started on the northern bank of River Buriganga to take the advantage of river trade activities. Starting with a mere few square kilometers, the city has expanded exponentially over the last 400 years mainly towards the north<sup>232</sup> (see Map 4). Dhaka's Population gives an idea about the fluctuating fortunes of the city as Table 8 shows:

Table 8: Population of Dhaka 1700 to 1961

<b>Year</b>	<b>Population of Dhaka</b>	<b>Source</b>
1700	900,000	James Taylor
1800	200,000	Do
1814	200,000	Doili
1824	300,000	Bishop Hebar
1838	68,338	Do
1867	51,635	Renel
1872	69,212	Census of Pakistan, 1951
1881	80,358	Do
1891	83,358	Do
1901	104,385	Do
1911	1,251,733	Do
1921	137,908	Do
1931	161,922	Do
1941	239,728	Do
1951	335,928	Do
1961	550,142	Do

Source: Khan and Islam, 1964, p 4, cited in Mamun, 2008a, p 74.

The city's history can be divided into several major phases which are equally important, as the next section<sup>233</sup> elaborates:

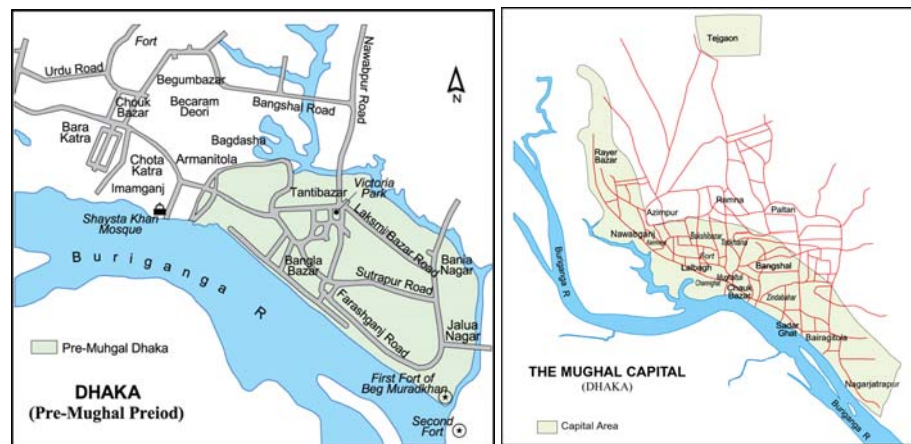
### ***Pre Mughal Dhaka (Before 1608)***

Though the official history of the city dates back to 1608, a prosperous urban area existed even before that, as evident in the *Binat Bibi* Mosque, the oldest remaining structure of Dhaka that dates back to 1456 (see Map 5). Some evidence of existence

<sup>232</sup> . Chowdhury and Faruqui, 1991.

<sup>233</sup> . The historical data (year, name, etc.) in this section (where not cited otherwise) are adapted from Mamoon (2008 a & b, 1991).

of an urban settlement has been discovered that indicates a time period even before that.<sup>234</sup> Most historians believe that the urbanized settlements in the area that is now Dhaka dates back to the 7th century. It was under the Buddhist kingdom of Kamarupa during the 7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> centuries followed by the Hindu Chandra and Sena Dynasties from the 9<sup>th</sup> century. According to most historians, the name *Dhaka* may have originated from the temple of Hindu Goddess *Dhakeshwari* constructed during this period by Hindu King Ballal Sen in 12<sup>th</sup> century. Dhaka and its surrounding areas were known as *Bengalla* during this period and it was probably a small town with “fifty two *bazars* and fifty three lanes”<sup>235</sup> by the river, with its center near the present day Bangla Bazar.



Map 5: Left - Map of Pre Mughal Dhaka and Right - Map of Mughal Dhaka, source: [www.dhakadailyphoto.blogspot.com](http://www.dhakadailyphoto.blogspot.com), accessed on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2010.

The town had several localities and market centers like *Tanti Bazar*, *Lakshmi Bazar*, *Shankhari Bazar*, *Bania Nagar*, *Patuatuli*, etc. (see Map 5) which grew as specialist craftsmen or businessmen enclaves. The *Sena* Dynasty was overthrown by Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khilji in 1204, the first Muslim ruler of Bengal. Since then,

<sup>234</sup> . Dani, 2008.

<sup>235</sup> . According to popular proverb.

different Muslim Sultans of Turks and Pathan origins of the Khilji, Mameluk, Shah, Khan and other Dynasties ruled from 1204 to 1608. The Afghan Fort was constructed during this period at the location of the present Central Jail. Finally the Mughals acquired sovereignty of the city in 1608.

### ***Dhaka during the Mughal rule (1608-1764)***

Dhaka was renamed *Jahangirnagar* after the Mughal ruler Jahangir. Dhaka with its river trades achieved great commercial importance as a center of the world-wide muslin trade and became a prominent trading center in the South to South-East Asia. There was significant development of townships with population growth (see Map 5). European traders from several countries started to come and settle in the city during the time of Ibrahim Khan (1616-1620). The city achieved its greatest glory and expanded during the rule of Shaista Khan (1662-1677 and 1679-1689) and measured 20 by 13 km with nearly a million people.<sup>236</sup> More European settlers came during the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, mainly consisting of the Portuguese, Dutch, English and French traders. The city was divided into several functional areas like administrative, business and industry according to diverse activities. The *Chauk* near the Buriganga River superseded *Bangla Bazar* as the main commercial center. Several cottage industries developed during this period with localities specialized in different crafts creating their own enclaves with unique names that indicated the profession of the community consisting of artisans, laborers and petty traders that continue till today. For example, some of these neighborhoods were *Tantibazar* (neighborhood of weavers), *Shankharibazar* (the neighborhood of *shankha*: special shell bangle makers), etc. The architecture of this period was brick built and included forts, palaces,

---

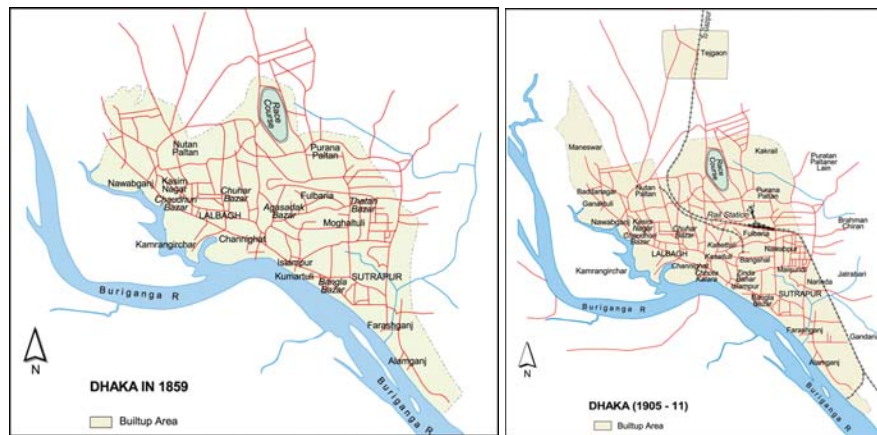
<sup>236</sup> . Karim, 1991.



mosques, *katras*, row houses, etc. showcasing Mughal architecture's prominent elements, arch, minarets and domes. Many of these survive till today and continue to be in use as important architectural heritages of the city.

### ***Dhaka during the rule of East India Company (1764-1858)***

The British East India Company took over the city around 1764 after Shirajuddoula, the last *Nawab*<sup>237</sup> of Bengal lost the battle of Palashy to the British in 1757, ending the Mughal rule. Subsequently, several natural and manmade disasters like floods, famines and fires hit Dhaka as the city lost the patronage of the British; gradually losing its former glory, as the prominence of Kolkata rose. Dhaka became a declining trade center with a tremendous decrease in population and area. The total urban area in 1800 was a 14.5 sq. km with a total population of about 200,000 and 51,635 in 1867.<sup>238</sup> Several residential and recreational spaces like the Ramna, Shahbagh and Paribagh areas were developed during this period.



Map 6: Left - Map of Dhaka in 1859 and Right - Map of Dhaka in 1905-11, source: dhakadailyphoto.blogspot.com, accessed on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2010.

<sup>237</sup> . The provincial rulers.

<sup>238</sup> . Census of Bengal, 1901, cited in www.bbs.gov.bd, accessed on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2010.

### ***Dhaka during the British rule (1858-1947)***

After the East India Company transferred power to the Crown, under the British rule, Dhaka started to grow rapidly and became the second-largest city in Bengal after Kolkata (then Calcutta). The city extended between the Buriganga River and the railway line (see Map 6). British Collector Charles Dawes undertook the revival of the city since the 1820s in the form of road widening and construction of administrative and educational buildings. Modern civic facilities like water supply and electricity were introduced in 1874 and 1878. During the Viceroy Lord Curzon's rule, Dhaka shortly became the capital of the new Bengal province in 1905 (see Map 6), comprising East Bengal and Assam. The *Bangobhango* or the partition of Bengal was annulled in 1911 and as compensation The Dhaka University was established in 1921. Since then till 1947, the city functioned as a trade center, administrative and district headquarter and as a university town. The Administrative and educational facilities were placed near the Victoria Park. Important educational institutes like the Medical and Engineering College were established. The *Chaukbazar* of Old Dhaka continued to be the center of trade, but the identity changed from retail to wholesale, as retail trade shifted to *Islampur* and *Banglabazar*. The *Sadarghat* river terminal became an important transportation hub and by 1930 business activities replaced the residential character of the riverfront. Crafts like Shankha, weaving, pottery, etc. continued in the traditional enclaves, with new large scale industries being established. Residential areas of different economic classes were established around the areas of Old Dhaka. Grid pattern planning was introduced for the first time in the city in areas like Wari and Gandaria. European villa type residences were introduced with massive pillars and round towers and verandas. On several occasions the local Mughal style was juxtaposed with the European style to create hybrid architecture.

### ***Dhaka as the Provincial capital of East Pakistan (1947-1971)***

Dhaka became the Provincial capital of the newly formed Pakistan on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1947. This was accompanied by a high pressure of housing administrative offices, industrial establishments and Muslim migrants from India<sup>239</sup>. The influx of people caused the population to increase from 335,925 in 1951 to 556,712 in 1961<sup>240</sup> which forced the city to expand further. There was a phenomenal growth in industry, wholesale and retail trade. Unfortunately, most of the expansion took place without any formal planning and mostly with piecemeal planning with no vision for future growth of the city. Eventually, in 1959 a Master plan was prepared for Dhaka. But with the exception of few planned areas, most of the city continued to grow organically and the Master Plan was not implemented successfully. Reinforced concrete houses with large balconies and glass windows were introduced during this period.

### ***Dhaka as the Capital of Bangladesh (1971 to present day)***

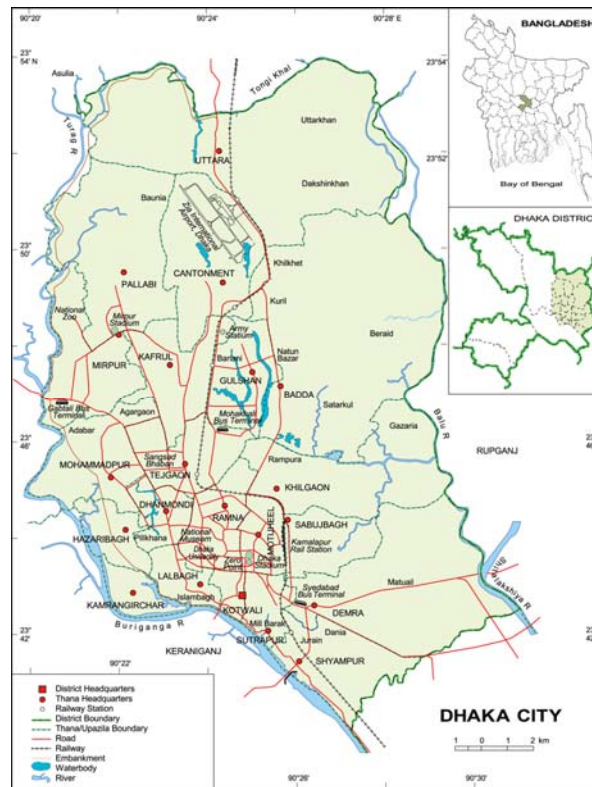
After the Liberation war of 1971, Bangladesh became a sovereign country with Dhaka as its capital. Over the past four decades, the city's population rose exponentially with growth in commerce and industry, demanding greater services and infrastructure. This has led to unplanned rapid urban growth. The city grew primarily towards the north and over the low-lying areas on the eastern and western side. Several administrative, business, residential and commercial centers along with numerous

---

<sup>239</sup> . While a major part of the Hindu population departed for India, the city had to accommodate a large influx of Muslims from India.

<sup>240</sup> . Census of Pakistan 1961, Bulletin No. 2, p. 18, cited in [www.bbs.gov.bd](http://www.bbs.gov.bd), accessed on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2010.

slums, squatters and unplanned low-income residential areas started to develop. The new Master Plan for Dhaka was prepared in 1995 to control future developments.



Map 7: Map of Dhaka after 2000, source: maps-of-bangladesh.blogspot.com, accessed on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2010.

Dhaka has a greater population density and the rate of expansion compared to most of the mega cities of Asia. From a population of 335,928 in 1951 in an area of 73 square km<sup>241</sup>, Dhaka is now a mega city of 12.8 million, encompassing approximately 1,530 square km<sup>242</sup> (see Map 7) and expanding further. According to a recent UN data sheet<sup>243</sup>, the Dhaka metropolis, currently the 22<sup>nd</sup> largest<sup>244</sup> urban agglomeration in the world will be the 5<sup>th</sup> largest, with a population of 19 million, by 2050, mainly due

<sup>241</sup> . Islam, 1998, p 71.

<sup>242</sup> . www.bbs.gov.bd, accessed on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2010.

<sup>243</sup> . Islam, 1998, p 71.

<sup>244</sup> . Ibid.

to the 500,000 migrants flowing into Dhaka each year<sup>245</sup>. This puts high pressure on the limited land to develop. As land with existing infrastructure is more lucrative for development than Greenfield sites, heritage in the traditional areas of Old Dhaka are highly vulnerable.

#### 4.2 Urbanism of Old Dhaka: Elements

The historic core with some of the earliest settlements of the city on the northern bank of the River Buriganga is known as *Puran Dhaka* or Old Dhaka. Old Dhaka's urbanism is a curious mix of rural and urban elements. The urban growth is informal, unplanned and organic with narrow meandering roads (see Figure 16, 17-1 and 17-2). Once the core of the Mughal capital, Old Dhaka has the highest density (population and built) in the city. Old Dhaka is a combination of several traditional neighborhoods, many of them enclaves of traditional crafts and trades. Most parts of the urban fabric dates back to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, while others were later additions.



Figure 16: Aerial view of Old Dhaka shows the River Buriganga, river terminal and the high density urban fabric, source: [www.google.com/earth/index.html](http://www.google.com/earth/index.html), accessed on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2010.

<sup>245</sup> . PBS Newshour, 2010.



Traditional Crafts and Trades



Residence



Street Façade



Permeability



Courtyards



Narrow streets

Figure 17-1: Some basic elements of Old Dhaka Urbanism-1, Source: Author.



Street front shops



Religious/Cultural festivals



Street house interface



Bustling Bazaars



Mosque



Fort

Figure 17-2: Some basic elements of Old Dhaka Urbanism-2, Source: Author.

While there are several areas in Old Dhaka dedicated to commercial activities related to the river, most of the area is residential. Generally the ground level is used for business, and the upper floors of the buildings are used as residences. Most of the

neighborhoods continue to be inhabited by the same family over several generations. Naturally the plots and the individual residential units are subdivided several times, defining and redefining the architecture of the area. Having influence of the Mughal, European, Indian and rural vernacular, the architecture is unique hybrid. The heritage of Old Dhaka is embedded in the neighborhoods and very much part of everyday life (see Figure 17-1 and 17-2). Most of them, especially the religious heritage buildings like mosques, continue to be in use. The River still continues to be a very important part of the urbanism.

### **4.3 Traditional Neighborhoods of Old Dhaka: the *Mahalla***

The traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka are locally known as *mahalla*. *Mahallas* are the basic indigenous urban unit of Old Dhaka with each having their unique identity and character, formed over several centuries. Generally they are divided into two layers. The street fronts are often bustling bazaars while the second layer right behind is the residential neighborhoods, almost hidden behind the bazaar façade. Though often dilapidated, narrow and cramped at first glance, the neighborhoods are highly livable places with some of the finest examples of local architecture.

Formed as enclaves of particular craft or trade in most cases, as their names suggest, the *mahallas* have undergone several major social-political changes though their physical fabric remains more or less intact in most cases. The formation and continuity of the *mahalla* often depended on the specialized or minority communities' desire to stick together to face urban and socio-political changes and also for benefit of business.<sup>246</sup> This, in turn gave each a distinct character of their own, reflected in

---

<sup>246</sup> . Islam, 1991 and Kamal, et al., 1990.



their physical form. They share several common traits that may be called Old Dhaka urbanism (see Figure 17-1 and 17-2). Initiated as specialized enclaves, most of the *mahallas* have undergone vigorous rebuilding. This happened as up until the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, most of the houses were temporary in nature, built with mud with thatch roofs<sup>247</sup> with the rich opting brick and concrete. Many of them are inhabited by the original community for several hundred years while others were replaced by new communities.

#### 4.4 Chronology of the Development of Traditional Neighborhoods

The exact period when the *mahallas* were formed cannot be determined in most cases. But their approximate period can be traced back from oral history references and also from the date of their important architectural heritage, as can be seen in Table 9:

Table 9: Chronological development of some of the traditional neighborhoods and few of the important Architectural heritages of Old Dhaka

Area	Heritage buildings	17 <sup>th</sup> century	18 <sup>th</sup> century	19 <sup>th</sup> century	20 <sup>th</sup> century
Shankharibazar					
	Temples				
	Row houses				
Kosaituli	Pogose school				
	Kosaituli mosque				
	Chini-tikri houses				
Armanitola	Armenian Church				
	Star mosque				
	Armanitola School				

Source: author.

<sup>247</sup> . Mamoon, 2008b, p 56.

As described by most British historians during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, most of the *mahallas* flourished during the Mughal period as Dhaka was a provincial center for trade. A few of them (like *Shankharibazar*) have been thought to exist even before that. The architectural heritage can be traced back to the last three centuries as most construction before that period was temporary in nature (mostly mud and thatch), replaced by more permanent brick constructions at later periods.

#### **4.5 Mahalla, Community and Urban Form**

##### **4.5.1 Relationship of Mahalla and Community**

The *mahallas* of Old Dhaka developed as enclaves of specialized crafts, trades and cottage industries at different localities. They can be identified by their unique names that indicate the profession of the community. Many of them continue till today as living communities. Some of the names that express specialization of the Mahallas are *Shankharibazar* (special shell bangle makers market), *Kumartoli* (potter's neighborhood), *Tantibazar* (market of weavers), *Patuatuli* (jute-silk painters' locality), *Sutrapur* (carpenter's neighborhood), *Tantibazar* (weaver's market), *Banianagar* (trader's locality), *Churi Hatta* (bangle market), etc.

As the names suggest, the *mahallas* started as living quarters of specialized artisans, craftsmen and traders in very close-knit communities. The changing socioeconomic and political circumstances have seen a good part of the population migrate to India. Even with a new population replacing them, surprisingly most of the *mahallas* have retained the original community bond. This has originated from people living in close social contact in these high-density urban areas and depending on the community for

support in socioeconomic matters. The *Bangalees* (people of Bangladesh) are highly social in nature. The social bonding in rural communities was successfully adapted in the early urban settlements. The close association of the communities came from sharing craft, trade or in cases a particular religion<sup>248</sup>. Even with shortage of contemporary urban amenities in the older city fabrics, the community members continue to stay in the *mahallas*, mainly due to the psychological comfort that living in the community of their ancestors provides them. This is important to understand how the social-political dynamics work in the *mahallas*.

The sociological aspect of community living in the *mahallas* is closely related to the specialized craft or trade, which imparts identity to the neighborhoods. As the history of the city suggests, most of the *mahallas* have undergone a long and gradual process of social evolution, even though the physical fabric may have remained more or less intact. The close community living has enabled the residents to cope with changing sociocultural needs.

#### **4.5.2 Sociocultural Influence on Space Formation in Mahalla**

In the *mahallas* of Old Dhaka, the neighbors are treated as close as relatives, which is an essential part of Bengali culture.<sup>249</sup> The *mahallas* have been created by communities over centuries and reflect their everyday social activities, tastes, lifestyle choices, etc. The community living and close relationship with the neighbors is reflected in the space formation and shared usage of the social spaces of the *mahallas*.

---

<sup>248</sup> . Like in Shankharibazar, most of the residents are Hindu *Shankha* craftsmen.

<sup>249</sup> . Hossain, 1992.

The space formation successfully reflects the lifestyle choices of *Bangalees* and has proven socio-culturally sustainable over a long period. This has been carried on from the broader urban fabric to the physical layout of built forms and into the details. Rather than a pre-designed idea, often the solution came from spontaneous problem-solving, aided by the traditional wisdom of the locals. This created an architectural language that is unique to the area. While many of the common spaces in the *mahallas* were created to stage cultural and religious events, the social cohesion can be seen in smaller scale urban space sharing. As the households are subsequently subdivided through generations, even small scale architectural elements like staircases or courtyards had to be shared. A common social sharing is only made possible due to the presence of the community bond. This sharing of common spaces in turn enabled greater compactness in the urban fabric of *mahallas*.

Among the several typologies of residential building in Old Dhaka, the courtyard houses have a strong presence in the *mahallas*. The open courtyards (also other community open spaces) are good examples of semi-public spaces formed due to sociocultural influence. The rural vernacular courtyard was successfully adapted into the urban fabric, basically to facilitate sociocultural interaction. Besides being essential spaces for everyday communal interaction, they are venues for special cultural and religious festivals and celebrations. They are successful examples of how the *mahallas*' spatial formation and the sociocultural activities of the community can complement each other. The shared social spaces are not only formed and integrated into the community's social sphere, but are also closely managed by the community, often represented by informal community bodies.

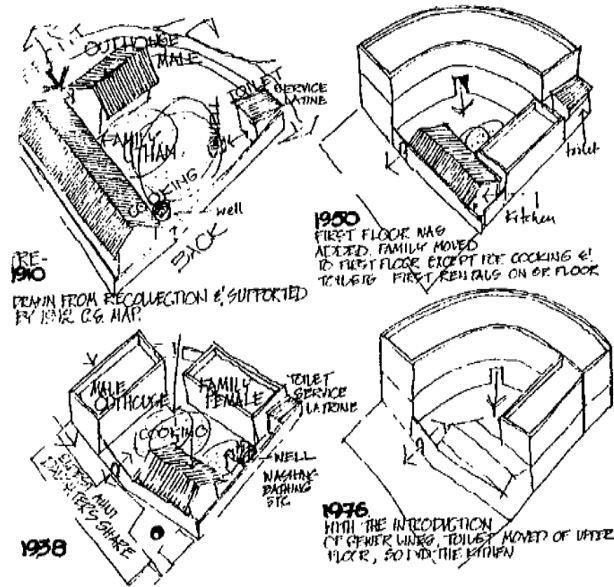


Figure 18: The manifestation of sociocultural choices in the space formation in *mahallas*, Source: Khan, 1991, p 110.

The early urban households were direct replica of the rural vernacular courtyard settlements, as shown in Figure 18. The houses were constructed with mud and thatch. Their formation was a true reflection of the *Bengali* lifestyle with the built forms generally organized around shared social spaces like courtyards. This typology continued till the first half of the twentieth century. With changing lifestyle choices and sociocultural demands, the space formations were adapted. Though the basic space formation remained similar (see Figure 18), the use of materials was more permanent, with brick replacing mud and thatch. Taking advantage of the new construction technology, houses became multistoried; however the spatial formation was retained to accommodate the sociocultural preferences of community living.

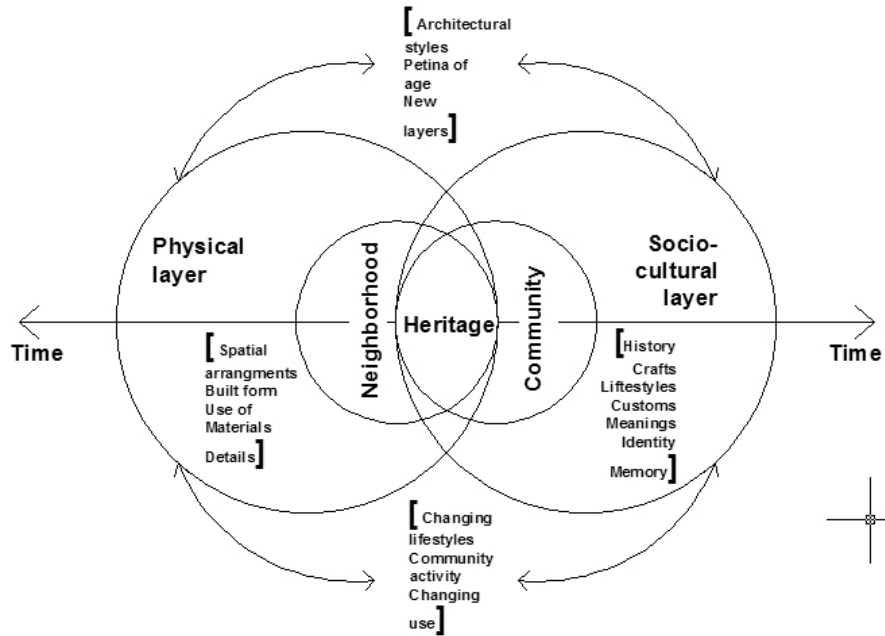


Figure 19: Transformation and continuity of the *mahalla* with growing Physical and Sociocultural layers with time, source: author.

The elements that construct the traditional neighborhoods or *mahallas* can be divided into the Physical and Sociocultural layer (Figure 19). The intangible elements of the sociocultural layer are manifested in the elements of the physical layer. The elements of sociocultural layer evolve through the long history of the Mahallas and take shape with the community's everyday lifestyle, crafts, shared customs, meanings, identity and common memory. These in turn are reflected in the elements of the physical layer that include the spatial arrangement of the social spaces, which are often direct reflections of the community living. Other important elements of the physical layer are the built form, adapted architectural styles, use of materials and details, etc.

The community, *Mahallas* and their layers are constructed over time. As time passes, the layers are juxtaposed and superimposed with new layers. The most important elements that survive this slow and gradual process of sociocultural evolution remain as heritage in the local communities. They become the identity of particular *Mahallas*.

While the longest lasting sociocultural elements become cultural heritage, the physical elements become the architectural heritage.

#### 4.5.3 *Mahalla*: Formation, Transformation and Continuity

The *mahallas* of Old Dhaka have grown over subsequent centuries of sociocultural transformations.<sup>250</sup> There is a curious rural-vernacular quality in a major part of the urban fabric of Old Dhaka, which is essentially organic. The organic nature of the

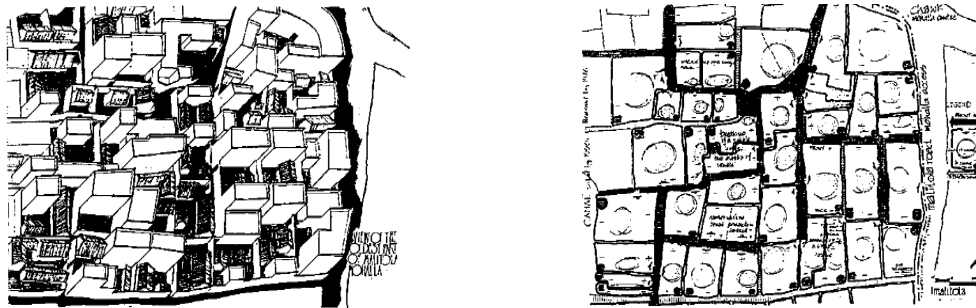


Figure 20: Urban pattern in the *mahallas*, source: Khan, 1991.

*mahalla* (see Figure 20) owes to the *need-based development* rather than a predetermined Master plan. Exploring the urban fabric reveals one meandering road leading to another alley that is even narrower, but surprisingly the spaces inside the residences are mostly spacious with few exceptions.

A critical issue in the *mahallas* of Old Dhaka is the ownership pattern. Lane<sup>251</sup> observes this common phenomenon for older city centers: “there is a multiplicity of ownership of fragments of sites. Every city block contains dozens of interests, freeholds, leaseholds of every imaginable length, mortgages and so forth. Sites have

---

<sup>250</sup> . Karim, 1996.

<sup>251</sup> . Lane, 1958.

crazy boundaries, which are the outcome of centuries of extensions.... rebuilding, consolidation and additions.” The ownership pattern and property subdivision have played an important role in shaping the urban fabric of the *mahalla*.

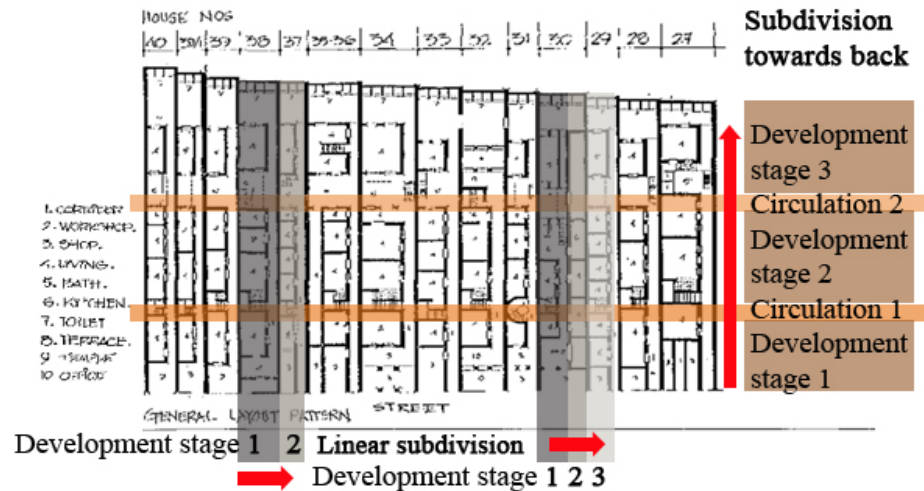


Figure 21: Development stages in the residential subdivision in Shankharibazar, a *mahalla* of Old Dhaka. Source: Drawn by author, original plan: Imamuddin, 1990, p 123.

The property subdivision is also closely related to the family business. As the street frontage was crucial to run a business, it is common to subdivide the property linearly over subsequent generations with backward development to accommodate growing demand for space (see Figure 21).

Another issue is the apparent uncared look that the *Mahallas* often showcase. This is not always related to the actual economic condition of the household. Khan<sup>252</sup> offers the reason: “The municipal rates are fixed on the basis of an assumed yearly rental value, a difficult exercise in a non-rental, owner-occupant society. The rates had been fixed decades ago and passed on without adjustment and by today’s standards are

<sup>252</sup> . Khan, 1991, pp. 107-108.



extremely cheap. Residents take undue care to keep the rates unchanged and depressed.”

A study of several Mahallas of Old Dhaka reveals there is a common hierarchy and similarity in their formation and urban pattern (see Figure 22). Generally there are bazaars on the ground level in close contact with the Primary roads that work as main arteries for the neighborhoods. The bazaars are bustling with numerous types of shops; with specialized shops of particular localities dominating (like *Shankha* shops in Shankharibazar). The Secondary roads that branches out from the primary roads are narrower and quieter in nature. While there are houses on the primary road, they only start from the second story to facilitate business. Houses on the Secondary roads have shops or *Rocks*<sup>253</sup> in their street interface. Many of the houses have internal courtyards that may lead to rooftop or ground level temples. There is a smooth transition from public to semi-public to private to sacred, expressed both horizontally and vertically. Figure 22 shows these common elements:

---

<sup>253</sup> . *Rocks* are ground level verandah or platforms without railings that has direct interaction with the street.

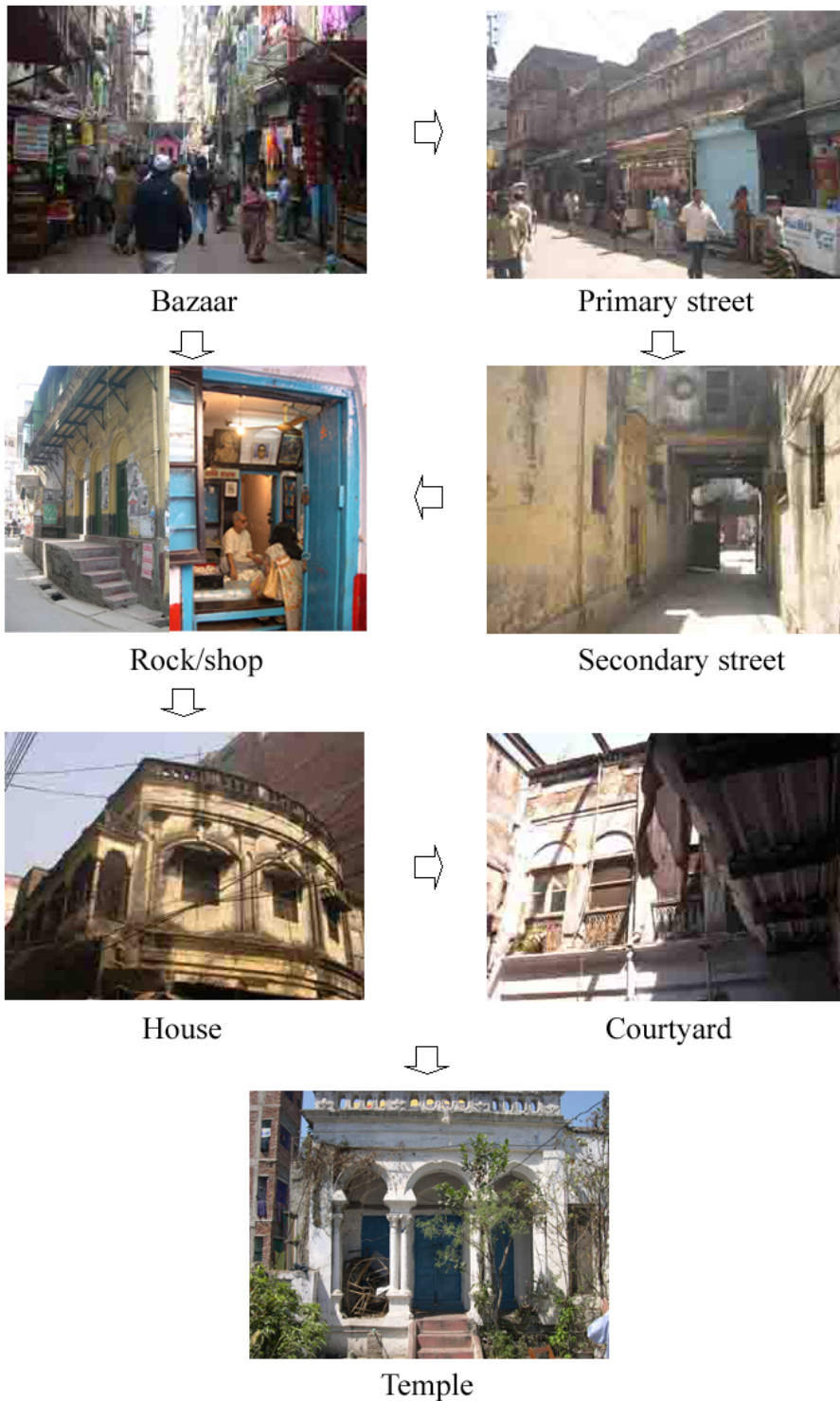


Figure 22: Hierarchy and transition from public to semi-public to private to sacred spaces (horizontally and vertically) in the Physical forms of *mahallas* (arrows showing the hierarchical link between spaces), source: author.

The urban fabric has been shaped and reshaped over the centuries with changing needs. “Change to the physical fabric takes many forms, ranging from minor decorative alterations to buildings to the comprehensive redevelopment of extensive areas.”<sup>254</sup> Fortunately, with the exception of several buildings and additional streets, the urban fabric and the overall physical form remain more or less unaltered. Though major parts of the original buildings were altered or replaced later, there are also remaining good examples of the original architecture that dates back centuries. In general, the sense of place of the *Mahallas* has remained unchanged even though the physical fabric has changed in a few cases. This has been made possible by the strong bond existing in the communities.

#### **4.5.4 Social Unit Formed by Crafts and Trade: Role of Economic Activities**

While in a few of the traditional neighborhoods (like in *Shankharibazar*) the original economic activities have continued for centuries through subsequent generations of craftsmen or traders, in other cases, the original economic activities were later replaced (or at least added to) with new ones (as can be seen in *Kosaituli*<sup>255</sup>). This has happened due to a combination of different factors like demise of particular practices or trade, changes in demand and the overall change in socioeconomic and technological standards.

---

<sup>254</sup> . Whitehand, 1978, cited in Sim, 1982.

<sup>255</sup> . Original inhabitants of the area were *Kosai* or butchers. They were later replaced by people engaged in different crafts and trade.

The changing economic conditions dictate a decline of a particular type of use in the traditional neighborhoods which ultimately give way to other more suitable uses.<sup>256</sup> Much of the original uses or businesses have thus become obsolete over the years. This has often led to either demolition or adaptive reuse of older buildings in Old Dhaka. Lewis has observed (see Table 10) the reasons behind these changes in suitability – or obsolescence (most of which is present in Old Dhaka):

Table 10: Five major types of obsolescence

Type of obsolescence	Reasons of occurrence
Condition	When it is more profitable to spend money on improvements and hence receive a higher rent, than to allow the present rent to fall.
Rental	When demand for occupation of a building; if high, then rents will tend to move upwards but if low, then the opposite will happen.
Building	When a particular structure cannot be adapted for another use and it becomes more profitable to demolish it and to rebuild.
Tenant	When the tenant finds a particular building is no longer suited to his needs and he finds it desirable to move.
Community	When the balance of trade in an area is distributed and pedestrian and traffic flows are altered, to the detriment of local business.

Source: Lewis, 1965, cited in Sim, 1982, p 13.

The space formation in the *mahallas* is closely related to the economic activities. In most cases, the family business or craft is carried through the generations with a system of apprenticeship. The built form generally has two layers, either spread horizontally or vertically, with each having a close contact with the street life for the convenience of business. There are two basic typologies. In the first type, the

---

<sup>256</sup> . Chapman, 2007.

residential functions are placed in the second layer behind the bazaar façade. In the second type, the ground floor is dedicated to business and the upper floors are used for residential purposes. Particularly in the second type, subdivision of property and extension of the row houses is directly related to the economic conditions and business survival.

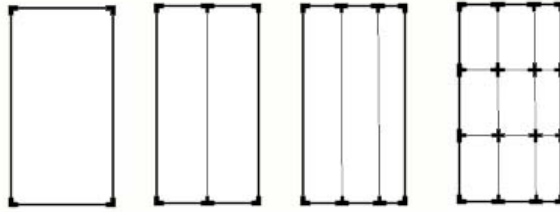


Figure 23: Diagrammatic representation of linear and transverse horizontal subdivisions of property in the *mahallas* (shown in plan), source: author

In most cases, the property is inherited by more than one family; generally subdivided to accommodate the changing requirements (Figure 23). Especially important is the street front, which must be shared for business survival. Other considerations like access and circulation are reflected in the linear and backward subdivision of the plots. The subdivision initially starts with the linear subdivision and followed by transverse subdivision; which is done when the street front becomes too narrow to subdivide anymore.

#### **4.6 Heritage of Old Dhaka: Elements**

The historic fabrics of Old Dhaka are particularly important because of their heritage value. While there are several notable individual architectural heritages in the form of mosques, schools or residences, etc., few of the Mahallas are considered heritage as an urban ensemble, with all of their built forms, space layouts and architectural styles. They may or may not have major individual heritage buildings *per se*, but the most

important factor in such urban fabric is their unique character that creates a distinct charm and a sense of place.



Figure 24: Tangible heritage elements of Old Dhaka, source: author.

These unique characters can only be expressed through the entire range of buildings rather than a secluded heritage building. In some cases, it is a range of traditional vernacular residential buildings and in others it is the layout of the entire urban fabric that creates the heritage value.

The tangible or physical elements of the traditional *Mahallas* include a wide array of building forms, morphology, spatial layout, architectural styles, use of materials, details and ornamentations (see Figure 24). The local forms, textures and architectural styles were gradually accumulated over the years, from different influences like the Mughal, European and traditional vernacular.<sup>257</sup> They are equally rich in magnificent community buildings like mosques as well as private residences. Most common

---

<sup>257</sup> . Dani, 1961 and Imamuddin, 1982.

tangible elements of the architectural heritage are load bearing masonry and brick columns of burnt clay brick with *lime surki*<sup>258</sup> plaster. Walls are as thick as 2 feet with deep set windows with operable wooden louvers, for protection against scorching sun and monsoon rain. Semiprivate spaces like deep set colonnaded verandah with cornice are common. The openings are generally arched, following a wide range of architectural styles from Mughal to European. Magnificent ornamentations are common in cornices, pillars, arches and often on the entire surface.

The physical or tangible heritage of Old Dhaka has undergone the inevitable process of urban changes over the centuries, with individual buildings added or altered. However, but the unique intangible elements that impart their heritage value have remained more or less intact. The continuity of the intangible elements depends on how actively the heritage buildings are being used. Often abstract in nature, these unquantifiable intangible elements are spiritual assets of the communities (Figure 25).



Figure 25: Intangible heritage elements of Old Dhaka, including traditional crafts, businesses, skills and construction styles, source: author.

<sup>258</sup> . *Lime surki* is a mix of fine brick chips with lime.

In the traditional *mahallas*, the intangible elements breathe life into the heritage buildings. The wide range of intangible elements includes traditional crafts like *shankha*, clay pottery and idol making, traditional foods like *baker-khani*, traditional construction techniques like the *chini-tikri* and terracotta, local history, lifestyles, oral traditions, rituals, customs and festivals, meanings, identity, collective memory, etc.

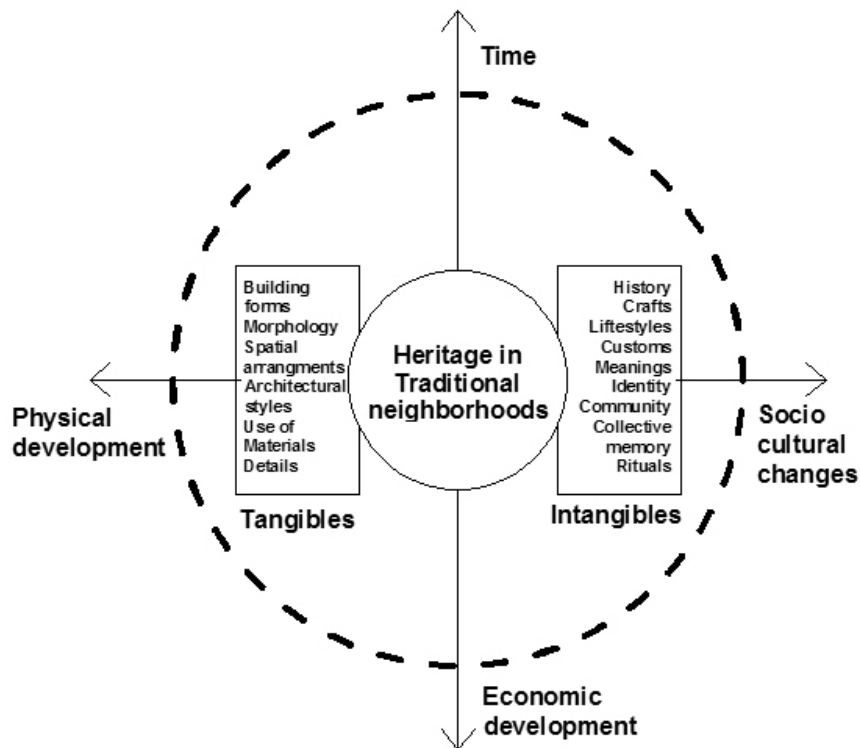


Figure 26: Tangible and Intangible elements of heritage in traditional neighborhoods with forces of change, source: author.

The heritage of Old Dhaka is an intricate network of interwoven tangible and intangible elements. The tangible and intangible elements are inseparable; the intangible is manifested in the tangible. The heritage of the traditional neighborhoods actually is a construct of the tangible elements in combination with the intangible elements as Figure 26 shows. They are constructed over time accommodating



sociocultural changes, physical and economic development. With time the *heritage sphere* grows and accommodates and accumulates all the tangible and intangible elements in an inseparable palimpsest set in their traditional environments.

#### **4.7 History and *Living heritage***

*Living Heritage* refers to the built heritage that has survived sociocultural changes in a dynamic living environment and copes with the present context. Rohit Jigyasu states<sup>259</sup> the term 'Living' heritage has two fundamental dimensions. The first, dealing with those aspects of heritage which are still living<sup>260</sup> and the second, dealing with heritage components which exist in a living environment. A wide range of elements constitutes the *living* aspects of heritage such as crafts and skills, everyday life of the local community and traditional building systems, etc. These evolve over time and survive in original, similar or adapted form.

Matsuura states that *living* heritage is “inspired by values, knowledge and beliefs that lay at the very heart of... culture. These are what we call ‘intangible heritage’. This heritage manifests itself in a living form through cultural and social practices and expressions. The latter vary from oral traditions, performances, rituals and festivities to knowledge and practices about nature. It is this living, or intangible, heritage that

---

<sup>259</sup> . Jigyasu, 2003.

<sup>260</sup> . For example, in the case of Shankharibazar, the craft of making *shankha* and different surviving crafts, skills and lifestyle.

anchors our sense of identity and continuity that is integral to the life of all societies”

261

*Continuity* is the critical element for *living* heritage. Continuity means that of the physical form, along with the activities within and around them that are vital in maintaining and accentuating the heritage value. *Living* heritage is transferred from one generation to the next in Old Dhaka. They become the identity of particular communities. The identity is not ‘frozen’ though, rather constantly evolving influenced by the dynamic sociocultural forces.

The heritage in the *mahallas* of Old Dhaka works both as a foundation and a vessel for continuity of the community’s shared memory and identity. The sociocultural and religious events are carriers for continuity of the architectural heritage. They ensure that the heritage buildings are *living* and continued to be in use. The *living* quality in the heritage buildings is imparted through the *living* communities with their memory and association, traditions, oral history, everyday social practices, customs and rituals, festival events, traditional vernacular knowledge of construction techniques and traditional crafts. The living traditions like crafts or vernacular knowledge of construction are carried on by families through subsequent generations.

In Old Dhaka, it is common for families to carry on with the family craft or trade for centuries, withstanding socio-political and economic challenges. Even after receiving modern education, the younger generation often opts to join the family craft or

---

<sup>261</sup> . Matsuura, 2007.

business. The continuity of intangible elements like the local crafts in turn helps the continuity of the built heritage.

In the traditional *mahallas* of Old Dhaka, the *living* heritage is constantly under threat from unplanned urban development, changing lifestyles, different types of age-old traditional activities becoming obsolete, etc. It is critical to identify, protect and manage the elements that have enabled the survival and continuity of the living heritage. The challenge of safeguarding the living heritage is doing so “without separating it from living processes of creativity and evolution.”<sup>262</sup> Protecting the living heritage of Old Dhaka includes maintaining the living heritage by continuing the traditional values and practices of the community. The informal community bodies in the traditional neighborhoods generally undertake this important responsibility to save the living heritage from disappearing irretrievably.

#### **4.8 Heritage as Cultural, Economic and Political Resource**

Several of the *mahallas* in Old Dhaka have sustained urban changes successfully, and are more or less intact in their *original* unique character. They are richly endowed with a range of architectural heritage. The local cultural and architectural heritage anchors the *mahallas* to their place. The heritage value of the architectural heritage is associated with the meaning assigned to them by the local community. The meaning is constructed over time, through the vehicles of sociocultural and religious elements.

---

<sup>262</sup> . Ibid.

The traditional *mahallas* of Old Dhaka showcase some of the best heritage of the city within their high density urban fabrics. In Old Dhaka, heritage is an integral part of everyday life in the *mahallas*. The community, the sociocultural elements and their architectural expression in the heritage are often one and inseparable. UNESCO defines Culture as: “The whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterizes a society or social group. It includes not only arts and letters but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of human beings, value systems, traditions and beliefs.”<sup>263</sup> The heritage of Old Dhaka is a *construct* of a long sociocultural process and reflects the local communities’ social, cultural and religious practices, as well as their combined identity.

The economic activities and heritage are closely related in the *mahallas*. The heritage buildings are actively used over several generations and are often places to earn a livelihood. The heritage is *living*, being actively used and an integral part of the everyday economic life of the community. This relationship actually dictates the continuity of the heritage itself.

The survival of the local heritage is also political. As Ghosh observes: “The historic centers generally have higher land values, and the built heritage here is particularly vulnerable to property redevelopment pressures”<sup>264</sup>. How well these urban ensembles have survived this pressure depends entirely on the community’s resistance to inappropriate physical development that often destroys the unique character of place and heritage. Thus, among several *mahallas*, it is only in those where the community

---

<sup>263</sup> . UNESCO, 1982.

<sup>264</sup> . Ghosh, 2002, p 110.

bond is strongest, and there are active community bodies to manage these matters, that the heritage has survived retaining their unique character.

#### **4.9 Types of Heritage**

The architectural heritage of Old Dhaka includes a wide array of physical elements, ranging from religious buildings (like mosques, temples and churches), administrative and institutional buildings (like schools), local vernacular residential architecture, and in some cases, entire historic fabrics of unique character, identity and style (like *Shankharibazar*). Based on ownership pattern, they can be broadly categorized into community building and private property.

##### **4.9.1 Community Buildings**

As the *mahallas* are enclaves of different ethnicities, the communities have erected their respective religious structure like mosque and temples. The most frequent community buildings of Old Dhaka are religious and institutional like a mosque and school (see Figure 27). The community buildings are generally owned and managed by the local community, except in a few cases where the government has taken over the ownership. Their continuity largely depends on the active involvement and maintenance of the community. Their functions range from religious, administrative, social, education and institutional, etc. Commonly shared by the community, these heritage buildings transgress their physical elements and often become the identity of particular Mahallas. They are the symbol of pride and represent the rich history of the traditional Mahallas of Old Dhaka.

An important ownership issue, especially for Islamic religious buildings like a mosque, is the system of the *Waqf*<sup>265</sup>. *Waqf* transfers the ownership from individuals to selected trusts, generally represented by prominent community members and members of the donor's family. With the system of *Waqf*, many of the mosques are legally owned by the community.



Figure 27: Community heritage buildings of Old Dhaka, source: author.

Most of the community buildings were constructed with generous donations from community members. Due to greater fund, their construction and detail, ornamentation and architectural styles are often superior to private residential heritage buildings. They showcase some of the best examples of architectural styles of 18<sup>th</sup>,

---

<sup>265</sup> . *Waqf* is an Islamic institution, by which an individual can donate land and other properties through charity trust. “*Waqf*, as a religious charitable institution, has been in existence in South Asian Muslim countries for centuries. Bangladeshi Muslims have high regard for religious activities and thus have a rich tradition of establishing *awqaf* for various types of religious, educational and social welfare purposes”, source: Karim, 2010, p1.

19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The dominant architectural elements of the community buildings are splendid use of local materials crafts (like terracotta, stucco and the *chini-tikri*), vernacular construction styles, magnificent plasterwork and ornamentation, grandeur of scale, proportion, use of the classical orders, etc.

In religious buildings like the mosques, inspirations basically came from the numerous Mughal mosques of the subcontinent, with adaptation to the local climate. For other religious (like church) and civic buildings, the inspiration was largely the European architectural style, dominated by the British style. Ahmed and Khan observe: “Indeed the British, the longest enduring colonialists and logically the main builders, were largely responsible for introducing a European style, fundamentals, elements and technology included, that responded to local climate to emerge as a hybrid.”<sup>266</sup> Other strong influences are Neo Classic and Baroque. The richer class of society frequently traveled to Europe and came back with inspirations, which were used in combination of the local master masons’ ideas and traditional styles.

The presence of the local traditional vernacular can be traced to space formation, local construction technique, ornamentation styles and use of architectural elements for climate protection. These turned the architecture into a unique local hybrid, more clearly evident in the community buildings. The community buildings are an important part of heritage of Old Dhaka, as they represent the dominant architectural legacy, construction techniques and ornamentation styles of different periods.

---

<sup>266</sup> . Ahmed & Khan, Ibid.

#### 4.9.2 Private Property

Besides the community buildings, a good part of the heritage of Old Dhaka consists of privately owned residential buildings (see Figure 28). Generally they include residential or commercial cum residential buildings. Most of the layperson's houses fall under this category, with several examples of villas or mansions belonging to the richer members of the community. There are some important examples of residential heritage building in the *mahallas* that showcase varying architectural styles. Ahmed and Khan observe some of the important elements of the residential buildings of Old Dhaka: “Visible outstanding features of these impressive buildings were application of floral ornamentation in plaster, column and surface treatment by shaped bricks and employment of imported classical orders in the form of freestanding decorative columns.”<sup>267</sup>

Several of the houses of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century are introvert in nature, clustered around one or multiple courtyards. They have continuous wide verandas on both sides of living spaces, classic or mixed colonnades, balconies, 19<sup>th</sup> century cast iron decorations and railing. The exteriors are embellished with rich ornamentation and the use of hybrid classical orders, while the interior was inspired by the rural courtyard houses. The courtyards are skillfully spaced to ensure traditional values, privacy and circulation to the inner quarters. While in many villa type residences, the courtyard was used for important social and religious gatherings, in others, they were more private in nature.

Most of the residences were later converted to brick from the mud and thatch construction. The prominent architectural elements of the residential heritage

---

<sup>267</sup> . Ahmed & Khan, 2004, February 20.



buildings are mosaic, terracotta and tile, burnt brick, *jalli*<sup>268</sup>, etc. (see Figure 28) The residential heritage buildings of Old Dhaka are essentially traditional vernacular in their space layout, functional arrangement, hierarchy of space, as inspired by the Bengal rural houses in image and form. The inspiration of the hybrid form, ornamentation and a range of architectural elements, largely came from the Indian architectural styles, especially the Mughal, along with the European, mainly British. Ghosh observes: “these variously inspired European elements came together in this period to form an eclectic and decorative local style known as Bengal Baroque”.<sup>269</sup> Over the centuries, this hybrid architecture has acquired a unique style of its own. Doig<sup>270</sup> also observes the particular beauty of Bengal Baroque, which had been derived from the liberal application of stucco with the adapted use of a mix of pillar types, Moorish arches, gaudy tiles, and distorted angles in the hybrid architecture.



Figure 28: Different residential heritage buildings of Old Dhaka, source: author.

<sup>268</sup> . *Jalli* is a special type of ornamented perforation, with floral or geometric patterns.

<sup>269</sup> . Ghosh, 2002, p 116.

<sup>270</sup> . Doig, 1968, cited in Ghosh, 2002, p 116.

Many of these houses date back to mid-19<sup>th</sup> to late 20<sup>th</sup> century. They have survived due to sustainable local vernacular construction techniques and durability of materials. One of the main typology of the residential heritage buildings is the large intricately-decorated villas, courtyard houses, compact row houses (similar to shop houses) and narrow tenement houses connected by long corridors.

As Old Dhaka is a high density area, the most prominent typology is the narrow row house, with shops at the ground level. Karim observes: “having always been a densely populated City, Dhaka was also home to another set of houses that had narrow frontals, were deep sidelong and high, and built in high-density area.”<sup>271</sup> To save space, they often shared the partition walls and have become ensemble heritage buildings. Due to their shared nature, their heritage values are also shared, i.e., as ensembles. The shared issues like common circulation and shared frontage are resolved through community cooperation.

#### **4.10 Culture and Religion: Influence of Intangible Elements on Tangible Heritage**

##### **4.10.1 Cultural and Religious Events in Old Dhaka and the Continuity of Heritage**

Cultural and religious festivals and events are important intangible elements that ensure the continuity of the architectural heritage (see Figure 29). Their role is particularly vital as there are numerous examples worldwide, of architectural heritage becoming obsolete due to lack of use. They breathe life into the ‘living’ architectural heritage of the *mahallas* as most of the festivals are celebrated in them or centered on them.

---

<sup>271</sup> . Karim, 1964.

Both cultural and religious festivals are important parts of social life in Old Dhaka. The cultural festivals are the rich cultural legacy of the Bengali culture. The major religious festivals are celebrated in their *original* flavor in Old Dhaka. The population of Dhaka is predominantly Muslim. Most of the communities of Old Dhaka have Muslim majorities. The main festivals of the Muslims are the two *Eids*, *Eid-ul-fitar* and *Eid-ul-Azha*. Old Dhaka has some of the best heritage mosques in the city. The Eid celebrations are directly related to the mosque. Special congregations are held in the heritage mosques as part of the Eid celebration. The heritage mosques also stage other important religious events like the Muharram festival of the Arabic calendar, especially celebrated by the *Shiite* population.

There are also several *mahallas* where the Hindu community is the majority (like *Shankharibazar*), and they work as the centers of celebration of main Hindu religious festivals like *Puja* for the whole city. Some of the important *Puja* celebrations are the *Durga Puja*, *Janmashtami*, *Swarashwati Puja*, *Kali Puja*, etc. (see Figure 29).



Figure 29: *Puja* celebrations (left), source: author, *Pohela Baishakh* celebration (right), source: [www.squidoo.com](http://www.squidoo.com), accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2010.

The community shared open spaces or *maidans* are used to stage major cultural events like the Bengali New Year celebration popularly known as *Baishakhi Mela* (fair). Old Dhaka is considered one of the best places to celebrate the festival. Other important

cultural festivals are the *Poush Mela* (fair) and the *Kite festival*. Kite flying is a popular recreation among the *Dhakaiyyas*<sup>272</sup>. A kite festival is celebrated on the 29<sup>th</sup> of *Poush* and is known as *Poush Sankranti* (the end of the Bangla month of *Poush*). There are several kite shops in Old Dhaka. A big turnout of kite flyers and onlookers gather at community open spaces and roof tops. This festival is an important part of the cultural heritage and dates back to the Mughal period.

#### **4.10.2 Social, Cultural and Religious Events as Platform for Informal Heritage Management of Built Heritage**

The informal community bodies are directly involved in the management of the social and cultural events (Figure 29). But their role is not limited to arranging the events only. The architectural heritage in the community sets the stage for these events and festivals to take place. The informal community bodies periodically maintain the community heritage, especially to stage these events. Here informal heritage management is induced by the cultural and religious festivals to a certain extent. These festivals are also good occasions to raise special funds required to undertake conservation. One of the important tasks that the informal community bodies undertake is to organize, collect and manage the funds to use them most efficiently for the periodical maintenance of the heritage structures. Often these events go beyond the community property like mosque or temples and even spread to the entire *Mahallah*. Though the entire community participates spontaneously, the informal community bodies play a very important role in managing and coordinating the social and private spaces of the *Mahallas*. The community bodies arrange the fairs (leasing stalls) in the community spaces, as part of various cultural (e.g. different *mela* or fair)

---

<sup>272</sup> . The residents of Old Dhaka are popularly known as *Dhakaiyyas*.

and religious (e.g. *Eid* and *Puja* celebrations) festivals. This provides important revenue that is used yearly to maintain the heritage structures. During *Eid ul Azha*, a special market is set up in the community open spaces for animals to be sacrificed. The revenue collected from the market is used for maintenance of the heritage buildings.

#### **4.11 Traditional Crafts of Old Dhaka**

The traditional crafts are an important part of the intangible heritage of Old Dhaka. They have been continuing through the system of apprenticeship for centuries. Subsequent generations of apprentices learn and copy the methods, techniques and composition from their masters. Once the apprentices have mastered the basic techniques and secrets of the craft, they are allowed to express individuality in their work. In the process, they enrich the craft further with their own expertise. The crafts are inspired by the rich material culture of the past and the contemporary urban influences.

The traditional crafts can be subdivided into two categories. The first category includes all types of traditional construction techniques like the *chini-tikri*, stucco, terracotta etc. The second category includes all types of crafts of artistic value, like *shankha* making, pottery and idol making, stone works, kite making, etc. All of these crafts are considered intangible heritage as traditional knowledge is passed on through generations. A few of them are discussed here.

## *Chini-tikri*

*Chini-tikri* is one of the main building ornamentation crafts of Old Dhaka. As the stones were not available for ornamentation, the *chini-tikri* was used as a replacement. Broken porcelain pieces of varying colors are used to make intricate geometric and floral patterns on the exterior and interior surfaces. The process is briefly described here (Figure 30):

### Steps of *Chini-Tikri* ornamentation

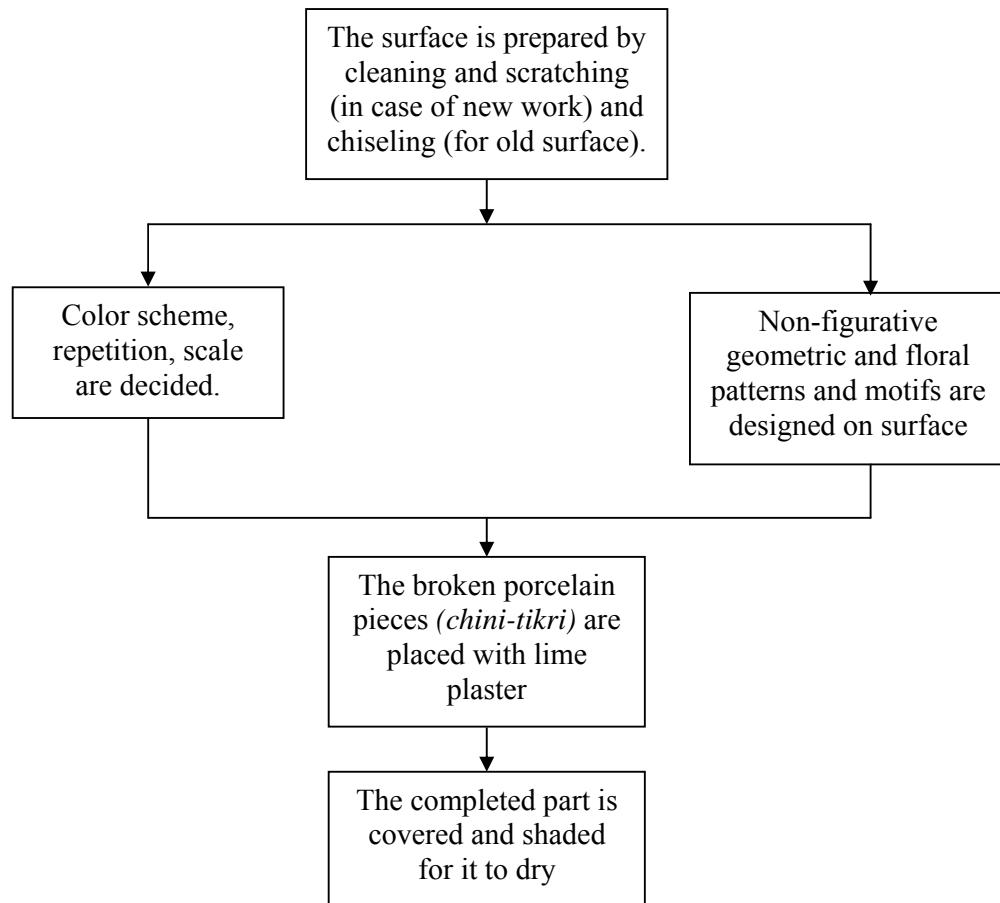


Figure 30: Steps of *Chini-Tikri* ornamentation, source: author.



Figure 31: *Chini-tikri* ornamentation in Old Dhaka, source: author.

*Chini-tikri* ornamentation is one of the most elaborate, intricate and time consuming crafts. As the pieces cannot be pre-decided, the master craftsmen and apprentices break the pieces according to design, shape and color (see Figure 31). They mix and match and apply the porcelain pieces of different size, shape and color in-situ. In some cases, it takes up to several years to complete ornamentation of a structure.

### ***Stucco***

Stucco is a special type of visually pleasing ornamental coating with lime plaster. A mix with lime, sand and brick chips are prepared for ornamental plaster over brick surfaces. This was popular in Old Dhaka, as the stones were not available for surface ornamentation. It was used mostly in exteriors and also in interiors, especially on ceilings. The floral and geometric patterns were done when the mix is wet and then it was dried to the final surface. The natural color of lime is white and different aggregate and pigments were mixed for varying colors. Stucco was applied in one or two thin layers directly over brick masonry, depending on how complicated the patterns were (see Figure 32 and 33).

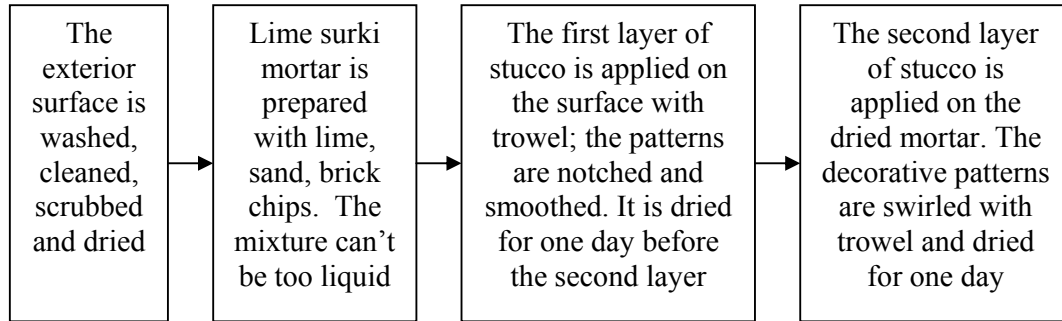


Figure 32: The process of making stucco, source: author



Figure 33: Stucco ornamentation in Old Dhaka, source: author.

Due to absence of stone, brick masonry with lime plaster was the main building material in Old Dhaka. Stucco is durable and weather resistant; it is evident in the surviving stucco of Old Dhaka from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The original craftsmen came from different cities of India and Pakistan, who later trained the local apprentices. The master craftsmen used intricate floral and geometric designs. In most cases, the Mughal architectural elements of stone were imitated in stucco, to create similar effects. The ornamental style was modified and stylized with local influences and stucco of Old Dhaka gradually became an intricate craft.



## *Shankha*

An important craft of artistic value is *Shankha* making. *Shankharibazar* is the enclave of *Shankharis* (*Shankha* makers). The name of the area originated from the name of the craft. *Shankha* is a special type of bangle worn by married Hindu women (see Figure 34). The raw material of *shankha* is conch shell, which is basically imported from Sri Lanka. The conch shell is cut and shaped through laborious manual process



Figure 34: *Shankha* and conch shells, source; author

(machines are also used nowadays) to make bangles. The design and thickness of the bangles vary and often gold is added to preference.

## *Clay Idols*

Old Dhaka is famous for the craft of making clay idols for different *puja* celebrations of the Hindu population of the entire city. Only the potters of highest skills can



Figure 35: Craft of clay idols, source: author

attempt this craft, as the craft is considered to be sacred. A special type of clay is mixed with water and straw. The semi-solid clay is shaped through hand to get the proper shape of the idols. The idols are kept in shaded areas to dry. Once dried, they are colored and adorned with clothes and ornamentations (see Figure 35). The eye is drawn on the eve of the *puja* celebration as it is believed to impart ‘life’ into the deities.

#### **4.12 General Observations: Collective Ownership, Informal Heritage Management and Community Coordinated Continuity of Heritage**

In Old Dhaka, the communities are closely associated social units. The *Mahallas* grew as traditional enclaves of particular craftsmen or traders. It benefited the community to stick together with the people of their craft, trade or religion in a shared social environment. This created the community’s deep desire to remain together at the place of their ancestors, both for psychological and socioeconomic reasons. As land was limited in *Mahallas*, the plots had to be subdivided through subsequent generations. This often did not follow any set legislative pattern or law, but rather based on traditional knowledge and social agreement. This created a ‘legal nightmare’

when it comes to undertaking any conservation effort, be it private or public. The only possible solution can come from the community itself, when it offers to come to commonly agreed terms of conservation of such disputed or multi-ownership properties. The informal community bodies play a very important part in this. The issue is discussed in more detail in chapter 6.

Other than private properties, the heritage of Old Dhaka is owned by the community. This ownership is legal in cases, while in others, it is a psychological ownership. The communities feel the heritage to be their own, a part of their life. This type of ownership actually transcends any formal ownership as the desire to maintain the continuity of a heritage comes naturally to the community, without desire to gain any material benefit from the activity. The heritage is the pride and identity of the community. Several community members expressed to the author that they intend to look after their community heritage without any outside help or interference. The community heritage has been continuing though the system of informal heritage management, often managed by informal community bodies.

#### **4.13 Chapter Conclusion**

The *living* heritage in the *mahallas* of Old Dhaka is embedded in the socioeconomic sphere of the community. With changing times and through a continuous process of evolution, subsequent tangible and intangible layers are juxtaposed onto the existing heritage elements. Heritage is never ‘frozen’. The future of the heritage must be considered by accepting this reality. Many conservation efforts have failed in the past as they ignored this critical aspect. In Old Dhaka, there is already an existing informal

framework of community bodies that has been managing the local heritage for centuries. Any efforts to conserve the heritage of Old Dhaka must take advantage of this existing system. The intangible elements like crafts and festivals have been continuing for centuries, through subsequent generations. Their existence is vital for the survival of the tangible heritage elements. While several traditional crafts have apparently continued, close conversations with the craftsmen reveal they are facing extremely steep economic challenges to survive with the changing urban composition. As it is improbable that the physical elements of heritage will survive without their intangible part, efforts to save the intangible elements from disappearing are required. The communities in their limited capacity are doing their best to protect the heritage, but this may not always be enough. A concerted effort is required involving the communities in the process of safeguarding the heritage of Old Dhaka.

## Chapter 5

### FORMAL HERITAGE CONSERVATION IN DHAKA

#### 5.1 Background of Formal Heritage Conservation in Dhaka

During the 1980s and 1990s, with the ever rising population, Dhaka expanded rapidly. Mostly unplanned, the urban growth rarely considered the heritage value of older buildings once it was ‘in the way’ of development. Many important heritages disappeared from Old Dhaka during this period. Ever since the country’s independence in 1971, the Department of Archaeology, which is primarily responsible for heritage conservation was mostly engaged in conserving only the monuments that were considered to be ‘important’ at the national level. As a result, almost no resource or fund was allotted to save the urban heritage that was nested within the historic fabrics of the city.

During the early 1990s, several important international seminars and workshops<sup>273</sup> held in Dhaka highlighted the importance of saving the heritage of Dhaka. Ever since, there has been an increased awareness of the city’s heritage among the formal authorities like The Department of Archaeology. The Department of Archaeology undertook conservation projects of several notable heritage buildings, primarily mosques and civil buildings in the city. The conservation activities were limited to the physical heritage like monuments and other prominent heritage buildings of the city.

---

<sup>273</sup> . For example, the “Workshop in architectural conservation”, organized by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, Dhaka, Bangladesh, March-April, 1989, source: Imamuddin, Hassan, & Alam, 1990.

Until very recently, state run development projects rarely considered whether there are any important heritage buildings in the development areas.

## **5.2 Formal Heritage Conservation: The ‘Top Down’ Approach**

Since the country’s independence in 1971, mainly due to political instability, the government rarely found the economic stability required to be in a position to allot significant resources for heritage conservation. With poor economic conditions, heritage conservation has always been at a lower level in the spectrum of the government’s priorities on urban issues. The Department of Archaeology’s approach was that of ‘saving the more important’ part of heritage within the limited resources available. As a result, the heritages that were considered of ‘lesser’ value, like several residential heritage buildings of Old Dhaka, seldom got the attention of the Department.

Askew and Logan<sup>274</sup> observe how the state embracing development goals often lead societies towards a destination where the cultural meaning and contexts associated with heritage lose their function. Unfortunately, the formal approach towards heritage conservation in Dhaka often follows a similar trend, giving little or no consideration for the cultural meaning associated with the heritage of the local communities. Over the last four decades, almost no consideration was given to the non-built environment and intangible elements of heritage value in the traditional environments.

There have been several instances when articles in the prominent Daily newspapers brought the cause of heritage conservation to the attention of the authorities. The

---

<sup>274</sup> . Askew & Logan, 1994, p 4.

Department has taken limited steps towards saving heritage structures in the past. However, in most cases they were not sufficient or in time to protect the heritages. In a few instances, the heritage actually disappeared forever. Even with the increased awareness about the importance of the city's 'common' heritage 'hidden' in the historical fabrics of Old Dhaka, unfortunately the same attitude has been carried through to the new millennium.

The formal heritage conservation in Dhaka adheres to a highly bureaucratic process. It follows set methods, processes and standard procedures before undertaking any conservation project. Unfortunately, there have been several instances where due to lack of awareness of the Department, heritage buildings have been modified, altered, added to or in extreme cases demolished<sup>275</sup> to make room for new development. When interviewed by the author, several officials of the Department of Archaeology expressed that even if the Department is aware of such activities that may threaten the heritage structures, it is not always possible to take immediate measures to stop the activities, as the Department is already highly overloaded with current conservation projects. Also, with limited fund and restrictions of the formal procedure, it is not always possible for the Department to take 'immediate' measures.

### **5.3 Background of the Department of Archeology**

The Department of Archaeology works under the Ministry of Cultural Affairs of the Government of Bangladesh. It is one of the oldest departments of the government of Bangladesh; continuing in the footsteps of its predecessor Departments of

---

<sup>275</sup> . For example, the 360 year old Churihatta mosque from the Mughal period was demolished in Old Dhaka, source: Mahmud, 2009, 16 September.

Archaeology of undivided India and later Pakistan. The Department of Archeology “preserves the National Cultural heritage and protects and controls the ancient monuments and regulates antiquities as per the Antiquities Act of 1968 (amended, 1976).”<sup>276</sup> Actually it still follows the *Antiquities Act of 1968*, which was formulated when Bangladesh was part of Pakistan as East Pakistan (see appendix 2).

According to the *Ministry of Cultural Affairs* <sup>277</sup>, the Department’s main responsibilities include “maintenance, conservation and repair of "Protected" sites and monuments all over the country as per Archaeological Works Code.” The Department is primarily responsible for preserving and safeguarding the architectural heritage of Dhaka (as well as the country), which it does under the provisions of the *Antiquities Act of 1968*. The Department studies, publishes, presents and promotes important research and disseminates information related to the history and heritage of the country as well as the city. It also coordinates and collaborates with the UNESCO mission’s “activities for the restoration and preservation of our World Heritage Sites of the country.”<sup>278</sup> Currently, the Department of Archeology “owns 398 heritage sites, of them two have been inscribed on the World Cultural Heritage List and five in the tentative list.”<sup>279</sup> The two World Cultural Heritage sites are the *Historic Mosque city* of Bagerhat and the *Paharpur Buddhist Vihara* at Naogaon. The Department currently owns and runs 14 site museums which exhibit cultural heritage of different periods, forms, religions, creeds and culture ranging from prehistoric to historical era.<sup>280</sup>

---

<sup>276</sup> . Peoples Republic of Bangladesh, 1968.

<sup>277</sup> . <http://www.moca.gov.bd/archaeology.php>, accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> November, 2010.

<sup>278</sup> . Ibid.

<sup>279</sup> . [www.archaeology.gov.bd](http://www.archaeology.gov.bd), accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2010.

<sup>280</sup> . Ibid.



Some of the archaeological sites of the country date back nearly 2,500 years. A great number of archaeological and architectural heritage sites (monuments and others), mostly belonging to the middle to late medieval period are spread across the different parts of the country. While several of them have been conserved by the Department, a good number of architectural heritage sites still lie unprotected. No immediate measures are taken by the Department to safeguard them; mainly due to limited manpower, finance and other resources. A research conducted by the Department during 1978 to 1994 in four divisions of the country shows<sup>281</sup>:

*A prolific number of sites, i.e. 1,060 in Rajshahi division, 201 in Khulna division, 74 in Barisal division and 145 in Greater Faridpur have been traced. Thus it can be assumed that the country contains more than 2,500 archaeological sites. Whatsoever, to date only 360 sites and monuments have been declared protected on priority basis under the provisions of the Antiquities Act (XIV of 1968) keeping pace with the financial allocation in this sector.*

The Department works from its head office in Dhaka with regional offices in four District Divisions.<sup>282</sup> Figure 36 shows the Department of Archaeology's organizational structure:

---

<sup>281</sup> . Ibid.

<sup>282</sup> . District Divisions are administrative zones consisting of several districts. There are six District Divisions in Bangladesh.

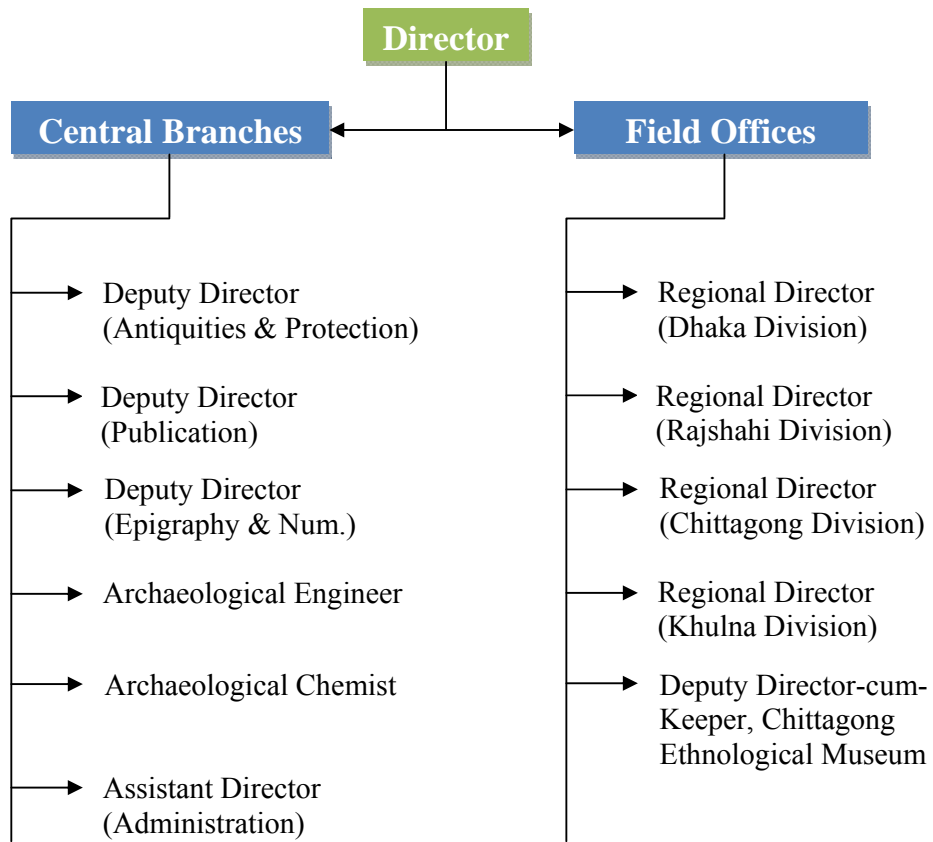


Figure 36: Administrative structure of the Department of Archaeology in short, source: Department of Archaeology leaflet.

There are three main sections within the Department of Archaeology that share different responsibilities of architectural and archaeological conservation. Figure 37 describes the sections with their responsibilities.

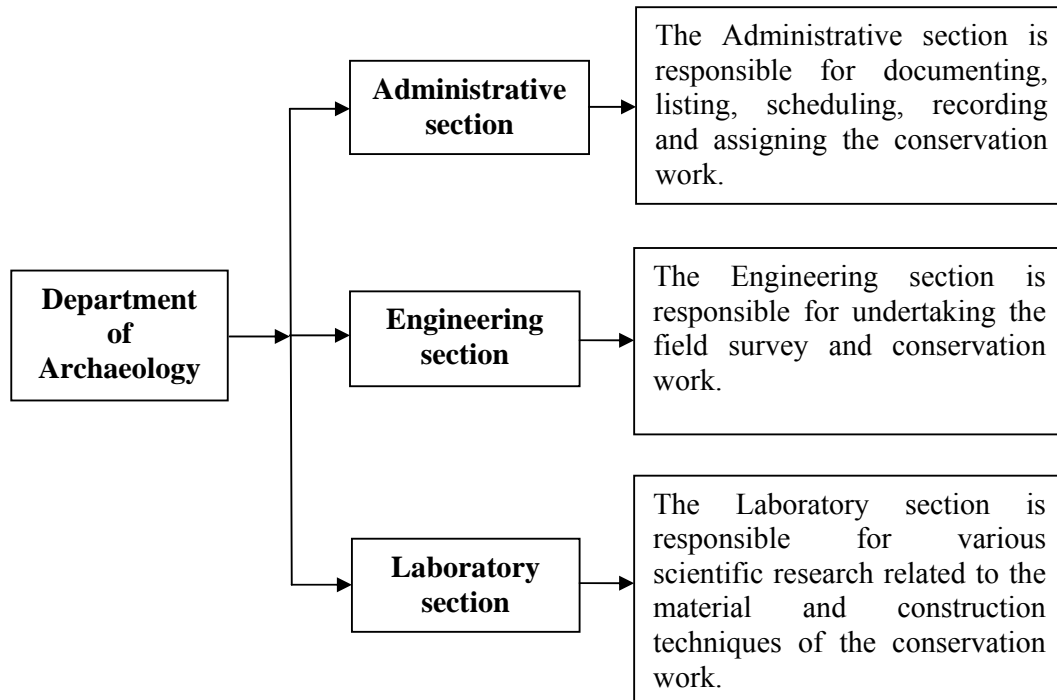


Figure 37: Different sections and responsibilities of Department of Archaeology, source: author.

#### 5.4 Legislations for Heritage Conservation

The activities of the Department of Archaeology of Government of Bangladesh are based on *the Antiquities Act, 1968*. The legislation came into practice when Bangladesh was part of Pakistan, as East Pakistan. Even though significant socioeconomic and political changes have taken place after the country's independence from Pakistan in 1971, there has been only a single amendment done in 1976. For the last four decades, the act still continues to govern the country's heritage conservation activities (including the heritage of Old Dhaka). *The Antiquities Act, 1968* (amended 1976)<sup>283</sup> states:

<sup>283</sup> . [www.archaeology.gov.bd](http://www.archaeology.gov.bd), accessed on 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2010.

- b. "ancient" means belonging or relating to any period prior to May, 1857 ;
- c. "antiquity" means -
  - a. any ancient product of human activity, movable or immovable, illustrative of art, architecture, craft, custom, literature, morals, politics, religion, warfare, science or of any aspect of civilization or culture,
  - b. any ancient object or site of historical, ethnographical, anthropological, military or scientific interest, and
  - c. any other ancient object or class of such objects declared by the Central Government, by notification in the official Gazette, to be an antiquity for the purposes of this Act ;

Here it should be noted that though the Act defines "ancient" as “belonging or relating to any period prior to May, 1857”, in practice, currently, the Department of Archaeology lists only those structures that are more than 100 years old for heritage conservation.

Over the last few decades, there have been several occasions on which there was debate within the department, whether an old structure should be considered a heritage element or not, based on the *Antiquities Act*. On this issue *The Antiquities Act, 1968* (amended 1976)<sup>284</sup> further states:

*Dispute as to whether any product, etc., is an antiquity - If any question arises whether any product, object or site is an antiquity within the meaning of this Act, it shall be referred to the Central Government which shall, after consultation with the Advisory Committee, decide the same; and the decision of the Central Government shall be final.*

Unfortunately, there has been very few cases where an ‘out of routine’ decision was taken to consider an old structure to be of heritage value, when it did not meet the

---

<sup>284</sup> . Ibid.

general criterion of the Act, which is currently its age of over 100 years. Several reasons explain this:

1. Either the structure was not deemed ‘old enough’ by the government;
2. The structure’s historical, social and other significances were ignored because of its apparent ‘lower aesthetic’ value;
3. More often than not, only the ‘popular’ old structures are considered to be of heritage value and private properties of heritage value are not considered under government’s heritage conservation list or priority, partly due to problematic ownership issues.

A good part of the city’s as well as Old Dhaka’s heritage falls out of this ‘100 year’ category, albeit marginally. They are generally ignored and left in their vulnerable state.

There are numerous old structures of heritage value, especially in Old Dhaka, which have no owners. This happened mainly due to migration of the Hindu population to India during the partition of the Subcontinent in 1947 and the Liberation war of 1971. This has left a good part of heritage buildings of traditional neighborhoods, especially the residential buildings and palatial villas, ownerless. *The Antiquities Act, 1968* (amended 1976)<sup>285</sup> states:

*Custody, preservation etc. of ownerless antiquity - Where the Director receives any information or otherwise has the knowledge of the discovery or existence of an antiquity of which there is no owner, he shall, after satisfying himself as to the correctness of the information or knowledge, take such steps as he may consider necessary for the custody, preservation and protection of the antiquity.*

Very few of these ownerless structures have received government’s attention as priority is given to community and civil buildings.

---

<sup>285</sup> . Ibid.

## 5.5 Methods of Listing Architectural Heritage

The author interviewed several officials of the Department of Archaeology about how the Department enlists important architectural heritage that has not yet been in the Department's list of protected architectural heritage for conservation. After cross checking opinions of different officials and the Department's legislative framework, a summary of the methods used by the Department of Archaeology to detect and enlist important architectural heritage of the country was developed (see Figure 38):

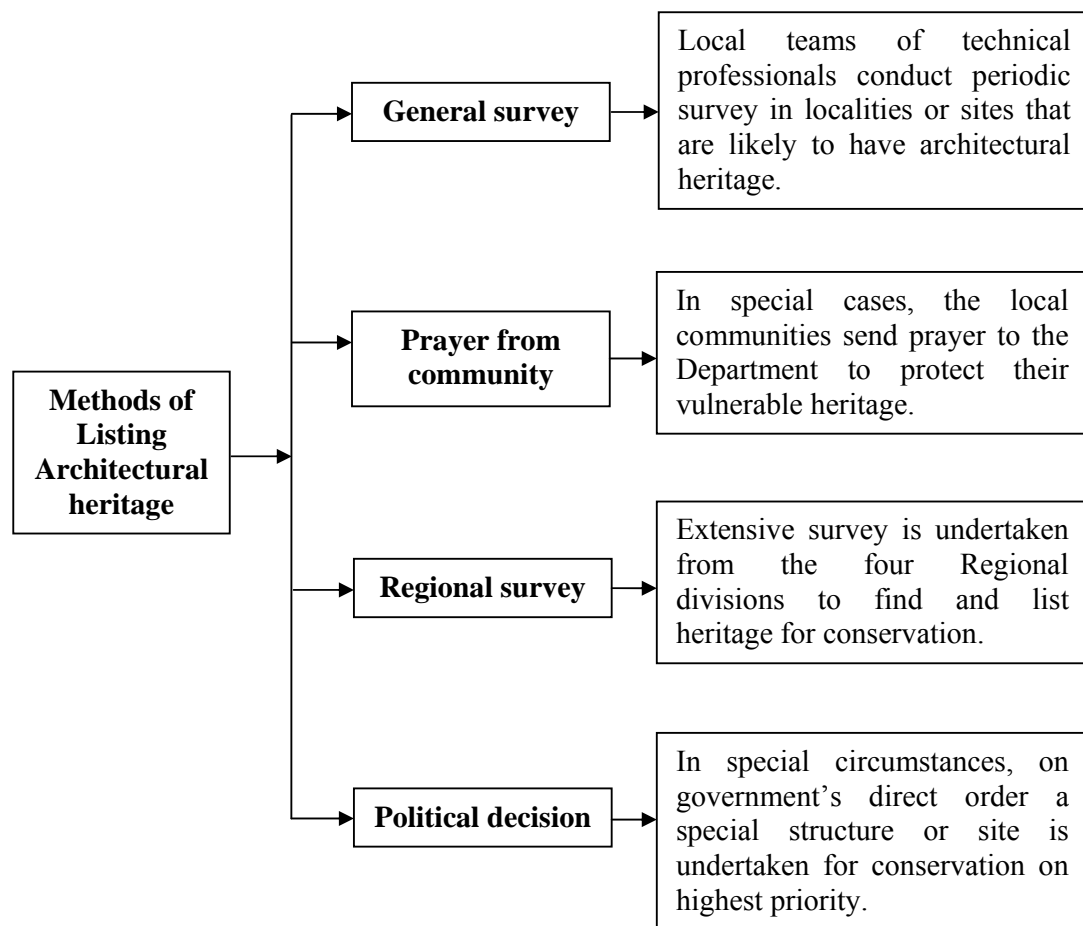


Figure 38: Different methods used by the Department of Archaeology for detecting and listing architectural heritage for conservation, source: author.

This section elaborates on the processes used by the Department of Archaeology in its different methods of listing architectural heritage:

### *General survey*

In most cases, there are no previously recorded data about the architectural heritage or site that are undertaken for the general field study survey. Due to limited manpower and resources to cover the extended areas that may have architectural heritage, the general survey is conducted on a priority basis on those areas or sites that are most likely to contain important architectural heritage. In the case of community owned and private properties, land owner's approval is achieved prior to the actual field survey. The approval is generally gained except in those cases where the owners are prejudiced that their ownership will be taken away by the government for the purpose of conservation. The general survey focuses on a visual inspection to detect and locate any important architectural elements of heritage value. A technical team of surveyors consisting architects, engineers and photographers goes to the sites for a preliminary documentation. The team searches the selected sites for evidence and pattern of architectural and archaeological heritage, document and produce important information about the heritage. It is the team's role to decide on the significance (historical, social, etc.) of the heritage structure or site and make relevant recommendations about their future. They prepare a report which suggests the level of vulnerability and importance of the heritage with recommendations for possible course of action. The general survey is a type of primary study that gives indication whether there is any architectural heritage in a particular locality or site. Once a

possible architectural heritage is detected by the survey team, more rigorous survey techniques are used to identify the actual heritage value of the structure or site.

### ***Prayer from community***

The second method of listing a heritage for protection is when the local community sends a formal prayer to the Department of Archaeology to list their heritage for protection. While there have been several prayers from the local community to the Department of Archaeology to list and protect their local heritage, only those that are actually highly vulnerable or high in architectural heritage value, are considered by the Department for protection. The prayers from the community are considered on the actual merit of the architectural heritage judged by the Department of Archaeology, after a team conducts a field survey and the reports meet the Department's standards. Priority is given to more vulnerable structures that require immediate attention.

### ***Regional survey***

Regional surveys are conducted by the Regional offices of the Department of Archaeology, like Khulna, Rajshahi, etc. in regional contexts. Parallel to the general survey, the regional surveys are conducted after every few years, but there is no regular schedule. More comprehensive in nature, entire cities are selected for regional surveys, to detect and identify unlisted heritage. Due to limited manpower of the Department, often private consultants are commissioned to undertake such surveys. One such survey was conducted in Khulna city by the private consultants Yousuf Associates a few years back.



### ***Political decision***

In very special circumstances, the decision about the heritage status of a structure or site is directly taken by the ruling government. The decision is often politically motivated and immediately executed. Often the political association and social value supersedes the historical or aesthetic value of the heritage. One such decision was taken by the government when the house of national leader *Bangabandhu* Sheikh Mujibar Rahman was declared a heritage building for its strong political and social value and its association with the memory of the assassinated national leader. Under this special category, the Department of Archaeology's routine procedure is sidelined to give preference to immediate conservation of such special projects.

### **5.6 Heritage Status and Ownership**

The Department of Archaeology's main legislative framework is still the *Antiquities Act of 1968* (amended 1976). Interview with several officials of the Department reveals that, currently the Department follows the policy to list only those structures that are at least 100 years old, as heritage. Even though a structure may have important heritage value, they are not considered for conservation unless they are 'old enough', i.e. 100 years old. The only exception of this rule occurred recently, when the *Panamnagar* conservation project was undertaken with a high priority, due to the vulnerability of the township. In other special cases, where this rule proves inadequate, decision about the status of a heritage for protection is taken at special meetings of the *Ministry of Cultural Affairs*.

The Department of Archaeology generally acquires the land with heritage where possible, for ease of undertaking the conservation work without disruption. Except in cases where the land with heritage structure(s) is under *Waqf*<sup>286</sup>, acquiring the heritage becomes difficult for the Department, due to the complicated legislative framework of the *Waqf* rule and community ownership. In other cases, the land is acquired by the Department of Archaeology before conservation. In most cases, the heritage structure falls under multiple *Daag*<sup>287</sup>. In such cases, all of them are acquired. In special cases, the community itself offers the ownership of the land to the Department of Archaeology for conservation. But such cases are rather rare, as most of the time the communities are very proud of their ownership of the heritage, which they inevitably lose to the government once the heritage is acquired. In fact many members of the informal community bodies have expressed their concern to the author that they are afraid that if their heritage is enlisted by the government for conservation, their ‘community ownership’ may be taken away by the government.

### **5.7 Formal Approach to Conserving Intangible Heritage**

Even though The Antiquities Act mentions the importance of conserving “any ancient product of human activity, movable or immovable, illustrative of art, architecture, craft, custom, literature, morals, politics, religion, warfare, science or of any aspect of civilization or culture”<sup>288</sup>, till now, only the tangible or physical elements of heritage have been conserved by the Department of Archaeology. The reasons behind are:

---

<sup>286</sup> . See chapter 4, p 162 for explanation.

<sup>287</sup> . A traditional local system of land plot subdivision.

<sup>288</sup> . [www.archaeology.gov.bd](http://www.archaeology.gov.bd), accessed on 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2010.

1. An overwhelmingly large number of physical elements of heritage value ‘piled up’ in queue for Government’s consideration, mainly due to lack of any initiative during the yesteryears.
2. Limited budget allotted to the Department of Archaeology to undertake conservation projects, mainly due to the priorities given to other sectors in a struggling economy. Lack of knowledge about the importance of intangible heritage elements of traditional fabrics.

These limitations have several implications. There have been cases where the physical heritage was conserved to a certain degree, but in the process the social and cultural value associated with the physical heritage was ignored by the Department of Archaeology. This has seen many important intangible heritage elements disappear over the years. In other cases, like in *Shankharibazar*, the intangible elements like the craft of *Shankha* still survives due to the strong bond of the traditional communities and the presence of the informal community bodies. However, they are struggling and in urgent need of assistance from formal authorities for their survival.

## **5.8 Limitations of Formal Heritage Conservation in Dhaka**

Logan observes the limitations of formal heritage conservation:

*There is a wide variation between Asian countries in their ability to undertake effective heritage protection in terms of available personnel with skills in heritage identification and recording, restoration, display, and interpretation. Generally, however, there is a lack of planning controls to protect heritage.*<sup>289</sup>

---

<sup>289</sup> . Logan, 2002, xx.

Considering the heritage conservation already undertaken or completed by the Department of Archaeology, it is a common trend that the social attachment and memory associated with the heritage was not (or could not be) considered due to several limitations as mentioned earlier. On several occasions, failure to recognize the importance of the intangible value of heritage has led to either total or partial disappearance of the intangible qualities of the heritage in the historic fabrics and have left the 'conserved' physical structures 'soulless' and socially detached from the community. In several cases, due to the strong social bond existing in the traditional communities of Old Dhaka, the living customs, traditions, memories and stories have somehow survived the conservation projects, but in the process the deep association among the community and the local heritage has been lost in the process of formal heritage conservation. In extreme cases, the heritage was almost 'recreated', with new physical elements added that significantly disturb the historical ambience and authenticity of the heritage and are devoid of the living memory association and social attachment, replaced with what Clarke and Johnston<sup>290</sup> term "un-memored past".

With heritage conservation lower on the government's priorities, resources allotted for conservation are naturally very limited. The Department only has 30 thousand US dollars available yearly to conserve nearly 400 heritage sites. With limited financial resources, naturally the allotment has to be prioritized. Only in very special circumstances, where an entire heritage district is under threat, the government has allotted special funds to undertake emergency conservation projects, as seen in the recent conservation project of *Panamnagar*<sup>291</sup>. Unfortunately, this does not always

---

<sup>290</sup> . Clarke & Johnston, 2003.

<sup>291</sup> . After a brief survey of *Panamnagar*, which included photographs and drawings of the buildings, a project plan of two years, involving approximately US\$ 700

bode well for the heritage<sup>292</sup>. Most of the time, the fund allotted comes with a limited timeframe and budget period to spend it. The conservation work is often undertaken without proper background research work on the heritage buildings and the work is done in a hurry, which actually damages the authenticity of the heritage, even though it may be formally termed ‘conserved’.

At present, there are no trained archaeologists or conservation experts in the Department, although the top officials of the Department revealed to the author the need for one. In absence of experts, engineers (generally with diploma background) generally look after the conservation work. They have little knowledge of the conservation process or the architectural style. Even the number of engineers is not adequate, with fourteen engineers in the Department now, while the requirement is at least thirty. Highly overworked, generally one engineer has to look after at least four to five conservation sites simultaneously.

Another major limitation of the Department of Archaeology is outdated legislation. *The Antiquities Act, 1968*<sup>293</sup> mentions the term ‘ancient’ as criterion for a building to be considered heritage. This has been defined as *at least 100 years old* in practice of the Department of Archeology. The legislative framework often leads the Department of Archaeology to ignore important heritage in the historic quarters of the city, just because it is not ‘old enough’ according to the Act.

---

thousand, had been allotted for the conservation of Panamnagar. Source: Ahmed, 2006, and Ali, 2007.

<sup>292</sup> . Hurriedly done unscientific restoration (with very poor research) by the Department of Archaeology has seriously disturbed the authenticity of the heritage of *Panamnagar*. Source: Ali, 2007. Ultimately the project was halted midway amidst serious protests from the public.

<sup>293</sup> . [www.archaeology.gov.bd](http://www.archaeology.gov.bd), accessed on 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2010.

The previous sections highlight several problems and challenges of formal heritage conservation in Dhaka. The existing literature also confirms this as Imam and Mamoon<sup>294</sup> have similar observations on the problems and issues of formal heritage conservation in Dhaka:

1. *Resource constraints*
2. *Ineffective machinery and legislation*
3. *Lack of policies and priorities*
4. *Lack of co-ordination between different relevant bodies*
5. *Lack of public awareness and involvement*
6. *Absence of necessary expertise in the relevant body*

In summary, the main limitations of the Department of Archaeology are lack of expertise, especially scientific knowledge of traditional construction techniques to undertake conservation projects, outdated legislation, low awareness and knowledge of local sociocultural issues in the traditional environments, etc. These limitations have been evident in several conservation projects already undertaken by the Department, often focusing only on the ‘physical’ structure; they failed to be sympathetic to all the relevant issues of the heritage. Some of these projects will be discussed in the next section.

## **5.9 Case Studies of Formal Heritage Conservation by Department of Archaeology**

### **5.9.1 Formal Heritage Conservation in Panamnagar**

#### ***Background of the township***

Panamnagar is a linear township at Sonargaon Thana of Narayanganj district, about 29 km northeast of Dhaka (see Map 8) and falls under the Dhaka Division. The street

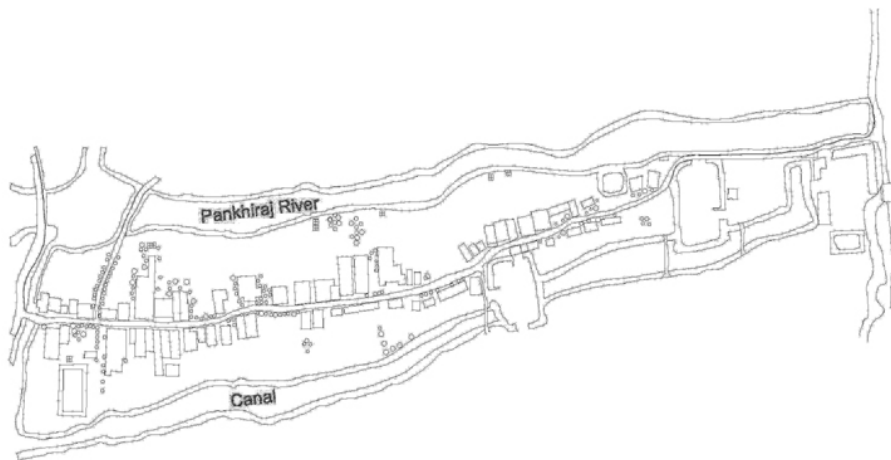
---

<sup>294</sup> . Imam and Mamoon, 1993, p 53.

front houses are stretched on either side of a single street about 5 meters wide and 600 meters in length<sup>295</sup> (see Map 9). The township was developed by rich Hindu estate owners and merchants during the late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century.



Map 8: Map showing location of Panamnagar, source: redrawn by author, original map Source: [www.banglapedia.org](http://www.banglapedia.org), accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2010.



Map 9: Map of Panamnagar, source: author.

<sup>295</sup> . Ahmed, 2006, p 25.

Panamnagar was inhabited by its original owners till the India-Pakistan division in 1947, after which most of the Hindu population migrated to India, abandoning the township. Subsequently, after a riot in 1964, the rest of the Hindu population migrated to India. During the past five decades, most of the houses have been illegally occupied. Due to lack of ownership, the houses were not maintained and faced natural weathering and degradation along with unplanned modification and alteration in cases.



Figure 39: Heritage buildings of Panamnagar before conservation, source: author.

### ***Vulnerable heritage***

Most of the buildings are courtyard villa type and have high architectural heritage value. They display some of the best examples of brick masonry with stucco ornamentation, hybrid colonnaded facades of Mughal, European, neo-classical influence and an overall unique vernacular *Bengal* style (see Figure 39).

As several of the houses were abandoned, only the few that were inhabited were in relatively good shape. A good number of buildings lost their plaster or color and few were in real danger of collapsing. The town's unique heritage was unprotected, highly



vulnerable and was at risk of disappearing. World Monuments Fund rated Panamnagar as one of the most endangered heritage sites in 2006 and 2008.<sup>296</sup>

### ***Formal Conservation***

Under these circumstances “the government of Bangladesh declared the town an archaeological site in March, 2003 and about 52 structures, mostly vested property, on more than 10 acres of land, were marked as part of an archaeological site for protection and conservation. Panamnagar was taken over by the Department of Archaeology of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, under *the Antiquities Act 1968*.”<sup>297</sup>

According to *The Daily Star*, a prominent local daily newspaper, “The DoA undertook a Tk 5 crore<sup>298</sup> restoration and conservation project in the first phase of 2005-2006 fiscal. Allocation for the ongoing phase has to be spent within June 2007. The DoA has intervened in 16 out of 51 buildings of Panamnagar.” In a hurry to complete the project and use the fund within the time, the Department of Archaeology started the conservation work without any research or proper and authentic documentation of the heritage building. *The Daily Star* states, “The Department of Archaeology (DoA) has not involved any historian, archaeologist or an architect in the conservation work, rather hired masons who are carrying out the job, distorting and defacing a proud heritage of the country, experts said.”<sup>299</sup> The daily further states “an office assistant at the site office of DoA, Md. Anisur Rahman told, “we are

---

<sup>296</sup> . [www.wmf.org](http://www.wmf.org), accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2010.

<sup>297</sup> . Panamnagar declared archeological site, 2003, March 23.

<sup>298</sup> . Equivalent to approximately 700,000 US\$.

<sup>299</sup> . Ali, 2007.

carrying out the restoration work hiring masons on a daily basis. The masons know how to do the job.”<sup>300</sup>



Figure 40: Improper restoration and conservation measures at Panam Nagar, source: Ali, 2007.

The striking original stucco ornamentations, decorative molded curves with meticulous proportions, decorated cornices, lintels and pilasters, done by the master craftsmen of yesteryear are unfortunately missing after the restoration work, making them flat and dull with thick plaster work. Proportion and scale of interior arches were also altered. “The original coating of plaster was of conch shell powder, which would create a smooth and pleasant look of white marble. But now the masons are putting a thick coating of lime and surki of a different color,”<sup>301</sup> (see Figure 40). This happened due to lack of knowledge of the common masons and supervising diploma engineers of the Department of Archaeology, who undertook the conservation project.

---

<sup>300</sup> . Ibid.

<sup>301</sup> . Ibid.

Dr. Abu Syed Ahmed, a conservation expert of Bangladesh and a member of the advisory committee on the project, stated: “Conservation work of such a historical site must involve conservation architects, general historians, geographers, archaeologists and historians of art and heritage.....the government agency is actually destroying the fundamental heritage features of the site in the name of restoration, engaging mere masons and construction contractors in the job. The DoA is not going by the recommendations of the advisory committee, instead they have bypassed the committee.”<sup>302</sup>

The author participated in a Seminar on Urban Regeneration through Conservation titled *OLD BUT NEW, NEW BUT OLD*, in Dhaka on March 2007.<sup>303</sup> The conference was held while the conservation work of Panamnagar was underway. The director of the Department of Archaeology was present at the seminar. When the participants and experts asked him about the improper restoration of Panamnagar, he replied that he was not aware of any improper conservation and he will look into the matter.

Surprisingly, ever since the Department of Archaeology has undertaken the unplanned, arbitrary, and a aimless conservation project, more damage has been done to the heritage than in the past five decades in the name of conservation. Most conservation experts agree and as figure 40 shows, authentic ornamentation and detailing like friezes, pilaster, cornices and colonnades are being abruptly replaced by out of proportion and odd alien features, virtually destroying the uniqueness and authenticity of the architectural heritage in the historic township. Under huge protest from expert

---

<sup>302</sup> . Ibid.

<sup>303</sup> . Organized by British Council Library and North-South University, Dhaka.

and academicians, the conservation work of Panamnagar was ultimately suspended until further notice.

### **5.9.2 Formal Heritage Conservation in Lalbagh fort**

#### ***Background of the fort***

Lalbagh fort is an incomplete Mughal palace fortress (about 18 acres) commenced by Muhammad Azam, then Mughal *Subedar*<sup>304</sup> of Bengal, in 1678. After his 15 month reign, Shaista Khan took power (1679-1688) before the fort was completed. He did not continue the work, as he considered the fort inauspicious after the premature death of his daughter *Bibi Pari* in 1684, whose tomb is located within the fort.<sup>305</sup> Located in Lalbagh in the southwestern part of Old Dhaka, the fort originally stood right on the banks of River Buriganga<sup>306</sup>. With the changed course of the River to further south and urban growth, it now sits in the middle of a high density urban locality.

“Lalbagh fort is one of the few remaining Mughal forts in the country and probably one of the most important heritages from the Mughal period in Bangladesh. The fort was declared protected as early as 1910.”<sup>307</sup> It is now one of the 398 sites and monuments enlisted in country as protected, and the Department of Archaeology is responsible for its protection and maintenance and necessary repairs and restorations.<sup>308</sup>

---

<sup>304</sup> . *Subedar*: Mughal viceroy.

<sup>305</sup> . [www.banglapedia.org/httpdocs/HT/L\\_0026.HTM](http://www.banglapedia.org/httpdocs/HT/L_0026.HTM), accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2010.

<sup>306</sup> . *Ibid*.

<sup>307</sup> . Qadir, 1993, p 134.

<sup>308</sup> . [www.archaeology.gov.bd](http://www.archaeology.gov.bd), accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2010.

## Heritage elements

The rectangular fort (1082 feet by 800 feet) fort has three main structures, the mosque on the west, the tomb of *Bibi Pari* in the middle and a *Diwan-i-Aam* with *hammam*<sup>309</sup> in the east (see Figure 41 and 42). There are three gateways, of which the Southern gateway is the most imposing, and a partly damaged fortification wall and a large tank on the east. The Department of Archaeology excavated the fort to find about 26/27 smaller structures, with elaborate arrangements for water supply, sewerage, roof gardens, and fountains. The excavated strata shows that several of the smaller structures, terracotta heads and plaques date back further to *Sultanate* as well as of the pre-Muslim periods; thereby establishing the city's history further back in time.<sup>310</sup>

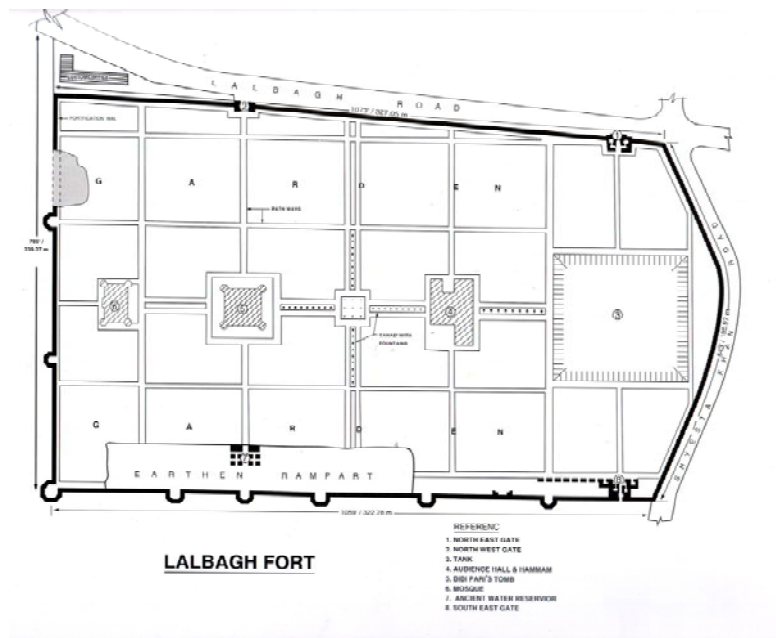


Figure 41: Plan of Lalbagh fort, source: Haque et.al , 1998.

<sup>309</sup> . *Diwan-i-Aam*: Audience hall, *hammam*: shower.

<sup>310</sup> . [www.banglapedia.org](http://www.banglapedia.org) and Ibid.



Figure 42: Aerial view of the Lalbagh fort within the high density urban fabric, source: [www.google.com/earth/index.html](http://www.google.com/earth/index.html), accessed on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2010.

The fort is the best example of a Mughal garden in the city. The meticulously proportioned symmetrical garden has regular Mughal elements like water channels and fountains, screens and semi-vaults. Historians assume that the fort may have originally extended further east.

### ***Formal Conservation***

“With process of time, the fort and its various structures suffered heavily and there grew many erections of diverse materials and uses in its premises.”<sup>311</sup> When the fort was restored by the Department of Archaeology during 1980s and 1990s, several of the later unauthentic additions in the fort were removed. “The original decorative structural panels of various sizes and shapes on the wall surface particularly niche like panels were filled in and were covered with plaster which has been raked off and all the original decorative elements exposed and restored.”<sup>312</sup>

---

<sup>311</sup> . Qadir, 1993, p 135.

<sup>312</sup> . Ibid, p 136.

Even after being formally conserved by the Department of Archaeology, several of the fort's original elements were not restored properly. Unfortunately, due to lack of proper research and knowledge about the materials, modern bricks of different size were used in place of the old bricks of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, which was considerably thinner and larger. "Detailed investigation revealed that the exterior surface of Mughal buildings was given a lime coating impregnated with lime *surki* plaster while it was still wet. This process made this coating look white and durable and kept it from the effects of rain water and from ugly stain"<sup>313</sup> While restoring the fort, in place of lime *surki*, normal plaster work with paint was used, which significantly disturbed the original appearance of the fort. Qadir observes: "Outer wall surfaces of structures in Lalbagh fort still preserve here and there remains of original plaster impregnated with white lime coating which brings to focus how different is the pinkish color *surki* coating, giving a very dark ugly stain. Original plaster with impregnated white lime coating and conservation plaster with *surki* wash with the dark ugly stain can be distinctly noticed."<sup>314</sup> This is evident in the Figure 43.

Qadir also mentions that: "the original pipe lines and details of the fountains exposed by excavations in Lalbagh Fort before construction of the present channels and fountains were different.... Suppression or failure to inform historical facts revealed by scientific investigations is a crime not only against scholarship but also against the heritage of the people "<sup>315</sup>. Several alien elements to the Mughal architecture were also introduced. For example, iron railings were added by the fountains.

---

<sup>313</sup> . Ibid, pp. 135-136.

<sup>314</sup> . Ibid, p 161.

<sup>315</sup> . Ibid, p 137.

The Department of Archaeology officially submitted documents to UNESCO to include the fort as a world heritage site (under cultural category) on 1999.<sup>316</sup> The submission was rejected on the grounds of improper restoration. Local conservationist architect Abu Sayeed M Ahmed stated that “UNESCO refused to declare Lalbagh Fort as a world heritage site because of wrong restoration.”<sup>317</sup>

### ***Heritage under threat***

As the aerial view (see Figure 42) shows, the fort is highly vulnerable to the surrounding dense urban development, with some illegal encroachments right on the fort wall. Site visit revealed that illegal constructions have taken place right on the boundary of the fort. Several of these structures went as far as to share the fort wall as their fourth wall (see Figure 43). Also, while the Department of Archaeology has concentrated on restoring the interior structures of the fort, the exterior surface of the fortification wall, gateways and the wall is highly vulnerable to illegal encroachment, and part of the wall may even collapse. Even though the official status by the Department of Archaeology shows that the fort has been conserved, these illegal constructions put the important heritage in a highly vulnerable position. No measure has been taken by the authorities to prevent these illegal encroachments.

---

<sup>316</sup> . [whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/1210](http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/1210)., accessed on 5<sup>th</sup> January, 2011.

<sup>317</sup> . 93 heritage buildings, sites listed for preservation, 2009, 28 January.





Figure 43: Illegal encroachments at Lalbag fort, source: author.

Qadir<sup>318</sup> observes the vulnerability of the fort:

*The surroundings of the fort, particularly in the south and also in the west, are engulfed with undesirable multi-storied buildings. Various legislations relating to construction do not help restrict such undesirable activities in the neighborhood of protected monuments. The Antiquity Act is of no avail in this regard, although it prohibits construction on or near the protected sites or monuments. To make prohibition effective, the 'nearness' must be made specific in terms of definite measurement.....The Directorate of Archaeology stands helpless in the face of such a situation.*

*Poribesh Bachao Andolon (Poba)*<sup>319</sup>, a civil movement to protect the heritage and environment of the city, formed a human chain (see Figure 44) on 4<sup>th</sup> March, 2011 to protest the vulnerable condition of the Lalbagh Fort and demand its protection.<sup>320</sup>

<sup>318</sup> . Qadir, 1993, p 138.

<sup>319</sup> . *Poribesh Bachao Andolon*: Movement to save the environment.

<sup>320</sup> . Save Lalbagh Fort, Mohasthangarh, 2011, March 5.



Figure 44: The *Poribesh Bachao Andolan* (Poba) formed a human chain in front of the National Museum in the city on 4<sup>th</sup> March, 2011, demanding that the Lalbagh Fort be protected, source: Save Lalbagh Fort, Mohasthangarh, 2011, March 5.

Speakers protested the illegal high rises constructed at the southwest side of the fort, and alleged that the authorities did not take any move to evict the illegal structures despite the High Court order. They also protested different kinds of programs including concerts that are being held inside the fort despite the High Court's directive to stop permitting those programs there.<sup>321</sup>

With very limited resources, a long list of heritage buildings and sites waiting to be conserved, it is unlikely that the Department of Archaeology will take any immediate measures to clear the illegal encroachments in the near future. Meanwhile the fate of the fort remains highly vulnerable. This is yet another example of formal heritage conservation gone wrong.

---

<sup>321</sup> . Ibid.

### 5.9.3 Formal Heritage Conservation of Khan Mohammad Mridha's Mosque

#### *Background of the Mosque*

Khan Mohammad Mridha's Mosque is a Mughal mosque, built by Khan Mohammad Mridha in 1706 under the patronage of Qadi Ibadullah.<sup>322</sup> It is located near the north-west corner of the Lalbagh fort. It is a three domed mosque on a square vaulted podium, one of the best examples of its type in the city. The podium can be reached by a straight flight of steps from the garden. The raised podium has the three domed mosque structure in the center and a small structure on the northeast, which is used as a *Madrasah*, a religious school. The purpose of the vaulted chambers below the platform could not be defined, but it is assumed that they “may originally have been utilized as a *Madrasah*, for its classrooms as well as for the residence of the teachers and the students.”<sup>323</sup> The mosque is a living heritage, an important example of Mughal mosque architecture and still being actively used by the local Muslim population.

#### *Heritage elements*

Hafiz<sup>324</sup> observes: “The Khan Mohammad Mridha’s mosque illustrates the elaborate style of the single aisle multi-domed mosque of the post-Shaista Khani period. The mosque follows the ‘qua-plan’ of the Muslim *Madrasah*, which was so extensively used in Egypt during the Ayyubid and Mameluke periods (11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> C. A.D.).

---

<sup>322</sup> . Hafiz, 1990, p 139.

<sup>323</sup> . Qadir, 1981, p 41, cited in Qadir, 1993, p 140.

<sup>324</sup> . Hafiz, 1990, p 139.

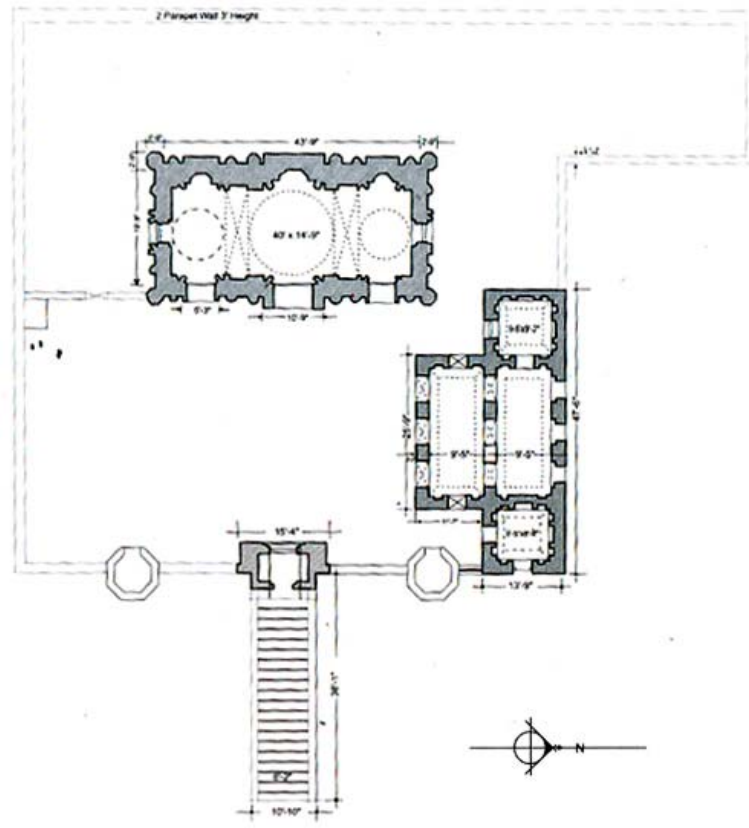


Figure 45: Plan of Khan Mohammad Mridha's Mosque, source: Haque et.al, 1998.

It is unlike any other.” Typical of the three domed Mughal mosques, the oblong mosque has three parts above a 17 foot high podium (125 foot by 100 foot). The podium is reached by a 24 steps straight flight stair. The mosque structure (48 feet by 24 feet) has a square central part flanked by two oblong side chambers (see Figure 45). The central dome is larger with the two oblong smaller chambers roofed by smaller domes. The entire space under the podium has vaulted rooms except verandahs in the east. The podium has a continuous parapet of 2.5 feet. The four corners of the mosque structure have octagonal turrets. The three cusped arched doorways are projected by semi-octagonal pilasters. Two transverse arches divide the interior space into three bays.

## Heritage under threat

The mosque is three hundred years old and there are several parts that are in a highly vulnerable condition due to age and decay. While some parts have been restored by the Department of Archaeology, others still remain neglected. Typical to the other formal conservation projects undertaken by the Department of archaeology, the restoration already done has not maintained the authentic character and materials of the mosque. In place of thinner original bricks and *lime surki* finishing, modern bricks of different size and common plaster with a pink paint have been used. This is significantly disturbing the authenticity of the mosque (see Figure 46).



Figure 46: Khan Mohammad Mridha's Mosque - main structure and raised podium of Khan Mohammad Mridha's Mosque (top left and bottom left), notice of Department of Archaeology (top right) and the members of mosque management committee (bottom right), source: author, except bottom left - source: 2<sup>nd</sup> Year studio, Department of Architecture, BRAC University.

Another major problem of the mosque is the encroaching structures surrounding it. During the field study, the author found that several of the encroaching structures are actually in very close proximity (on the northern, western and eastern sides of the mosque compound) of the heritage and are threatening the 300 year old structure (see Figure 46). The most threatening is a six-storied apartment building, which has been built almost over the northern boundary wall. These types of illegal constructions are more frequent in the vicinity as the mosque is a prime location. Hafiz<sup>325</sup> observes that the buildings are: “defying Bangladesh’s construction rules and regulations.” The mosque committee members informed the author that most of the adjacent land of the mosque compound used to be the property of the mosque. The illegal land grabbing and construction was backed by the influential of the neighborhoods, who had political influences. This was done so extensively that ultimately almost the entire adjacent area has been illegally built up. This was done with “initial leasing, subsequent confusion regarding the ownership laws of the country.”<sup>326</sup> There was no strong intervention from the city authorities to protect the mosque properties either.

### *Dilemma of heritage management*

The mosque was declared protected in 1913.<sup>327</sup> Currently, the mosque is a listed heritage under the protected sites and monuments. Its maintenance and conservation is the responsibility of the Department of Archaeology. While doing field study of the mosque, the author found that there is a prominent notice (see Figure 46) on the mosque garden which read as follows:

---

<sup>325</sup> . Hafiz, R. 1990, p 142.

<sup>326</sup> . Ibid, p 143.

<sup>327</sup> . Qadir, 1993, p 141.

## NOTICE

### *Protected Antiquities*

*Under the provisions of the Antiquities Act XIV of 1968, any person who destroys, breaks, damages, alters, injures, defaces or mutilates or scribbles, writes or engraves any inscription or sign, on this antiquity is punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year or with fine or with both.*

*Director of Archaeology and Museums  
Government of Bangladesh*

Khan Mohammad Mridha's mosque is run by an 18 member informal mosque management committee. The committee members are elected by influential people from the local community for a one to two year term. The mosque committee fund is mainly raised through regular and special donations and charity from the local community.<sup>328</sup> Interview with several members of the informal Mosque management committee revealed that other than the above notice, there has been no presence of the Department of Archaeology in the mosque for several years now. As the mosque is a three hundred year old structure and still actively used as a mosque, it has to be maintained regularly to keep it in working condition for five prayers a day. As mentioned in earlier sections, the Department of Archaeology has to work with limited resources. Thus, once a structure has been 'conserved' and shows the same in the official records of the Department, it falls lower on the priority to other urgent conservation matters that require immediate attention. As such, virtually there is no fund or technical assistance available from the Government for the maintenance of the mosque. The protected status of the heritage mosque makes it difficult for the informal Mosque management committee to undertake any major maintenance work themselves. "Maintenance and repairs have to be done with official permission from

---

<sup>328</sup> . Hafiz, 1990, p 141.

the Department of Archaeology as the mosque is a protected heritage.”<sup>329</sup> The Mosque committee members expressed that, this is a great dilemma where both parties are unable to take any immediate steps to protect the mosque structures, as several of its parts require immediate restoration.

#### **5.9.4 Formal Heritage Conservation of Northbrook Hall**

##### ***Background of the Northbrook Hall***

Northbrook Hall is located at *Wiseghat* of Old Dhaka on the bank of the *Buriganga* River. Locally known as *Lalkuthi* (red house), it was originally designed as a Town Hall in 1879 and named after Lord Northbrook, Viceroy of India (1872-1876). In 1882, a public library was added on the south-east side of the building. Also, a clubhouse was also added to the south-side of the Northbrook Hall and was named Johnson Hall.<sup>330</sup> Over the years, the library became popular for its great literary collection. The Northbrook Hall was built when the prominent land lords (locally known as *zamidaars*) of Dhaka decided to make a Hall in memory of the deceased Viceroy.

##### ***Heritage elements***

The building is one of the best examples of hybrid architecture in Old Dhaka, combining elements of Mughal architecture and European architecture of the Renaissance period (see Figure 47). The building’s most prominent features include the four octagonal *minars* at north, the distinct semi-circular horseshoe arch at the

---

<sup>329</sup> . Ibid.

<sup>330</sup> . [www.banglapedia.org/httpdocs/HT/N\\_0118.HTM](http://www.banglapedia.org/httpdocs/HT/N_0118.HTM)



entrance, ornamented parapets, graded roof, intricate *jalli* work at the windows, magnificent floral motifs and ornamentation and pinnacles; most of which show strong influences of Mughal and local Muslim architecture. Most of the ornate walls, doors and windows show strong influence of the European Renaissance architecture. With its deep red color and hybrid architectural features, the Northbrook Hall was one of the most significant buildings at the riverfront of Old Dhaka until the 1930s, after which the building (as well as the area) lost its prominence, as the river changed its course.



Figure 47: Hybrid architecture of Northbrook Hall at Old Dhaka, source: [www.everyneededinfo.com](http://www.everyneededinfo.com) and [www.banglapedia.org](http://www.banglapedia.org)

The building has been actively used by the local community for various social functions, beside the main use as public library. Some of these uses include telegram office, women's college, etc. The Northbrook Hall is witness to many historical events during the Language Movement of 1952 and Liberation War of 1971. Currently the heritage building is under the ownership of the Dhaka Municipality Corporation.

### ***Formal conservation and related issues***

The Northbrook Hall is one of the protected buildings under the Department of Archaeology. Over the years, several phases of restoration work were undertaken by the Department of Archaeology, in coordination with the Dhaka Municipality Corporation. As the building has been actively in use for over a century, only minor restorations were required on the ornamentations and surface painting on most occasions. However, as the building is more than 130 years old, on few instances, comparatively major restoration works were required, especially for the condensation of the plaster work and paint. The restoration works at the Northbrook Hall were more convenient for the Department of Archaeology, as the Dhaka Municipality Corporation actively supported the projects; along with the users, the local community. As there has been no disruption in the use of the building for over a century, the original details of the *jalli* work and surface ornamentations has survived in very good shape. The existing knowledge in the community about the building that has been passed on for several generations meant that the Department of Archaeology didn't have to undertake any extensive research on the background and detail of the building. Also, as the building is actively used and in relatively good shape compared to the other vulnerable heritage, no special fund was required for the conservation (as seen in the other examples like *Panamagar*). This meant that there was no strict deadline or limited fund to finish the restoration work in a hurry; thus the quality of work was better. In some past instances, the users of the building took partial responsibility of the minor restoration works under the supervision of the Department of Archaeology. The Northbrook Hall can be considered one of the more successful formal conservation projects undertaken by the Department of Archaeology.

One of the major threats for the heritage building is the encroaching structures, like an assembly hall and a few community canters built surrounding the building. Another critical factor is the ‘List of Protected Heritage’ published in 2009. Before the list was published, the collaboration between the local community, Dhaka Municipal Corporation and the Department of Archaeology was flexible. Perhaps, this is one of the reasons why the building is better conserved. The new legislation (the List) makes the process of restoration stricter; permission has to be obtained from the Department of Archaeology even for the most minute of repair or restoration work. Thus, there is risk that the heritage building’s inclusion in the ‘List of Protected Heritage’ may restrict the conservation activities and it may fall lower in priority; as the building is in relatively good shape.

#### **5.9.5 Comparison of Case Studies of Formal Heritage Conservation**

The four case studies were selected to cover the various critical aspects of formal heritage conservation in Dhaka. As the case studies are of different scales and building typology, a comparison of the key issues like research and background study, financial resources, condition after conservation, heritage status, etc. was done to get a holistic idea about how formal heritage conservation works on various types of heritage in Dhaka. The comparison shows that, while in cases, lack of financial resources can become the main obstacle to successful conservation, in others, having adequate fund may not be sufficient, due to lack of research and background study, technical resources, authenticity of material/ construction methods used in restoration and pressures like time limitation. On the other hand, the conservation is better when the building is actively used by the community. Table 11 shows the comparison of the case studies of Formal heritage conservation, to highlight these critical aspects.

Table 11: Comparison of case studies of Formal heritage conservation, source: author

Heritage conservation elements	Case study 1	Case study 2	Case study 3	Case study 4
	<b>Panamnagar</b>	<b>Lalbagh fort</b>	<b>Khan Mohammad Mridha's Mosque</b>	<b>Northbrook Hall</b>
Age	Late 19 <sup>th</sup> to Early 20 <sup>th</sup> century A.D.	1670s to 1680s A.D.	1706 A.D.	1879 A.D.
Scale	Township	Monument: Fort	Monument: Mosque	Public building
Building typology	Palatial residences, Villas, courtyard houses, etc.	Fort, audience hall, mosque, tomb, gateways.	Mosque and Madrasah	Public library, clubhouse and various functions
Heritage components	Hybrid residential brick architecture and ornamentations, architectural details, crafts, etc.	Mughal fort architecture and garden.	Three domed Mughal mosque on raised podium.	Hybrid architecture and ornamentations, intricate architectural details, etc.
Formal Authority	The Department of Archaeology	The Department of Archaeology	The Department of Archaeology	The Department of Archaeology
Condition before conservation	Dilapidated/ Illegally occupied	In ruins	In moderate working condition/ In use	In good condition/ In use
Research and background study	Very limited	Limited	Very limited	Adequate
Authenticity of material/ construction methods used in restoration	Very poor: use of wrong size brick, plaster in place of <i>lime surki</i> , plaster over details, etc.	Average: use of wrong size brick, conservation of boundary wall neglected, etc.	Poor: use of wrong size brick, plaster in place of <i>lime surki</i> , etc.	Good: original details & original surface ornamentations were restored.
Technical resources	No conservation expert, architect or archaeologist involved.	No conservation expert, architect or archaeologist involved.	No conservation expert, architect or archaeologist involved.	Knowledge of local community was considered.
Financial resources	Sufficient financial resource with time limit.	Inadequate financial resource.	Very limited financial resource.	Moderate financial resource.
Condition after conservation	Highly vulnerable	Vulnerable	Vulnerable	Good
Threats	Improper restoration by the Department of Archaeology	Illegal encroachment and incomplete restoration.	Illegal encroachment and lack of regular maintenance.	Illegal encroachment.
Heritage status	One of UNESCO's 100 endangered heritage sites.	UNESCO rejected the application to grant the fort World heritage status.	Officially conserved but no further maintenance done.	Officially conserved with irregular maintenance.

### 5.10 Recent Steps by Formal Authorities to Protect Local Heritage

During the early 1990s, several international seminars and workshops<sup>331</sup> on heritage were held in Dhaka. The seminars along with numerous headline articles in prominent local newspapers highlighted the vulnerability of the local heritage, the need for their protection and the inadequacy of the steps taken by the formal authorities.<sup>332</sup> This included several events where unprotected heritage had been altered or modified, leading to the loss of their authenticity. In extreme cases, important heritage of the city disappeared altogether making way for new development.<sup>333</sup> Several alterations and modifications have taken place in important heritage sites like Panamnagar during the last few decades. An unnamed heritage mosque (approximately two hundred years old) that was an important example of the single cell mosque in the city existed till the late 1990s. Its heritage value was not recognized by the formal authorities and was eventually demolished to make way for a new mosque. The Dhaka Metropolitan Building Construction Rules 2008<sup>334</sup> stated the importance of heritage conservation and protecting historic monuments and important heritage buildings (in article 61), but it did not have much impact on the protection of the heritage buildings.

Under the circumstances, ultimately the government formed a much awaited standing committee with representatives from “the Department of Archaeology, BUET, Dhaka University history department, Institute of Fine Arts, Bangladesh Institute of Planners,

---

<sup>331</sup> . “Workshop in architectural conservation”, 1989, source: Imamuddin, Hassan, & Alam, 1990.

<sup>332</sup> . See for example, Ghias, 2008a, May 28, Heritage in wrong hands, 2007, March 19, Islam and Sharmeen, 2005, July 5, Islam and Zaman, 2006, April 03, Leung, 2008, October 12.

<sup>333</sup> . The first movie theater, *Azad* and the 360 year old Churihatta mosque of Old Dhaka were demolished, source: Mahmud, 2008, October 28 and Mahmud, 2009, September 16.

<sup>334</sup> . RAJUK, 2008.

Institute of Architects Bangladesh, Asiatic Society, Dhaka City Corporation Public Works Department and a heritage conservationist Urban Study Group (USG)<sup>335</sup> to recommend heritage building for protection. The standing committee covered primarily “1528 square kilometers of Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan (DMDP) area and worked as per the outline in the Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC), Antiquities Act 1968 (amended 1976), and Dhaka Metropolitan Building Rules 2008.”<sup>336</sup> The committee ultimately recommended a preliminary list of heritage building and heritage sites for protection and submitted it to the Ministry of Works on December 4, 2008. While preparing the list, the committee considered historic, aesthetic, social, religious and scientific value of the buildings and sites. With the submission, the committee also recommended regular updating of the list.

The Government finally declared “93 heritage buildings and 7 heritage sites<sup>337</sup> as protected, though a gazette on 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2009. The gazette prohibits any demolition, amendment, selling or modification of these structures, even though several of them have already been modified and altered, with few illegally occupied.”<sup>338</sup> As already mentioned in earlier sections, according to the *Antiquities Act of 1968* (amended 1976), the Department of Archaeology generally considers historic buildings as a heritage for protection only if they are at least 100 years old. In a change of scenario, the standing committee has enlisted several buildings and sites considering their outstanding historical, architectural, aesthetic, social, religious,

---

<sup>335</sup> . Dutta and Billah, 2009, March 23.

<sup>336</sup> . Ibid.

<sup>337</sup> . Along with 93 important heritage buildings, the 7 heritage sites included *Shankharibazar, Farashganj, Tantibazar, Rishikesh Dash road, Rebatimohon Dash Road, Sutrapur and Ramna*, source: Ibid.

<sup>338</sup> . 93 heritage buildings, sites listed for preservation, 2009, 28 January.

political and cultural value, even if they were not 100 years old. “The listed heritage properties will be categorized roughly into three groups of structures in consideration of their heritage value. One group will include structures unalterable at all, another group will contain those that could be reconstructed partly and the last group will comprise those could be rebuilt completely, sparing a symbolic part as a relic.”<sup>339</sup>

Following the new list, the Development Control Wing of RAJUK<sup>340</sup>, has started to monitor and notify the private owners of heritage properties to practice caution and get permission before any new intervention. The Nagar Unnayan Committee<sup>341</sup> has recommended that “the listed buildings and areas cannot be fully or in part be demolished, rebuilt, altered or modified”<sup>342</sup> without approval from the authorities. However, the categorization of the listed heritage buildings and the actual development guidelines for conservation or new uses are yet to be done, while the gazette notification process is slowly underway.

Especially for private owned heritage buildings, another crucial issue is the TDR (Transfer of Development Right) for conservation, which has been in practice in other Asian countries like India, Hong Kong, etc. In most cases, the ownership pattern in Old Dhaka is very complicated, mainly due to subsequent subdivision of property over generations and different types of legal issues for the same building. The authorities are not yet clear on how to approach this problem.

---

<sup>339</sup> . Dutta and Billah, Ibid.

<sup>340</sup> . RAJUK: *Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha* is a governmental statutory body responsible for controlling and monitoring any development within the parameters of Dhaka city.

<sup>341</sup> . The Nagar Unnayan Committee (City Development authority) was formed on ad-hoc basis to decide on the development issues of the heritage buildings and sites.

<sup>342</sup> . Dutta and Billah, Ibid.

Architect Taimur Islam of USG (Urban Study Group), who is also a member of the standing committee, expressed his concern and suggested “speedy introduction of the TDR concept to compensate the private owners of the listed heritage properties and persuade them to cooperate with the conservation movement.”<sup>343</sup>The Nagar Unnayan Committee has been looking into the development proposals at enlisted sites, until the TDR issue is finalized as legislation. Several expert historians, academics, architects and planners have expressed their concern that only declaring these structures and sites as ‘protected’ may not ensure their actual conservation and most of them remain highly vulnerable.

### **5.11 Present Scenario after the *List*: Vulnerable Local Heritage**

Even after being declared in the list (93 heritage buildings and seven heritage sites) for protection by the Department of Archaeology, a major part of the listed buildings and sites lie equally vulnerable before they were declared protected. Due to the limitations of the Department of Archaeology mentioned in earlier sections, the conservation works are not actually being implemented except in very few selected cases. What the Department has done in most cases is to put a hold on any local heritage management initiative that was taken by the community to protect the heritage. Thus their condition is even more vulnerable than before the list was declared, as seen in the case of Khan Mohammad Mridha mosque. Several cases came out in the local media about heritage that are highly vulnerable, within or beyond the list. Mainly, there are two types of vulnerability as described here:

---

<sup>343</sup> . Ibid.



### *Ignored from the list*

The government's formal list declaring 93 heritage buildings and seven heritage sites protected, is by no means comprehensive or complete, as evident in the recent demolition of the 360 year old Churihatta mosque and the library building of the Jagannath college of old Dhaka<sup>344</sup> (see Figure 48). The Churihatta mosque was high in historic and architectural heritage value as it was one of the oldest remaining mosque in the city (360 years) and was the only mosque to have a *Chou-chala*<sup>345</sup> roof in the interior (with a flat exterior roof), a unique feature in mosque architecture of Dhaka. Apparently the mosque was demolished as the space available “was not enough as the population of the area was rising because of increasing commercial activities.”<sup>346</sup>



Figure 48: Vulnerable local heritage – Left: Dilapidated Choto Katra, present condition, source: <http://jishankhan.wordpress.com/2009/02/16/bara-katra-choto-katra/>, accessed on 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2010, middle top: Choto Katra in the 1940s, source: Mamoon, 2008a, p 82, middle bottom: the partly demolished Churihatta mosque, source: Ghias, 2008b, July 28, right: the demolished library building of Jagannath college, source: Ali, 2006, November 18.

<sup>344</sup> . Dutta and Billah, 2009, March 23.

<sup>345</sup> . A special kind of pitched roof used in rural architecture of Bangladesh.

<sup>346</sup> . Ghias, 2008b, July 28.

The Jagannath University authorities arbitrarily demolished the 150-year-old two-storied monumental library building and destroyed an adjacent ancient garden to make room for a new high-rise building. The historic library building was a fine example of ornate British colonial architecture and had immense architectural value. These important heritage buildings of the city have been demolished (see Figure 48) to pave the way for extension by additional blocks (the mosque) or new development (the library), as they were not included in the list. The concerned authorities took the opportunity to hastily alter or demolish these structures lest they be added in an amended version of the list.

### ***Low priority***

Even within the list of protected heritage buildings and sites, many important heritage lies completely unprotected, illegally occupied and in a highly vulnerable condition. One such structure is the *Choto Katra*, which is a prominent Mughal structure in the city and represents several unique features of the Local Mughal style. It was constructed during the rule of Shayesta Khan from 1663 to 1671, and assumed to be used for lodging or as an administrative building.<sup>347</sup> The Mughal structure was originally constructed on the bank of the River Buriganga for ease of transportation. Over the years, the river has shifted its course and now the structure stands within a high density urban fabric of Old Dhaka.

Currently, the *Choto Katra* is being used as a *Qaomi Madrasah*, an Islamic religious school. The important heritage is almost in ruins, illegally occupied, cramped by

---

<sup>347</sup> . Mamoon, 2008a, p 81.

illegal shops, with parts of it altered beyond recognition by the current occupants. The northern part of the *Choto Katra* has disappeared. The eastern and western parts are altered, with the southern part somewhat intact. The *Madrakah* committee has plans to further alter the structure.<sup>348</sup> The dilapidated condition of such an important heritage of the city shows that even after the list has been published, the heritage included and ‘protected’ in the list are still equally vulnerable as they were before.

### 5.12 General Observations

The study of the formal conservation approach in Dhaka, with the selected case studies, reveals the following issues:

- Even though a structure may have important heritage value, they are not considered for conservation unless they are ‘old enough’.
- The heritages that are listed for protection, are mostly ‘famous’ individual buildings and monuments. Building ensembles, intangible elements or entire urban fabrics are not generally considered for protection. Even though a recent list declared seven older urban neighborhoods as protected heritage sites, no actual steps has been taken to conserve them.
- The formal authority responsible for conservation is highly under resourced, under equipped and unskilled. There are no trained conservation specialists, conservation architects or archaeologists working in the Department of Archaeology, whose expertise is vital for proper heritage conservation. In many cases, only unskilled diploma engineers with no skill of conservation, are responsible on site to oversee the restoration.

---

<sup>348</sup> . Mamoon, *Ibid*, p 82 and Dutta and Billah, 2009, March 23.

- Due to limited resource and time allotted, generally little (or no) research is done prior to restoration.
- In several cases, no actual steps have been taken yet to safeguard the heritage that has been declared ‘protected’.
- The limited fund allotted to conservation projects comes with the rule that the fund for a project is allotted with a time restriction to spend it, beyond that the fund is called back. Thus it is a general practice to do little or no research and hurriedly spend the fund on the site. As a result, the restoration is not done properly and the authenticity of heritage suffers.
- In the case of heritages that are listed, the Department of Archaeology either fails to take immediate measures to conserve them (due to limited resources) or in other cases where they do restore them, there is no regular maintenance. The informal community bodies are prohibited from managing the heritage on their own due to the protected status. The ‘protected’ status creates a *stalemate* situation where no party can take measures to safeguard the heritage.
- The formal conservation seems to be more effective in cases where the local community or users are allowed to be actively involved in the conservation process, actively or through the use of their traditional knowledge.
- The examples of formal heritage conservation which has been more successful show that routine and regular maintenance are more effective than the conservation done on a project basis with fund and time limitations.
- The Department of Archaeology has four regional branches. Of these, the Dhaka branch has the responsibility to take care of the highest number of heritage. As Dhaka was the Mughal provincial capital, naturally it has a greater number of heritage buildings and sites, compared to other cities. To effectively conserve and maintain the large number of heritage buildings and

sites, Dhaka branch of the Department of Archaeology requires more fund and skilled personnel. However, no such special consideration is given to the Dhaka branch. As a result, the Dhaka branch has to conserve and maintain the large number of heritage buildings and sites with very limited resources. Naturally, the quality of conservation is not up to the mark in most cases. The case of Department of Archaeology, especially the Dhaka branch shows how the formal approach to conservation can be constrained due to lack of resources. However, this may not be the case for all the other branches of the Department of Archaeology or similar organizations in other cities.

### **5.13 Chapter Conclusion**

Like many other developing countries, more often than not, the formal authorities of Bangladesh have failed to strike a balance (willingly or unwillingly) between conservation and rapid urban development (planned or unplanned). Unfortunately in this uneven race, urban development led by economic growth seems to be mostly winning. There has always been the dilemma of setting priority for conservation within scarce economic resources.

Due to lack of knowledge or adequate research, the value of urban heritage has often been ignored. The common assumption is that the conservation projects do not generate enough returns to sustain themselves, which has been proven wrong in many successful examples (both in developed and developing countries); where conserved heritage projects not only revived social activities but also have proven economically sustainable. This attitude is directly related to allocating proper budget and other required resources necessary for conserving the urban heritage.

A good part of the urban heritage has already disappeared, paving way for new development. The agenda of conservation has a 'negligible' part of the wide spectrum of the government's activities. The rapid urban development apparently always seems to have 'greater value' than heritage conservation. Due to lack of properly trained personnel and required resources, even the formally conserved projects are not always of desired quality, to the extent that many formal interventions have actually damaged the heritage, in the process of trying to 'restore' them.

As the limitations of the formal approach to conservation are unlikely to change overnight, while the urban heritage lies highly vulnerable to rapid urban growth, an alternate strategy is required to address the issue of urban conservation. Using existing resources in the traditional communities in the form of traditional knowledge of heritage and the strong social structure may be useful to make up for the limitations of formal approach to conservation.

## Chapter 6

### COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN HERITAGE MANAGEMENT IN OLD DHAKA

#### 6.1 Heritage Management in Old Dhaka: Active Participation of the Community

Throughout the history of the traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka, there has been a system of informal community management that worked parallel to the formal ‘top-down’ approach. The system dates back centuries in several neighborhoods and has been mostly autonomous, free of the influence of the formal authorities. Surprisingly, long before the formal political system, the traditional communities realized the importance of *representative* democracy in the form of informal community bodies.

The community management system is governed by informally selected community bodies. The community management and actions are the result of inclusive decision making where the community is directly involved. Generally the community is represented by a small number of selected *representatives* working together as informal community bodies. The *representatives* are selected either without elections, with limited elections or respected community elders were simply chosen through common consensus.

The representatives are responsible both for deciding on the everyday routine social issues and special decisions that affect the community. They are also responsible to act and implement on the community mandates. The general decision making process is consultation based.

Unlike many modern societies, the sociocultural practices and the heritage in traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka are not treated separately. Through the long process of social evolution and everyday social activities, they virtually become one. Along with managing common sociocultural issues of the community, the informal community management system is also responsible for heritage management in Old Dhaka.

## **6.2 Stakeholders' Role and Participation in Informal Heritage Management**

Throughout the history of Old Dhaka, the traditional communities have collectively secured the local heritage with limited resources available within the neighborhoods. The stakeholders in the local communities are naturally resourced with traditional knowledge, enthusiasm, pride in local cultural assets, local construction methods and skills gained over successive generations. Any formal organization or authorities can hardly obtain similar skills even with skilled personnel. The collective skill of the community stakeholders is used in two ways, participation by expressing opinions and participation by organizing heritage management or with construction skills.

The physical heritages in the form of a building or group of buildings in the traditional neighborhoods survive through the vibrancy of the everyday community social life, customs and rituals of local communities. The traditional communities have a clear idea about *what they have*, thus they generally know *what they need* in case of a situation never faced before. This deep intuition and understanding about the community asset drives the informal community heritage management.



Other than in *extraordinary* situations (can be a legal, disaster or maintenance issue), the management of the local heritage is part of everyday social life. Communities meet to discuss the possible solutions to the *extraordinary* situations organized by the local informal community bodies.

The importance of community participation in the heritage management process (along with everyday social issues of the community) was realized since the early days of the communities. But it should be noted that, even though the public participation process in the local communities of Old Dhaka dates back centuries, it was recognized that no real social process or organization will work if each and every community member continues to equally express themselves. This is the rationale behind forming the informal community bodies. Selected (or elected) community representatives voice the decision of the community through a representative public participation, which is informal in nature. The stakeholders generally express their opinions through the elected or selected members of the informal community bodies. Only in very special circumstances do most of the community members participate as a group.

### **6.3 Informal Heritage Management and Continuity of Use**

The local heritages in the traditional neighborhoods that continue to be in use are in relatively good condition, for example community mosques. Both for culturally and architecturally significant buildings, the continuity of shared usage by the community ensure greater attention of the community. Continuity of use actually makes

community heritage management more convenient, as routine maintenance coincides with important cultural or religious events like *Eid* festivals.

Compared to community owned heritage, the structures that cease to be in use (for example, abandoned residences of heritage value) are often more difficult to maintain because of legal issues. Also for privately owned heritage buildings, naturally the control of informal community bodies is of varying degrees. Beyond the regular maintenance undertaken by the owners of private properties of heritage value, when some restoration or modification in a privately owned heritage building affects the community interest, the informal community bodies interfere and can even stop the work. But minor modifications often take place according to the interest of the owner.

Among the traditional neighborhoods, there are several types of continuity of use. Some of these are:

- By continuity of use - Mosque (example: Kosaituli mosque, Star mosque)
- By common interest - Example: Community pond of Bangshal.
- By resolving conflict of boundary issues – Example: Armanitola church.

The local communities' general view of the heritage structures in the traditional neighborhoods is: *not to freeze the structures in a particular time in a pristine authentic form*. While the key issue is the continuity of use for the community, at the same time, the architectural and cultural importance of a particular heritage is understood by the community. This is evident especially in the well maintained

Armenian Church, *Kosaituli* and Star mosque that have been continuing to be in use in their original form for centuries.

There are several examples where the community spontaneously chose a new use replacing an obsolete function. The adaptive reuse is often spontaneous and commonly decided and agreed by the community. Example of this can be seen in the transformation of the former butcher yards in *Kosaituli* into playgrounds when the past uses ceased to exist. Several former residential quarters are also replaced with commercial use like small factories and shops when there is a change of ownership or the former residents migrated to India.

The architectural qualities of heritage buildings are maintained with supervision and co-ordination of the concerned community bodies. Except for few rare examples (mainly focused on ‘popular’ monuments), there is almost no intervention by the formal authorities to take care of the heritage structures or urban fabric in the traditional neighborhoods. The informal community management system that has maintained the heritage structures and fabrics for over two centuries, still continue to efficiently look after and maintain them.

## **6.4 Social Capital and the Local Community**

### **6.4.1 Definition of Social Capital**

Social Capital is an important concept related to the local community structure and their informal activities. Ever since Coleman (1988 and 1990) and Putnam (1993)

published their views on Social Capital, it has been recognized as a very important part in any study relating to community or collective actions. Social Capital is a contested concept that encompasses a large array of sub-concepts. Also, issues related to human capital cannot be measured directly. Alder and Kwon observe: “Not surprisingly considering the different frameworks for looking at social capital there is considerable disagreement and even contradiction in the definitions of social capital.”<sup>349</sup> The following definitions give an overview of the concept:

Coleman states:

*Social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities having two characteristics in common: They all consist of some aspect of social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure.*<sup>350</sup>

Fukuyama defines Social Capital as: “the ability of people to work together for common purposes in groups and organizations.”<sup>351</sup> Lounsbury observes the importance of Social capital in relation to acquisition of skills and traits: “naturally occurring social relationships among persons which promote or assist the acquisition of skills and traits valued in the marketplace.... an asset which may be as significant as financial bequests in accounting for the maintenance of inequality in our society.”<sup>352</sup>

The concept of Social Capital has been considered both for the micro and macro scales. At the micro scale, social capital can be regarded as an association between people, horizontal in nature and consists of various social networks with the associated norms and values. Social capital is directly associated with the well-being

---

<sup>349</sup> . Adler and Kwon, 2002.

<sup>350</sup> . Coleman 1990, p. 302.

<sup>351</sup> . Fukuyama 1995, p. 10.

<sup>352</sup> . Lounsbury 1992, p. 100.

and functioning of the community. Comparatively, in a macro scale, social capital is more vertical in nature and includes the sociopolitical environment that actually shapes and fosters the social networks and structure. It creates an environment for social norms to develop and continue.

#### **6.4.2 Social Capital in Old Dhaka**

The most important aspect that ensures the continuity of informal heritage management in traditional neighborhoods is the community's strong attachments to the social settings. A relevant statement on the traditional communities of Old Dhaka: 'the folk wisdom that more people get their jobs from whom they know, rather than what they know, turns out to be true.'<sup>353</sup>

The communities view the local heritage in close relation with their place of residence; they are inseparable. There is a strong attachment to place. The community manages (often through common informal bodies) the local heritage and their living environment, based on the social capital acquired over generations. Nahapiet and Ghoshal observe: "the sum of the actual and potential resources embedded within, available through, and derived from the network of relationships possessed by an individual or social unit."<sup>354</sup>

When assessing their living environment, it is common for community members of the traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka to value their social relations and

---

<sup>353</sup> . Dekker and Uslaner 2001, pp. 1 - 8, Uslaner 2001, pp. 104 - 117 and Sander 2002, p. 213.

<sup>354</sup> . Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998, p. 243.

community bond to a greater degree than the physical environment that they live in. Thus, there is often a substantial discrepancy between the evaluations of formal authorities when they decide what is valuable in these traditional environments, and the actual perception expressed by communities living in them. There are varying degrees of social capital existing in different communities of Old Dhaka, but in general the traditional communities are richer in social capital. The author found that in the traditional communities of Old Dhaka, social capital constitutes social relationships, traditional social norms, vernacular skills and crafts, informal institutions (like community bodies) that have shaped the quality of the traditional community's social interactions.

Field study shows that social cohesion provided by greater social capital in traditional neighborhoods actually helps the communities to continue and survive. In Old Dhaka, social capital is not only the sum of valued social networks and institutions; rather it is the glue that holds the communities together. In the traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka, the following issues stand out as the most important elements of social capital:

### ***1. Greater social trust among the community members***

The social trust that exists in the traditional communities of Old Dhaka has been acquired over several generations. Indeed, social trust is more common in traditional communities than more contemporary communities. Social trust is often seen as superior to legally binding documents. This is the base on which several socioeconomic issues are solved and conflicts are avoided. Social trust has several sub-issues like trust among craftsmen or traders, sharing similar professions, trust in family members, trust in the local community, trust in the informal community bodies,

local cultural and sociopolitical system, etc. One good example of social trust is the shared usage of courtyards, rooftop terraces and temples by the community members of *Shankharibazar* as shown in the Figures 67 and 69.

## ***2. Informal community membership, social network and infrastructure***

Several types of informal social network and community membership exist in traditional communities. The most prominent being the informal community bodies like the *Panchayet*. While membership of groups, associations and network of trade guilds comes more generally, the membership of the informal community bodies or special religious bodies or groups are considered more prestigious. Thus, only the community members who are highly regarded by the majority of the community members are elected or selected. The survival of the overall social network of the community depends on the functioning of the informal community bodies. The functioning and well-being of the communities including community development depend on the spontaneous participation. This extends to group involvement and joining in group activities with the entire community. The degree of participation definitely varies among the active, influential and ordinary members of the community bodies. Examples of such informal memberships can be seen in the *Kosaituli Panchayet* (see section 7.3.1) and *Kosaituli mosque* (see section 7.3.2).

## ***3. Routine and special collective action taken by the community***

While the first two issues constitute social capital directly, the third issue, i.e. shared community action, is actually a manifestation or the outcome of the former two. The collective action in time enriches the social capital and community bond, through the

outcome of the actions taken. The collective community actions can be categorized into routine and special types. For example, the routine maintenance of the local heritage structures can be considered routine while special collective actions are taken in times of special or emergency circumstances like relief activities for flood victims or taking action to save a vulnerable heritage building.

## **6.5 Informal Community Bodies of Old Dhaka**

### **6.5.1 History and Development of Community Bodies**

The study of Old Dhaka reveals that the traditional urban fabrics are more than only old buildings. The social elements are equally strong (even stronger) than the physical elements. People in the traditional communities are different from the modern parts of the city, with their long urban history, distinct culture and lifestyle, language and mannerism. All these elements (social and physical) give the milieu definite but an indefinable aura that is very specific to the area.

A physical part of this milieu is the high density urban fabric of Old Dhaka with its street patterns, the close-knit layout of houses and old heritage buildings. What ensures the continuity of the physical part is the traditional communities with their social organizations that have been continuing for centuries. The traditional neighborhoods were caste/craft enclaves, closed compartments with specific groups of trader and craftsmen residing in specific sites. For example, the *Shankharis* (*Shankha* makers) lives in Shankharibazar, *Kosais* (butchers) in Kosaituli, *Tantis* (weavers) in Tantibazar and Armenians in Armanitola. This site specific social order allowed little scope of physical expansion and one loosely built, low-density neighborhood grew next to a dense one with only a canal, a ditch or waste land separating them. The



communities decided to stick together in a neighborhood for practical reasons. It ensured their safety and gave socioeconomic and cultural benefits.

Every community had their special requirements and it gave rise to the need to form informal community bodies (like the *Panchayet*) to look after the community interest within the neighborhood and to resolve conflicts with adjacent neighborhoods. Gradually these community bodies became responsible for deciding the common social, economic and cultural issues in the traditional neighborhoods. Many of them date back centuries, as early as during the formation of the neighborhood while others are more recent. The following section gives an overview of the main informal community body in the traditional neighborhoods, the *Panchayets*.

### **6.5.2 *Panchayet*: History, Development and Activities**

Among the informal community bodies of Old Dhaka, the oldest to survive is the *Panchayet*. There are several traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka where there is an active *Panchayet* functioning today (see Figure 48). The term *Panchayet* (meaning body of five) came from the initial number of members such bodies had. As discussed in the earlier sections, especially during the British rule, the provincial government did not care enough to look after the sociocultural needs of the people. Under these circumstances, the *Panchayet* system developed in Old Dhaka to address the social, cultural and economic issues of the traditional neighborhoods or *mahallas*. Though initially the idea of *Panchayet* was developed by the local Muslim community, later it was adapted by other communities in different neighborhoods of Dhaka. The *Panchayets* of the Muslims and the Hindus were generally different.<sup>355</sup>

---

<sup>355</sup> . [www.banglapedia.org](http://www.banglapedia.org), accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2010.

There is limited historical reference available on the *Panchayets* of Old Dhaka.<sup>356</sup> The main source of historical reference is the books by few British authors of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Taylor and Walters<sup>357</sup> describe the existence and details of the *Panchayets* of Dhaka. Another important source is a book of James Wise, a famous British historian, published in 1883<sup>358</sup>. According to Wise:

*Every Muslim 'Kaom' or class had a panchayet. If anyone opposed the unwritten law of the panchayet in trade, business and other matters, severe measures were taken against that person. The panchayet intended to serve the common people and bring forth their well-being. This court was 'secular and republican', where every member enjoyed an equal voting right, although the opinion of the president of the panchayet would prevail in almost all cases.*<sup>359</sup>

Another contemporary local account is that of Khwaja Azam, the supervisor of different *Panchayets* of Dhaka during the early twentieth century. Azam contested Wise's idea and shared a different opinion on the history of *Panchayet* in his book *The Panchayet System of Dhaka* published in 1907.<sup>360</sup> According to Azam, the *Panchayet* system used to control the neighborhoods of Dhaka. The system was introduced by a limited Muslim community of recent converts of East Bengal and other Muslims of foreign origin. They were looked down upon by their elite Hindu neighbors and were popularly known as *Mlechchhas* (outcast). Azam claims that the *Panchayet* system basically originated to provide social protection to this minority group. Many historians believe there was also the influence of the local *Fakirs* (i.e. Saints) in the formation of *Panchayet* system, evident from the use of terms like

---

<sup>356</sup> . Along with the reference cited in this section, part of the information is gathered from oral history narrated by the residents of the traditional communities.

<sup>357</sup> . Taylor, 1840, and [www.banglapedia.org](http://www.banglapedia.org), accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2010.

<sup>358</sup> . Wise, 1883.

<sup>359</sup> . Ibid, p 2-3.

<sup>360</sup> . Azam, 1907.

*chanda* (subscription), which was used by *Fakirs*.<sup>361</sup> Contemporary noted historians like Muntasir Mamoon shares the opinion that the *Panchayet* system must have been inspired by other social system that already existed in the traditional communities.<sup>362</sup>

Elders of the local communities expressed to the author that other than the greater *Mahalla Panchayets* (see Figure 49), different groups or castes (in case of the Hindus) had their own *Panchayet* to look after their trade or professional interests, similar to professional guilds. They were also based on specialized craftsmen like the *Shankharis*. The system of professional bodies (similar to guilds) later extended to the entire community as the traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka formed as specialized enclaves of craftsmen or traders, like *Shankharibazar*, *Tantibazar*, etc. Azam stated that neither the Muslim rulers nor the Mughals had introduced this system.<sup>363</sup> So most probably the system existed even before that. According to most of the local community members, the system has existed since around the mid-nineteenth century. Azam and den Hollander<sup>364</sup> state that every *mahalla* in Old Dhaka had a functioning Panchayet during the early twentieth century.



Figure 49: Left and middle - the Kosaituli Panchayet, right – Mosque committee members at Star mosque of Armanitola, Source: author.

<sup>361</sup> . Mamoon, 1991, 2008a & 2008b.

<sup>362</sup> . Ibid.

<sup>363</sup> . Azam, 1907.

<sup>364</sup> . Azam and den Hollander, 1990, p 4.

The *Panchayet* system existed in other parts of the Indian subcontinent and Bengal in various forms during the British rule. Currently the *Panchayet* system exists in India basically in the rural areas.<sup>365</sup> The *Mahalla Panchayets* originated to resolve the social disputes and later encompassed other spheres of community life like heritage conservation.

A major shift came in the *Panchayet* system immediately after the administrative partition of Bengal by Lord Curzon, the Governor-General of India in 1905.<sup>366</sup> The provincial ruler *Nawab*<sup>367</sup> Salimullah made significant changes in the *Panchayet* system to make Dhaka more 'Islamic'. Muslim representation increased in the *Panchayets*, who were highly loyal to the *Nawabs*. During this period, the *Panchayets* virtually became a political tool to control the society. Khwaja Azam was appointed supervisor by the *Nawabs* to oversee the *Panchayets*.

After the Partition of the sub-continent in 1947 (end of British rule) the communities regained the control of the *Panchayets* and the system returned to its true purpose. Ever since then, the *Panchayets* has been functioning outside the political influence of the formal authorities to manage the social and spatial issues in the local communities.

### **6.5.3 Organization of *Panchayet***

The *Nawabs* of Dhaka gave the *Panchayet* system a more organized form under their patronage to exert political power. According to Khwaja Azam, the total number of

---

<sup>365</sup> . Acharya, 2008.

<sup>366</sup> . Biswas, 1995.

<sup>367</sup> . *Nawab*: Official title of the Provincial Muslim rulers Dhaka during the British rule from mid 19<sup>th</sup> century till the partition of 1947. The *Nawab* was a hereditary title (similar to British nobility) given by the British Raj due to the loyality of these Muslim families during Sipahi Mutiny in 1857. The official title of the family head and estate was *Nawab of Dhaka*, source: Mamoon, 2008a.

*panchayets* in Dhaka in 1907 was 133. These were divided into two groups ‘Bara’ (twelve member council) and ‘Bais’ (twenty-two member council) according to the number of members. The descendants of the converted Muslims formed the ‘Bara’ *panchayets* and the members of the ‘Bais’ were the Muslims who came here as foreigners.<sup>368</sup> Among the two systems, the *Sardari* system or ‘Bais’ Panchayet was more influential in the traditional neighborhoods of old Dhaka.<sup>369</sup>

During the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the *Panchayet* system was headed by *Panchayet Sardars*, who had a deputy the ‘Naib Sardar’, whose responsibility was similar to a vice-president. Two of the elderly persons known as ‘Layek Biradar’ would also be elected as members of the *panchayet*. A fifth member called ‘Gurid’ acted as a messenger.<sup>370</sup>

During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, any dispute that could not be settled within or among the *Panchayets*, the *Sardars* would approach the most prominent and aristocratic persons of the city, generally in a high administrative position. All the *Sardars* also had a council of their own as mentioned in the census of 1901.<sup>371</sup> The *Panchayet Sardars* were answerable; the council could conduct trials on allegations brought against them and give a verdict, with a right to appeal to the *Panchayet* supervisor. The supervisor’s verdict was final.<sup>372</sup>

The traditional communities had several professional *Panchayets*, like those of the *Bhists* (water-carriers)<sup>373</sup> and craft based *Panchayets*, like those of *Shankharis*.

---

<sup>368</sup> . Azam and den Hollander, 1990.

<sup>369</sup> . Jamil, 2005, August 4.

<sup>370</sup> . Ibid.

<sup>371</sup> . [www.banglapedia.org](http://www.banglapedia.org), accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2010.

<sup>372</sup> . Ibid.

<sup>373</sup> . Azam and den Hollander, 1990.

*Mahalla Panchayets* are the most powerful and the community obeys the decisions made by them. In this respect, they play the role of informal community governing bodies, who manage the social and physical matters of the neighborhoods. An example of managing the social matters is the decision making regarding the shared usage of common spaces for religious events, like Puja festivals in *Shankharibazar*. A good Example of managing the physical matters is the decisions made during the property subdivisions in the various *mahallas*.

Nowadays, the *Panchayets* are headed by a *Shabhapati* or President. Though the organization varies among the mahallas, generally the president is assisted by a vice-president and treasurer. They are most respected among the communities and their respect it to hold the community together by efficiently managing everyday social issues. For example, the *Panchayet Shabhapati* of *Shankharibazar* takes several important decisions on the organization and management of the major *Puja* (e.g. *Lakshmi* and *Swarashwati Puja*) celebrations. The formal administrative personnel like ward commissioners do not have the spontaneous respect they command from the community.

Except the short stint during the early twentieth century, the *Panchayets* generally act for the common good of the communities and are democratic and secular in decision making, with all members having equal voting right. However, being the most respected, the president's opinion is generally accepted by all. The *Panchayets* collectively decides on social matters as well as physical issues in the neighborhood, including heritage management. The decisions generally reflect common community interests. Currently, prominent and respected community members are either elected

by the community members or selected by the elders and respected members of the community to be members of *Panchayet*. The election system is a more recent development. The number of *Panchayet* members varies among the *mahallas*. For example the *Shankharibazar Panchayet* has 21 members who are selected by vote. Regular meetings are held every few weeks and emergency meetings are held in special situations.

Along with the funds collected from organizing different religious and cultural events, the *Panchayets* have incomes from properties within the community under their ownership. The revenues and rent earned is used in community activities, including informal heritage management. Several of the *Panchayets* own the building that houses the *Panchayet*, locally known as ‘Bangla’.<sup>374</sup> The *Kosaituli Panchayet* is located in an ornate and culturally significant heritage building.

#### **6.5.4 Roles and Responsibilities of Community Bodies**

Among the informal community bodies of Old Dhaka, the most common and socially popular is the *Panchayet*. The roles and responsibilities are primarily sociopolitical in nature, including management of everyday activities of the communities. A part of the responsibilities is the management of the local heritage structures.

Another important informal community body in Old Dhaka is the *Religious committees*, who primarily work as a sub-committee with the greater social supervision of the *Panchayets*. As the *Panchayets* have numerous sociocultural responsibilities, a part of the responsibilities are shared by the *Religious committees*, which work as a sub-committee in the traditional neighborhoods. Along with running

---

<sup>374</sup> . Rizvi, 1969, p 37.

the day to day activities of the religious heritage structures, they are also responsible for routine maintenance and restoration of the religious heritage.

The population of Dhaka is predominantly Muslim, with few traditional communities of Hindus, like *Shankharibazar*. There are several significant heritage mosques in Old Dhaka. Each of these mosques has a *Mosque committee*, a type of *Religious committee*, some of which have been running for centuries. They are responsible for managing religious and physical activities like maintenance and restoration of the mosques. Along with running the day to day activities of the religious heritage structures, they are also responsible for routine maintenance and restoration of the heritage. Similarly in communities where the majority of the population is Hindu, the *Religious committees* are *Temple committees*.

It is common for elders and respected community members to be members of both the community bodies. Thus, there is rarely any conflict, as most of the senior members of the community represent both types of community bodies.

When it comes to managing the religious heritage structures like mosques, a greater part of the responsibilities are shared by the *Religious committees* (like the *Mosque committees*). When it comes to heritage buildings that are secular in nature, like the Pogose School near *Shankharibazar*, the *Panchayets* take greater responsibilities in the heritage management process.



### **6.5.5 Informal Heritage Management by Community Bodies**

Along with a few private residences of heritage value, a number of community heritage buildings are informally managed by informal community bodies. They include mosques, temples, church, school, etc. Any activity of informal heritage management involves deliberation of multiple stakeholders from the community. Decisions are taken in consultation with the community body, building management committee (like the mosque committee) and the advice of the senior master builder and craftsmen. Vernacular knowledge of local construction and material is practiced. Routine heritage management activities include façade and ornamentation restoration, treating structural problems in the old brick buildings by adding reinforcement in vulnerable slabs and walls with appropriate materials and treating damaged facades to help reduce the load of the upper floors, using horizontal wooden and concrete beams to treat vertical cracks in walls, repairing defective structural elements, adding appropriate new facilities, where required.

The architectural knowledge and vernacular construction techniques are continued through generations of community members, the master builder and craftsmen and their apprentices. The local construction styles have some unique features of masonry; ornamentation and detailing that are carried on by the skilled local construction workers. This is accompanied by the continuity of knowledge by the community bodies (mainly the local elements that are considered neighborhood *assets*).

Complicated structural interventions and repair work are rather rare (only used in extraordinary situations) mainly due to limited financial resources. Ornament

restoration and routine repair work are more common. Both types follow traditionally practiced vernacular methods of masonry in Old Dhaka. Often simple hand tools are favored to advanced machinery and construction tools. This in turn helps maintain authenticity of the old heritage structures. The common practice is to engage a local team of mason/builders supervised by a senior master builder or craftsman (in cases where intricate ornamentation is involved). The senior master builder or craftsman supervises the work of the apprentices and train them in the construction techniques /crafts in the process of restoration. Thus the local crafts and the traditional construction skills carry on through the generations with a system of apprenticeship. The division of workforce is managed by the local guilds of builders, craftsmen and construction workers. Generally brick masonry and vernacular construction methods are used.

One of the most important traditional ornamentation styles is the *chini-tikri*. It is a local ornamentation style where intricate geometric and floral patterns are composed with broken porcelain pieces collected from the factory and household waste of broken porcelain pieces and fixtures. The craftsmen of *chini-tikri* are rare as it requires highly specialized skills acquired over a long span of time. The informal community bodies hire such specialized craftsmen, organize and manage the required restoration work.

Most of the heritage buildings have a *lime-surki* based masonry and were originally plastered with lime wash for waterproofing the outer surfaces. The *lime-surki*, a local brick masonry system, was applied in two layers followed by a final finishing wash. The first coat was applied thick, preparing the base for the second layer which was applied thinner and was usually mixed, while wet, with fine sand that acted as

aggregate to stabilize the lime. This technique has been used in many of the heritage buildings and is so sustainable that several of the buildings are in relatively good shape even after ageing for centuries. This method is still practiced (in limited capacity though) in the traditional neighborhoods while many formal conservation efforts has crudely replaced the lime wash with modern paintwork, as mentioned in chapter 5. Though not widely practiced anymore, the continuity of this construction method (and with it the authenticity of the heritage buildings) largely depends on the informal heritage management in the traditional communities.

#### **6.5.6 Informal Community Bodies, Consultation and Community Involvement**

The decision making process of the informal community bodies is truly participatory. There are several ways that the community actively participates in the decision making process of the community bodies. Most common of these is the shared decision making in regular and special meetings of the neighborhood Community bodies. Generally in the regular meetings, the community members are involved in the decision making process in the following three ways:

1. Where the issue is related to the whole community, like restoration or repair work of a community building like a mosque or a temple, streetscape repair, etc.; opinion of all the community members is taken into consideration as far as possible without jeopardizing the decision making process. Generally representatives chosen from the households are present at such meetings to give their opinions. The decision is ultimately taken by the members of the informal community bodies selected or elected by the community but the

inputs and opinions given by the community members are generally taken into consideration as much as possible.

2. When the issue concerns a few related parties, like two or three households (for example shared interest of heritage properties), the issue is discussed in the common platform of community bodies. Special meetings are called on request of the parties concerned. Most of the time the issues are related to shared interest or resolving conflicts arising from the subdivision of properties with heritage value over successive generations. Opinions or complaints of the concerned parties are expressed in the meetings and a decision agreeable to all the concerned parties is usually taken. Community members generally respect the decision taken by the community bodies. Important decisions concerning how the heritage buildings are maintained over subsequent generations' subdivisions are generally taken at such special meetings.
3. The third type of meeting is called either for special occasions (like during the Bengali New Year, *Puja* or *Eid* festivals) or for emergency situations. They are called to deal with community shared issues like special restoration/repair work on heritage building undertaken for festive occasions or fund raising, use of common spaces, etc. There are rare occasions where a special emergency meeting had been called to deal with immediate issues like a vulnerable building at risk of collapse. One of the buildings in Shankharibazar collapsed and the immediate steps to be taken were decided by the Shankharibazar *Panchayet*.

### 6.5.7 Bangshal Pond: a Case of Successful Community Management

*Bangshal* is one of the traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka. The *Bangshal* pond on the Haji Abdullah Sarkar Lane is one of the largest and also the oldest (while several of its contemporaries were filled in) public pond surviving in the city. Excavated about fifty years ago in the high density area, the pond is an oasis amidst the thick urban fabric. The pond is a rare source of clean water and fishing for the community (see Figure 50). It is well maintained, neat and clean and the usage is maintained by the local *Panchayet*.



Figure 50: Aerial view of Bangshal pond,  
source: [www.thedailystar.net/story.php?nid=31354](http://www.thedailystar.net/story.php?nid=31354), accessed on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2010.

Though not architectural in nature, over the years, the pond is considered a heritage by the local community. Moreover, it is highly active in the everyday social life of the community. The surrounding spaces to the pond are vibrant public spaces that are the heart of the local community. The *Bangshal* pond demonstrates a very important example of how local informal community management works.



Figure 51: Different activities in the *Bangshal* pond, source: author.

There are many activities surrounding the pond throughout the day (see Figure 51). But there are two main activities that take place in the pond regularly. These activities actually earn good yearly revenue for the *Bangshal Panchayet*. The activities are:

1. *Rent from Ghat for washing*: The steps of the pond are locally known as *Ghat*. The *Ghat* is highly used for daily washing and bathing. On the busiest days, up to 3,000 people use the pond. The use of *Ghat* is free for the greater local community of *Bangshal* and *Nazirabazar*, etc. For people who come from outside the community to use the *Ghat*, a very small fee of two *taka* (equivalent to approximately 3 cents) is charged. The users are mostly day laborers and workers of different trades, who use the pond for washing before they go to work. With a high number of users, the daily earning reaches up to 1500 to 1600 *taka* (equivalent to approximately US\$ 25). At the local level,

the yearly revenue collected becomes a substantial amount. The person in charge of collecting the fee for using the Ghat is familiar to the people of the local community. The outsiders pay the fee gladly. There is an inherent honesty. Generally no one breaks the system.

2. *Rent from the Fishing points:* On side of the pond, there are twenty fishing points. The fishing points are high in demand and are occupied all year round. Each of the fishing points is rented for weekends (Friday and Saturday) for a monthly rent of 2000 taka (equivalent to approximately US\$ 30) for eight days (four weekends).

From these two sources, yearly revenue of nearly 15 lac taka (equivalent to approximately US\$ 22,000) is collected. The pond is managed by the local *Panchayet* and the fund collected is used for the development of the neighborhood. Even though the neighborhood is under the formal authority of *Bangshal* ward, the fund limitations do not always allow the government to take immediate measure for the local development needs. Accepting the situation as reality, the informal community bodies take care of the local development needs like emergency road repair after the rainy season without always depending on the actions of Dhaka City Corporation. Along with the social and maintenance work of the area, the fund collected from the pond is used to pay salary to thirteen maintenance workers and run several mechanized water pumps.

Being a heritage in its own right, the case of *Bangshal* pond clearly demonstrates how the informal community management works parallel to the formal political system and is highly effective in managing the community needs.

## **6.6 Heritage Management Activities of Informal Community Bodies**

### **6.6.1 Decision Making, Task Management and Implementation**

As mentioned earlier, decisions about actions to be taken for managing community heritage buildings are taken at Panchayet meetings. At various stages of the routine and emergency heritage management process it involves decision making, managing different tasks among the members and hired craftsmen and finally implementing. Some of the basic tasks are as follows:

- Basic improvement and repair of community heritage buildings.
- Controlling improper modification, addition, alteration and demolition in relation to community heritage buildings.
- Shared streetscape and public space repair and improvement to maintain the activities of community heritage buildings.

A key challenge is to manage the heritage with the limited fund available within the community. Considering the financial realities the community bodies take the following decisions:

- The scope of the renovation works to be undertaken by the limited funding available.
- When a restoration work requires larger funds and it is difficult to collect immediately, the project is generally phased (depending on fund collection). The restoration or repair can take up to several years, while the building continues to be in use. This approach was recently used in the restoration of the *Kosaituli* mosque.



- The details of the task to be undertaken, for example: details restoration, paintings, etc. More vulnerable parts of older buildings are given priority.
- Assign persons both from the *Panchayet* committee and outside the committee to manage and supervise the task. Generally the following three types of persons are involved:
  1. Administrative persons from the *Panchayet* committee.
  2. Representative of the building (example: representative of *Mosque committee*).
  3. Person with technical knowledge of the restoration. Example: Master builder and craftsman, specialist craftsmen of *chini-tikri* etc.

### **6.6.2 Financial Management**

The local heritage is managed with limited financial resources available within the community. No external support is required. The community bodies collect and manage the fund for heritage management. Generally there are three main sources:

1. Regular contributions of community members in the form of charitable donations to mosques, temples and churches. This includes regular weekly contributions in mosques during the weekly Friday *Jumaa* prayer and yearly contributions during special religious festivals like the two *Eids* from Muslims, weekly contributions and special contributions during several *Puja* festivals from Hindus and Sunday contributions and special contributions during Christmas from Christians.
2. Special fund collected through voluntary contributions, when there is an urgent necessity to repair or restore a community heritage building (like a mosque or temple). This happens when regular contributions are not sufficient

to take care of the repair/restoration work. The donation amount is generally very small and affordable, as the common people of the neighborhoods are not very well off. It is either collected by a member of the community body or in the regular meetings attended by the community members. The cumulated amount is generally sufficient to take care of the repair/restoration work. In special cases, when there is a shortage of the target amount, it is generally covered by a few voluntary generous donation(s) from the wealthier community members.

3. The third source of fund is related to both cultural and religious events. To celebrate cultural events (like *Baishaki Mela* (fair), *Poush Mela* (fair), and Kite festival) and religious events (the two *Eids* for Muslims, several *Puja* for the Hindus). Various local events like fairs and bazaars are organized and the revenue earned from the rent of stalls or spaces are used as fund for local heritage management.

### **6.6.3 Involvement of Community Bodies in Heritage Management**

The community bodies of Old Dhaka are involved in the informal heritage management of community and private owned heritage buildings. Based on ownership, the involvement is direct and indirect in nature. The community heritage buildings are owned by the local community, unless the government intervenes to take over. Management of the community buildings is direct in nature, involving routine repair/restoration, managing funds and ensuring the continuity of the traditional craftsmen's guilds by engaging them. For privately owned buildings, the involvement is more indirect in nature; this happens by influencing, monitoring and

assisting the private owners in the limited capacity of the community bodies. The activities are summarized in Figure 52:

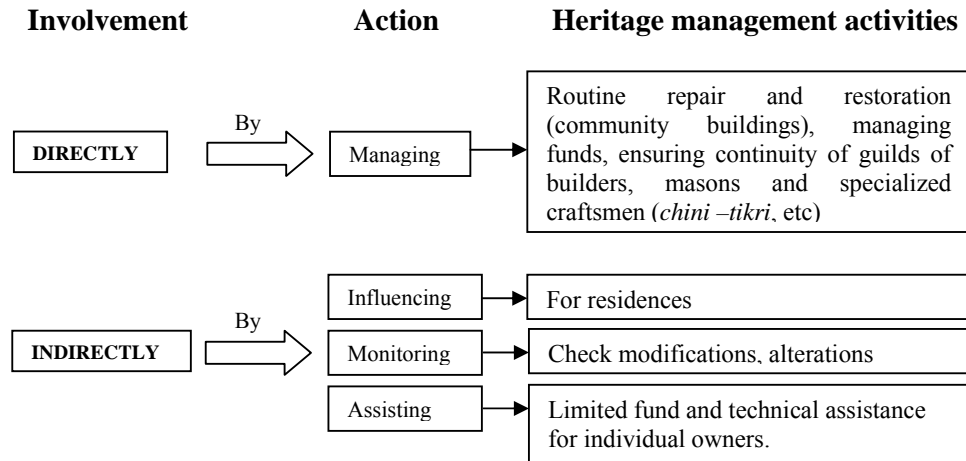


Figure 52: Involvements of community bodies in heritage management, source: author.

#### 6.6.4 Primary Contributions of the Informal Community Bodies

The Informal community bodies contribute to the continuity of the local heritage in several ways. Some of the more important issues are discussed here:

##### *1. Engaging the artisans and craftsmen in heritage management*

The informal community bodies like the *Panchayet* and *Religious committee* are involved in periodic restoration and regular maintenance, especially of the community heritage like mosques and temples. This provides necessary employment for a range of traditional masons, artisans and craftsmen. They include brick masons, carpenters, *chini-tikri* craftsmen, stone workers, mosaic craftsmen, etc. Management of the community and private heritage buildings provides a framework for continuity and retention of the traditional construction skills, use of traditional materials and methods. It also helps in training of a new generation of artisans and craftsmen. As the

community bodies have the knowledge of how these heritage buildings work they are the most knowledgeable about engaging the most appropriate groups of artisans, mason and craftsmen, expert in traditional construction methods. The economic activity generated by the heritage management activities is essential for survival of the traditional artisans and craftsmen.

## ***2. Voluntary contribution with labor and funding***

Though the specialist artisans, master masons and craftsmen (like the *chini-tikri* craftsmen) are hired for payment, there have been cases where the community members worked for free when the restoration or repair was for the good of the community. This is most common for repair and restoration work of religious heritage buildings. The voluntary contribution from the community members happens both in the form of funding and labor. The wealthier community members generally offer funding and those who cannot offer fund, try to contribute with free labor in a limited capacity. This becomes more evident in times of crisis (e.g. the community members of *Shankharibazar* voluntarily contributed with limited fund and labor to help the twelve victim families, when a six story building collapsed in *Shankharibazar* in June, 2004; killing eleven) when it is not possible for the community bodies to arrange for the fund to hire all the workers required. The labor that the community bodies provide is unskilled in nature while the skilled artisans and craftsmen are hired. When the religious heritage buildings are concerned, the faith of the believers influences the participation, as the reward for their contribution is expected in the afterlife. Generally, the community bodies make an appeal to the community members when such voluntary contribution becomes essential. It is generally observed that greater the community bond and social capital, the better the management by the community

bodies. As a result, there is a higher rate of voluntary participation in the restoration and repair work.

### ***3. Continuity of the traditional construction techniques***

The presence of active informal community bodies indirectly helps in retention of the physical fabric and the architectural heritage of the local neighborhoods through the continuity of the traditional construction techniques. The community heritage buildings are routinely repaired and restored by the informal community bodies. For privately owned heritage buildings, the repair and restored depending on the availability of fund of the owner. The traditional materials and construction techniques (like the *chini-tikri* work) are still used in the neighborhoods, which in turn help to maintain the authenticity and historical continuity of the heritage buildings. Many of these heritage buildings have beautiful ornamentation and detailing from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. For example, continuity of the traditional construction techniques is evident in the beautifully ornate *Kosaituli* mosque, which still retains the original details after nearly 100 years of construction.

The traditional construction techniques are continued with the craftsman's guilds and the patronage and supervision of the community bodies like the Panchayet. The community bodies help them both by employing regularly in the restoration work of the community buildings and also coordinating with the craftsman and masons in guilds for other sources of employment.

### ***4. Shop front houses and property subdivision***

In *Shankharibazar*, the heritage is mainly the street front row houses with shops in the ground level. Especially this housing typology gives *Shankharibazar* its unique

character. It is the responsibility of the *Panchayet* to maintain the continuity of the shop fronts when the house is inherited by a new generation. Generally the shops are subdivided into two where the house is wide enough. In cases where it is no more possible to subdivide the house any further because they are already too narrow, the *Panchayet* manages the issue of resolving the conflicts. In most cases, either the shop is shared by multiple owners or the ownership of the shop goes to one while the other(s) get a better share of the house. The ultimate goal is to maintain the historic continuity of the shop front row houses which give a sense of place of the area. The continuity of the shop front houses helps the local economy and continuity of the local craft, *Shankha*.

For example, with the pressure of modernization, if the owner of a part wants to get into a new business (and do not want to continue with the traditional crafts like *Shankha*, music instruments, etc.) that is not suitable for the historical continuity, the *Panchayet* arranges a meeting between the owners and decides how the inheritance may be divided and the party not continuing the craft may be compensated with alternate options. This happens very rarely though. As the craft is proudly passed on through generations by apprenticeship, there are very few such cases. But the local *Panchayet* manages such conflicting issues and helps to maintain the character and heritage of the area.

##### ***5. Supervision while subdividing***

Due to extreme pressure of rising populations in a limited land area, subsequent horizontal subdivision (after inheritance) is a common trend in *Shankharibazar*. The facade of the heritage buildings that were once a single building can become up to three separate facades over the years. This gradual change of façade is cleverly dealt

with some common understanding among the new owners after inheritance. This is generally decided so that the natures of the common elements are not altered with only proportion of openings changed, to cope with the added demand of the business. This decision is often taken in the *Panchayet* as it provides a common venue to discuss this type of issues of shared interest.

### **6.7 Informal Community Heritage Management: Some General Observations**

The heritage in the traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka is highly vulnerable in the face of rapid urbanization. The unique patina of the traditional places cannot be recreated or reinstated. Any undue removal and intervention in the traditional urban fabrics interrupts the essential link to the past. It is a challenge to ensure the continuity of the local heritage. The heritage of Old Dhaka is an integral part of the traditional urban fabric. As the living conditions improve with modern infrastructures and amenities, pressure for redevelopment increases on these urban fabrics. It is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain the heritage as the traditional fabrics they belong to are changing rapidly and are often being redeveloped.

Especially for those heritages that are being actively used, i.e. the *living* heritages, heritage management is a complex process. It requires active involvement of all the relevant stakeholders in the community. This only happens in the traditional environments where the communities have survived and sustained through several generations and continue to inhabit them. These communities are equipped with greater social capital to manage the local heritage. They have the vernacular knowledge of material, crafts and construction methods to ensure the continuity of the heritage. Thus, the local informal effort in heritage management has proven

successful for several generations while many of the formal interventions have failed and damaged the heritage.

The heritage management by the informal community bodies involves and engages the local community. The public participation is spontaneous. This ensures that the users are the managers. With the user's involvement, the authenticity and integrity of the local heritage continue. The following sections describe the generation observations of the informal heritage management process:

### **6.7.1 Managing Continuity of Intangible Elements**

The continuity of the intangible heritage elements is mainly maintained by the informal community bodies. They generally manage the following three types of intangible elements:

**1. Festivals and religious events:** Even with the changing urban conditions, the local communities regularly arrange the religious and cultural festivals organized by the informal community bodies. Old Dhaka continues to be at the heart of the city's cultural continuity. The main intangible elements include the crafts (*Shankha*), festivals (Bengali New Year), religious events (*Eid* and *Puja*), etc. The role of the community bodies is mostly in managing and organizing these events to ensure the continuity of these festivals, rituals and religious events.

**2. Local norms and values:** In several of the traditional neighborhoods (like *Shankharibazar*), the inhabitants are of a particular ethnic or religious background and have their own set norms and values. These are in turn reflected in the spatial formation and the architectural heritage. The communities are best knowledgeable



about the local social, cultural and religious norms and how they are manifested in their heritage. The continuity of these norms and values ensures the continuity of the architectural heritage. The management of the informal community bodies ensures this continuity.

### ***3. Unique character & significant elements***

Every traditional environment and the built heritage are unique. The local communities know the most significant elements that give their neighborhoods and heritage this unique character. Though not done formally, it has become a part of the management process to respect and save these elements. In cases, these elements are tangible, in others they are intangible or it can be both. In Shankharibazar, these are the craft of *Shankha*, the streetscape, courtyards, shop front row houses, etc. Even with rapid urbanization, effort is given to retain these elements as much as possible. This prevents these elements from completely disappearing.

## **6.7.2 Informal Heritage Management and Notion of Authenticity**

### **a. Authenticity and Continuity of Use**

In the traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka, it is not possible to freeze the *living* heritage structures (like mosques) in a particular ‘ideal’ state. The communities of Old Dhaka view the authenticity of a building in relation to the continuity of their use. The communities understand the architectural and cultural significance of the buildings. Care is taken to save the authentic characters of the heritage. However, rising demand for space has to be accommodated in some cases. For example, most of the heritage mosques of Old Dhaka are three domed with a small rectangular interior space. The

space was sufficient for the small population when they were designed, but they cannot accommodate the high number of devotees anymore. Naturally, additional buildings had to be added as the use of the mosque must continue. In most of the cases, care was taken so that the original heritage building was not disturbed.

Several of the international charters and protocols recognize the importance of maintaining authenticity in heritage management. The local practice of heritage management does not view the notion of authenticity the same way as the western notion of 'pristine' authenticity of physical fabric. The informal community bodies have to frequently repair and restore the local heritage buildings on a cyclical basis. It is natural that there are several layers of materials as the building ages. In cases, the materials used two centuries ago are no longer used, but the traditional construction technique continue most of the time. So, with the continuity of the use, the authenticity of the buildings is maintained, even though new material is used. In time the new layers become part of the heritage. Focus is given on the continuity of use and sense of place.

As the religious buildings like the community mosques and temples continue to be actively in use, generally they are in better shape. These heritage structures are easier to maintain for the community bodies as they continue to be actively used. This is especially evident in the well maintained Armenian Church, *Kosaituli* mosque and Star mosque, which has been maintained for centuries. The heritage buildings that cease to be in use are difficult to maintain as priority is given to community buildings in use. For example, owners of several of the heritage buildings in Shankharibazar have migrated to India; these abandoned houses are difficult to manage, as they are

not occupied by the original owners and the community bodies do not have the fund to manage them.

Also, the local *Panchayets* naturally have a lower level of control over the management of private owned heritage buildings. Minor maintenance work and restoration often take place according to the interest of the owner. In cases, where the repair work affects the community interest or the street character of the neighborhoods, the *Panchayets* intervene and advise the private owners to improve. The authenticity in the traditional neighborhoods is ensured in several ways of continuity. The following four (see Table 12) are more common in all the neighborhoods:

Table 12: Types of continuity in the traditional neighborhoods

Types of continuity	Example
By continuity of use	Community mosques like the Kosaituli mosque and Star mosque has been continuing with the same use for centuries.
By continuity of shared interest	Community pond of Bangshal. Even though the pond is no longer used as a source of drinking water with introduction of pipe water, the pond remains the center of the community through shared interest.
Continuity by resolving conflict of boundary issues	In several cases, both for the community and privately owned heritage buildings, conflict over boundary issues arise. The community bodies ensure the continuity of the heritage buildings by resolving the conflicts of boundary issues.
Continuity of traditional building techniques (like the <i>chini-tikri</i> )	Use of the traditional building techniques and similar (if not same) materials are used to maintain the authenticity.

Source: author.

There are several examples where the local community bodies spontaneously chose a new function, replacing an obsolete function. The adaptive reuse is often spontaneous

and commonly chosen by the community. The entire *Kosaituli* area used to be enclaves of butchers and had several butcher yards. After their functions became obsolete, the community bodies converted them into a playground. In several of the neighborhoods, after the owners migrated or ownership changed hands, former residences were replaced with commercial use like small factory and shops. In each of the cases, the authenticity of the heritage structures and the urban fabrics is understood, maintained or coordinated (directly or indirectly) by the informal community bodies for over two to three hundred years; even if the original use ceased to exist.

#### **b. Some Relevant Issues of Authenticity**

There are a few more issues relevant to the authenticity of the heritage of Old Dhaka as described here:

##### ***1. Authenticity of the original form***

There are few instances where there are almost no alterations to the original form or details of the heritage buildings. They confirm that the heritage management of the informal community bodies was responsible for this continuity. The value of the original form and details is clearly understood and valued by the community and the informal community bodies. The *Kosaituli* mosque, Pogose School and the Armenian Church, fall under this category.

##### ***2. Modification and retention***

With changing time and demand, there have been some modifications and additions done on the heritage buildings or their compounds. There are cases, where additional

blocks are added in the compound, as there is no other way to accommodate the rising demand. However, the most important quality or characteristics of the heritage buildings (for example: courtyards, main facades, the original form, etc.) are retained. This is most evident in the subsequent subdivision of the linear houses of *Shankharibazar*; where the houses went through several horizontal and vertical subdivisions and still retained their heritage value both in appearance and interior arrangements.

### *3. Character of place*

Every traditional neighborhood has its own unique character. The continuity of this unique character of the place is maintained by several important management decisions taken by the informal community bodies. While some of the decisions are taken at community meetings, others naturally carry through generations as a common understanding among the neighbors. The issues include the shared usage of common facilities like courtyards, well, passageways, street and other shared spaces.

Some of the important management decisions (in relation to maintaining the character of place) taken by the community bodies are as follows:

- a. Community heritage building: In cases of community heritage buildings like mosques for example, the knowledge of the façade, ornamentation and other details is carried on through generations and generally there is no proper documentation. The knowledge is best carried on by the master masons and the senior members of the community bodies. Any decision that is beyond the common knowledge is decided in the regular community meetings. As this

process of managing the heritage is followed, generally there are no inappropriate alterations of the heritage buildings.

- b. Private heritage building: The community bodies have lesser control over the privately owned heritage buildings. Any attempted uncharacteristic addition that may disturb the character of place is discussed with the owner and a common agreement is reached that is agreed upon by the owner and the concerned neighbors. There are alterations and modifications, but the overall quality of the place is continued and any major change is resisted.

The authenticity of the local heritage is maintained both directly and indirectly by the management of the community bodies. The notion of what is authentic and culturally significant is place specific. It is the local community bodies with their vernacular knowledge that are best equipped to ascertain what is unique or authentic of their heritage and thus needs to be managed.

### **6.7.3 Construction Methods and Other Physical Issues**

The informal community bodies are directly related to the management of several issues related to the traditional construction methods. Some of these are discussed here:

***Craftsmen***: Skilled craftsmen and artisans of traditional construction methods and crafts are vital for the continuity and authenticity of the local architectural heritage. Some of these craftsmen and artisans have their own guild, while others work individually. The community bodies co-ordinate with the craftsmen and artisans to involve them in the heritage management process. The importance of this process is

evident in several other neighborhoods where this relationship is not continued anymore resulting in a significant number of heritages being lost.

**Material:** Several of the heritage buildings in the traditional neighborhoods date back centuries. A good part of the materials used in these heritage buildings are not formally produced anymore in the city. Some of the materials are still available in old Dhaka in a limited capacity. These materials are not widely and readily available, and the practice of producing them is ever shrinking. The community bodies co-ordinate their availability in cases where they become necessary for the authenticity of a local heritage. In rare examples, an almost lost material has been revived with the active involvement of the community bodies.

***Manage urban expansion, the integrity of heritage buildings and mahalla boundary:***

Every traditional *mahalla* in Old Dhaka has an unofficial boundary. The few traditional *mahalla* that has survived the onslaught of rapid urban expansion, still continues with the original fabric, which in case of *mahallas* like *Shankharibazar* is also part of the heritage. The informal community bodies like the *Panchayet* play a very important role in controlling and checking the threats from urban expansion development and maintaining the neighborhood boundary.

In the traditional *mahallas* of Old Dhaka, the individual heritage buildings survive with the entire *mahalla*, which has its own heritage value. The *Panchayets* manage the boundary issues of the traditional neighborhoods, which is vital for the continuity of the heritage buildings and also the heritage value of the neighborhood. The important management issues are preventing inappropriate development and infringement on the heritage buildings and the *mahalla* boundary. Several of the surrounding neighborhoods do not have any informal community management system.

The impact is evident, as they have already lost several important heritage buildings. Boundary infringement and improper development have also eroded the character of these areas and diminished their heritage value. The community *Panchayets* asserts an informal control over improper urban expansion that harms the heritage buildings. The integrity of the *mahalla* boundaries ensures the continuity of the heritage buildings. This informal control is especially important for the *mahallas* like *Shankharibazar*, where the buildings are of a particular typology (narrow row houses) and one improper development can disturb the entire fabric. The overall character of the *mahalla* is maintained by management of the buildings and the boundary issues.

***Harmonious development (respecting the old):*** It is not always possible to ‘reverse the clock’ and stop all new development in the traditional fabrics. The traditional neighborhoods are always under overwhelming pressure of redevelopment. The best possible scenario is to manage the new development as far as possible so that it doesn’t destroy the heritage characters of the urban fabrics. The effort may not always be successful, but a limited degree of control exists because of the strong social influence of the community bodies in the *mahallas*. At least an effort is made so that the new development is harmonious enough to respect the older heritage buildings and doesn’t stand out as ‘sore thumbs’. The limited success of this system is evident in the traditional neighborhood with active informal community bodies, as many of the neighborhoods in the vicinity without such control have already lost a significant part of their heritage.

***Informal regulations to maintain common language:*** In the traditional *mahallas* like *Shankharibazar*, an important part of the shared heritage is the repetition of the street front openings and the continuous street level pedestrian access. The close interaction



with the street gives the narrow street its vibrancy. It is essential that all the craftsmen have a shop front to run their business. Even after consequent subdivision of several generations, the open ground level façade was continued. It has been made possible by the strong intervention and management by the local Panchayet to prevent any improper addition and retain a common language for the narrow buildings in the entire *mahalla*.

***Modification/Demolition control of heritage buildings:*** The community buildings like mosque and temples are carefully managed and guarded against modifications. As the degree of control is lesser for private owned heritage buildings, any conflict arising from improper modification or attempted demolition is taken in meetings (where the owner is present), by deliberation and common understanding. For example, special care is taken against altered shop fronts and the addition of glazed materials in *Shankharibazar*, as the shop fronts are important to the character of the area. Generally when an improper modification is attempted, it is brought into the notice of the local *Panchayet* in regular meetings. After consultation with the owner, it is generally agreed upon by concerned parties that the modifications, if it has to take place at least it should not change the character of the building front and will follow the original quality of the façade.

The success varies according to the cooperation of the owner, but the overall management helps the neighborhood retain its historic character and prevents the original details from disappearing altogether. There are few encouraging examples (they are rare though) where modifications made by the former owner are reversed and the original character of the heritage has been restored by a new owner who is more conscious of the heritage value of the building.

***Managing the streets:*** The streets are important parts of the traditional environments. Managing street details and maintaining the link between the shops and the streets is important for the continuity of the heritage. The streets are periodically maintained by the local community bodies with contributions from the shop owners, for the area adjacent to their shops. The regular maintenance has helped to retain the historic continuity of the street. Generally no major alterations in the fabric are done without the involvement of the community bodies.

#### **6.7.4 Steps of Informal Heritage Management**

There is no formal documentation procedure in the local heritage management process, except few old photographs and sketches available in some cases. These materials work as a reference when major restoration work is undertaken. Generally there are the following two steps in the informal heritage management process:

***Identification:*** Identification of heritage parts for maintenance or restoration are done periodically or on need basis. Members of the community bodies and the building management bodies (like the mosque committee) do informal surveys to identify parts of the heritage buildings that require immediate maintenance or restoration. As the fund is always limited, the restoration work is done on priority basis. The parts that are more vulnerable are given immediate attention. Matters that require urgent attention are discussed and identified in the general meetings. Issues of greater importance are recognized and generally taken care of in a hierarchical order.

***Information through continuity of knowledge:*** There is no structured documentation of the local heritage. There are instances when photographs are taken or rough sketches are done, especially while any major restoration work is done. The available

photographs, sketches and other important documents are kept by the building management committee. More generally, the details of the heritage buildings are carried on through the common knowledge of the community. The craftsmen and the master masons that originally worked in the heritage buildings are most knowledgeable about the local construction style and use of materials. They carry this knowledge through a system of apprenticeship. When the buildings are maintained or restored, either the original craftsmen or masons are employed (where they are still available) or in other cases, the next generation of apprentices is employed. The involvement of the local craftsmen or masons is crucial. As there is no formal documentation, when non-local masons are employed, they do not have the knowledge to undertake the restoration work properly. This leads to loss of authenticity of the heritage buildings, as has happened in several formal conservation projects.

#### **6.7.5 Role in Managing the Community Businesses**

In the traditional neighborhoods, the social and economic life are inseparable, the traditional skills have both a social purpose and an economic one. The business of crafts like *Shankha*, making deities, and music instruments are integrated with the social structure of the community. For the survival of the communities, it is important that the traditional businesses, often directly related to the crafts, also survive. The community infrastructures and partnerships have ongoing social and economic benefits that help the continuity of these businesses. The community businesses work on an individual and a collective level. The individual decisions are taken by the business owners. Decisions on price, supply of raw materials and production capacity are often taken on the collective level. The community bodies like the *Panchayets* or

the craftsman's guilds often take the collective decisions for the welfare of the community business. The local craft and business are vital community assets. Their continuity determines the survival of the communities. The informal community bodies help with this continuity with their management.

## **6.8 Chapter Conclusion**

The traditional neighborhoods are the product of local socioeconomic policies through a time tested process. The informal community management system respects and represents the cultural, economic, social, political preferences of the local community members. These preferences and community interests can often be beyond what is seen on the surface. Only through the informal community management are they maintained. Heritage management is a vital part of community management and the informal management saw the local heritage through the centuries. Public participation in the informal heritage management works in multiple forms and channels, involving the community members and using their knowledge and capacities in various ways. The system helps bring the entire community together on important heritage management issues, which is so vital for their survival. The system successfully administrates the collective 'bottom up' power in the local communities.

The community bodies face a greater challenge in managing the local heritage today. The communities have become more complex than before with multiple interests, making it more difficult to manage the local heritage. Some of the main problems are the rising population, lack of fund and development pressure from surrounding urban environment. Local community bodies like the *Panchayets* are still working within these restraints with their limited resources. Additional assistance would help them perform better.

## Chapter 7

### CASE STUDIES OF INFORMAL HERITAGE MANGEMNT IN OLD DHAKA

#### 7.1 Selection Criteria of Case Study Areas

Three traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka: *Kosaituli*, *Shankharibazar* and *Armanitola* were selected as research case study areas. They were formed approximately around similar times (nearly two to three hundred years ago), are similar in size and have active informal community management bodies. This made it possible to have a comparative analysis of the three neighborhoods. These neighborhoods also have some of the most important architectural heritages of Old Dhaka, both community and private in nature. Having different ethnic and religious background, the three selected neighborhoods also provide a cross section of heritage management in various types of heritage buildings like mosques, temples and churches. The case study areas have an active community management system and continuing vernacular knowledge base both in terms of spatial formation and intangible cultural assets. These are directly related to the informal heritage management in the traditional neighborhoods.

#### 7.2 Types of Architectural Heritage and Management Approaches

The informal community bodies manage the local architectural heritage with varying levels of involvement, both direct and indirect. For the different community buildings like mosques, temples, churches, schools, etc. they are directly involved in the

heritage management process. As a result they are in relatively good shape due to regular maintenance.

Beyond the community buildings, there are private residences. There are three types of residences that the informal community bodies manage, the first type used to be well managed, but now they are dilapidated as the owners migrated (to India or other areas of the city). The current occupants are not the owners and thus there is no regular maintenance. The second type are the houses with important community functions (like temple) at ground level or at the roof level. Generally their management is combined, where the informal community bodies and the private owners are involved in the heritage management. The owners receive limited financial support, both from the government during different festivals and from community fund. Due to financial constraints, the restoration or repair work is limited and irregular for these two types.

The third type is the successful business houses, like the Jatin Music and Co. in *Shankharibazar*, who are in relatively better financial position. The owners take care of the restoration of the heritage buildings and they actively set their own budget. The informal community bodies help them indirectly through technical assistance like: commissioning the master builder, arranging the specialized craftsmen and materials.

An important issue related to heritage management is tax regulation, as in most cases it governs the level of heritage management (or lack of it). In most areas, the residences fall under special tax rules that are governed by the physical condition of the houses. To take advantage of this rule, several of the houses are intentionally kept

in their original form with very little or no restoration. This in turn has helped to retain the heritage value of these residences.

### **7.3 Case Study Area 1: *Kosaituli***

Like many other traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka, *Kosaituli* was an enclave of a community sharing a particular profession. Until the recent past, *Kosaituli* has been the traditional quarter of butchers.<sup>375</sup> The name of the area originated from the profession of the majority of the residents. In Bengali, the term *Kosai* means butcher. Although very few are still engaged in the profession, the name of the area remains. The high density traditional neighborhood (see Figure 53) has some important architectural heritage like the *Kosaituli* mosque, famous for its intricate *chini-tikri* work, comparable only to the Star mosque of Armanitola. *Kosaituli* also has one of the most active *Panchayets* of Old Dhaka, with its distinct *Panchayet* house. Most of the neighborhood is mainly residential with some traditional factories with shop fronts.

The majority of the population are descendants of the original *Kosais*, who spoke Urdu and came from different parts of India during the Mughal period. Even though the recent generations have changed their profession, they are still proud of their heritage. The traditional intangible cultural elements survived due to this.

---

<sup>375</sup> . Mamoon, 2008a, p 56.



Figure 53: *Kosaituli* location map in Dhaka city, *Kosaituli* map and Aerial view (circle showing location of the *Kosaituli* mosque), source: [www.banglapedia.org](http://www.banglapedia.org), accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2010, Dhaka City Corporation and [www.google.com/earth/index.html](http://www.google.com/earth/index.html), accessed on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2010.



The rest of the population settled later and are low in number, but have been living in the area for many years now. The inhabitants of this locality were followers of Maulana Keramat Ali and the females excelled in embroidery works exported to Central Asia and Europe.<sup>376</sup>

### **7.3.1 *Kosaituli Panchayet***

The *Kosaituli Panchayet* is one of the oldest and most active community bodies in Old Dhaka. The *Panchayet* house was established in 1974. The *Panchayet* members meet regularly at the *Panchayet* house to attend regular and special meetings (Figure 54). The *Panchayet* house is highly ornamented with beautiful *chini-tikri* work. The *chini-tikri* work was done by the same craftsmen who worked in the *Kosaituli* mosque. The strong presence of the *Panchayet* house helps to improve interaction with the community and invites the spontaneous participation of the community members.

Currently there are 12 members in the *Kosaituli Panchayet*, who are selected through a lottery. Most of the *Panchayet* members are highly respected and socially active local residents of the community. Some of them also represent the mosque committee, which makes it easier to distribute responsibilities between the two committees. *Panchayet* meetings are arranged regularly, generally once a month and also when there is an urgent matter to discuss. The community members also attend these meetings. The activities of the *Panchayet* are organized. The meetings are held more regularly close to the religious event like the two *Eids* and the holy month of *Ramadan*.

---

<sup>376</sup> . Ibid.



Figure 54: Different parts of the ornate *Kosaituli Panchayet* house, source: author.

During the *Ramadan*, *Panchayet* takes care of responsibilities like distributing the *Zakat*, mandatory religious donations by the Muslims collected through the *Kosaituli*

mosque. The *Panchayet* makes a list of the needy people in the local community and distributes the *Zakat* (mandatory religious alms) among them. The fund is also used for solving different social problems and community activities. The community members also actively participate in these activities. The *Panchayet* also helps the *Kosaituli* mosque committee in managing the heritage mosque. *Panchayet* shares a certain part of the responsibilities with the mosque committee on heritage management, which includes helping with arranging the specialist craftsmen and special funds required when major restoration works are undertaken.

A religious school named *Muslim Academy* is housed on the upper floors of the eight storey building that houses the *Panchayet* on the ground floor (see Figure 54). The religious school generates annual revenue of about seven to eight lac taka (approximately US\$ 10,000 – 12,000). This income is used to buy new properties for the *Panchayet*. These new properties add to the existing revenue, which is used to run the activities of the *Panchayet*, including heritage management.

### **7.3.2 Kosaituli Mosque**

#### ***Background and significance***

The *Kosaituli* mosque is a three domed rectangular mosque of the British colonial period, located in the *Kosaituli* neighborhood in Bangshal area of Old Dhaka (see Figure 54). It was constructed in 1919 AD and is one of the older surviving mosques in Old Dhaka and has been the main mosque of the neighborhood for a century. The

mosque is at the heart of the neighborhood and has been one of the main social gathering places of the local Muslim community. The mosque is a *living* heritage and a recognized landmark of Old Dhaka. It has been in use as a mosque for the last 90 years and is still actively used by the local Muslim community.

It is one of the finest surviving examples of colonial mosque architecture. It is also considered one of the best surviving examples of the *chini-tikri* craft displaying some of the finest examples of 20<sup>th</sup> century *chini-tikri* work (see Figure 55). The *chini-tikri* consists of white and colored broken porcelain pieces in laid in different floral and geometric patterns. Most of the original *chini-tikri* craftsmen came from Pakistan. The present day craftsmen are their third generation descendants through the system of apprenticeship.



Figure 55: Chini-tikri ornamentation in exterior and interior of *Kosaituli* mosque, source: author.

### ***Intangible elements and cultural events***

Beyond the physical heritage, there are several intangible heritage elements closely associated with the *Kosaituli* mosque. The mosque has been an integral part of the social and religious life of the local Muslim community for nearly a century, with celebration of different religious events and festivals. The two main religious festivals of the Muslims, *Eid ul Fitar* and *Eid ul Azha* are celebrated centered around the mosque. The main activities of the two festivals include religious congregations, religious and cultural events of the community, fairs, etc. Besides these, during the *Ramadan*, the holy month of the Muslims, the mosque is used as a center for different religious activities like collection and distribution of *Zakat* (mandatory religious alms) to the poor of the community. It is due to these types of activities that the mosque remains at the center of social life of the community.

### ***Informal heritage management activities***

The *Kosaituli* mosque management committee is one of the most active mosque committees of Old Dhaka (see Figure 56). They are mainly responsible for the management of the heritage mosque along with help from the local *Panchayet*, which is also highly active, compared to few other neighborhood committees. Several of the senior mosque committee members are also members of the *Kosaituli Panchayet*. There are currently 21 members in the *Kosaituli* mosque committee.

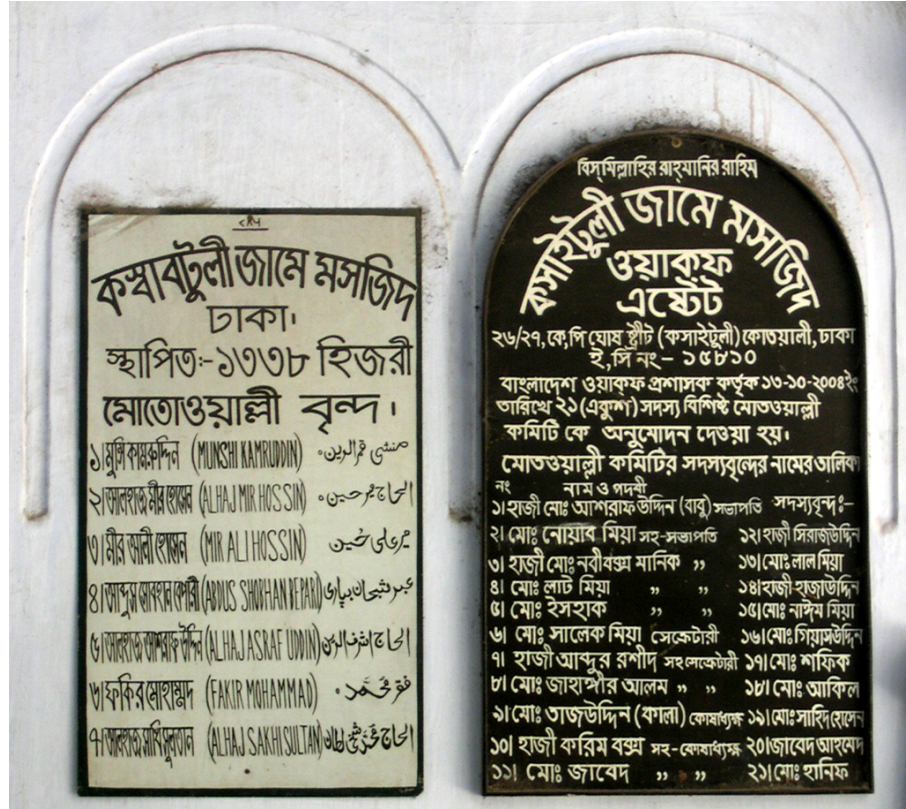


Figure 56: List of the members of the *Kosaituli* mosque management committee (past and present) displayed on the mosque wall, source: author.

The *Kosaituli* mosque is one of the few remaining heritage mosques that are still completely owned by the people of the local community, without any government intervention. The members of the community bodies expressed that they are very proud of this ownership and intend to continue with the local management.

Even though the mosque was listed as one of the 93 protected heritage buildings by the government<sup>377</sup>, till now there has been no formal intervention from the Government. The community bodies have actively refrained from asking for any government aid or intervention in fear of losing their ownership by a formal takeover by government (as happened in the case of the nearby Star mosque in Armanitola).

<sup>377</sup>. Dutta and Billah, 2009, March 23.

The community is rather content with management of the community bodies with local resources. The mosque has been and continues to be actively used and is informally managed by the mosque committee. All aspects of the heritage are managed by the local community.

The mosque has remained in its original form. The original *chini-tikri* work has survived and carefully restored several times over the last century. The heritage management activities include regular repair and restoration, surface cleaning, etc. No major repair work of structural parts was required till now. The *chini-tikri* work has actually ensured that there is no condensation or vegetation growth on the surface. As *chini-tikri* work is relatively durable, lesser repair work is required such as painting. Generally a regular survey and routine repair work is done before the two *Eid* festivals. Also special maintenance work is done yearly during the Arabic month of *Ramadan*.

The main source of funding for the heritage management activities (see Figure 57) is regular and special donations (collected with announcement) from the local mosque users and property owners. Also, during the *Ramadan*, the holy month of the Muslims, larger sums of donations are collected, as greater rewards are expected in the afterlife for religious activities during this month. The main sources of funding for managing the heritage mosque are as follows:

1. Income from properties owned by the mosque (see Figure 57)
  - Rent from a three storied house opposite the mosque.
  - Rent from several shops owned by the mosque.



- A large residential building owned by the mosque is now under the process of demolition for construction of a new shopping center. The mosque committee is expecting that once the shopping center is completed, it will generate more funds for the managing the mosque.

## 2. Donations

- Regular donations (throughout the week and on Fridays from the donation boxes, see Figure 57)
- Large individual donations for special restoration/repair work. If there is a shortage of fund during major repair and restoration works, application for donation is made especially to the generous donors of the community for donation in larger amounts.

Revenues of Kosaituli Mosque			Expenses of Kosaituli Mosque		
1	Revenue from the Friday donations and donation box from 05/03/2004 to 02/09/2009	4,87,800 tk	1	Total expenses from 279 vouchers	5,42,338 tk
			2	Expenses for Haroon's tiles	35,000 tk
2	Revenue from the donation box of the ablution space 09/04/2009 to 25/09/2009	50,318 tk	3	Expenses for Mr. Jasim	87,600 tk
3	Revenue of 21 pages (of 100) from the receipt book no 5 and 23 pages (of 100) from the receipt book no 6	97,250 tk	4	Expenses for plumber Jewel	12,000 tk
4	Revenue of 55 pages (of 100) from the receipt book no 4 : 65,600 – Withdrawal by Mr. Salek 18,000, 65,600 - 18,000 =	47,600 tk	5	Expenses for grill technician Ramzan	17,205 tk
5	Withdrawal by <i>Shabhapati</i> Babu Haji from bank	1,95,000 tk	6	Expenses for truck driver	12,800 tk
6	From Mr. Javed	35,000 tk	7	Expenses for washing brick and sand	12,670 tk
7	Advance rent for the two rooms	30,000 tk	8	Expenses for Ilias's tiles	22,600 tk
8	Rent from the house of Mr. Arjoo	45,000 tk	9	Total expenses for the labour and technician for the years 2004 and 2005	1,96,196 tk
	<b>Total</b>	<b>9,87,968 tk</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>9,42,409 tk</b>

Figure 57: Notice showing revenue and expenditure of 2009 for *Kosaituli* mosque management, source: collected by author from the mosque notice board.

The *chini-tikri* work is relatively durable compared to other forms of ornamentations. Still, after several years they need to be restored. The *chini-tikri* work of the mosque, especially the interior, became vulnerable around the turn of the new millennium. The mosque committee decided that the interior has to be restored immediately. But it required a large sum of about 17 lac taka (approximately US\$ 25,000). During the holy month of *Ramadan*, Mr. Kamal, a local businessman, was so moved by the recital of the *Quran* by his younger brother during the prayers that he decided to donate the entire sum. There have been other precedents of similar donations of larger sums.

The current *chini-tikri* restoration was done during 2004-2005. The work took nearly two years and was headed by a senior master craftsman of *chini-tikri*. Due to funding limitations, the restoration is generally done on a need basis. For example, the mosque interior was more vulnerable and required immediate attention. So, the interior was restored first (during 2004-2005), which cost about 17 lac taka (approximately US\$ 25,000). The mosque committee plans to restore the mosque exterior next, which is estimated to cost about 30 lac taka (approximately US\$ 43,000).

### ***Threats and challenges***

Even though the *Kosaituli Panchayet* and the *Kosaituli Mosque Committee* are highly active community bodies, they are not free of internal conflicts. In *Kosaituli*, the most recent source of conflict was the selection process of a new group of leaders and members of the *Kosaituli Mosque Committee* during 2004-5. The leadership is

deemed highly prestigious in the traditional neighborhood. The current *Mosque committee* members replaced the long serving older committee members, who served for several decades. The community became divided over the selection, as a good number of the community members didn't accept the new selection for being unfair. For them, the older Mosque Committee members were more honest and knowledgeable. The conflict ultimately continued into the heritage management activities, as the selection of the *Kosaituli Mosque committee* was nearly simultaneous to the last major restoration work done in the mosque during 2004-2005.

Over the years, there has been a great increase in the number of Muslims in the local community. The original structure can barely accommodate about 100 worshippers. A four story additional block had to be added to the east to accommodate the increasing number of worshippers and also to keep the heritage mosque in its original form. The extension of the mosque to the east, though inevitable, always remains a threat to the original mosque. Recently there have been some conflicts and disagreements between the newly selected mosque committee members with former committee members over the management of the mosque and the new extension and restoration. This mainly happened due to the difference of ideals. The new mosque committee leaders and members shared conflicting ideas and opposing views on what the correct approach to heritage management should be for the *Kosaituli* mosque; especially the restoration work and its continuity in the newly added block.

The former committee members strongly felt that for the authenticity of the heritage mosque. It was suggested by several members of the former mosque committee to replicate the *chini-tikri* ornamentation of the original mosque in the extension of the

mosque ablution space and other parts of the ground floor extension, so the new extensions don't contrast too much with the original mosque. However, it was rejected by the more influential new Mosque Committee members arguing that the cost will be beyond the means of the mosque fund.

Basically the issue of restoration decisions and few other similar issues related to community leadership, created a great tension in the *Kosaituli mahalla*. The conflict nearly turned into violent clashes between the followers of the two groups. Fortunately, the situation gradually became normal with the intervention of the elders of the *mahalla* and further discussion, and the conflict was resolved before the committee's capacity to operate was compromised. This incident shows that there is always the threat of similar conflicts that can disrupt the heritage management activities of even the most active community bodies; as they are not beyond internal conflicts and problems.

Another threat is the diminishing number of specialist craftsmen. The craftsmen of *chini-tikri* are becoming increasingly rare. Several of the senior craftsmen have died and others have left the profession as only a limited number of jobs are available. The master craftsman employed in the last restoration, locally known as *Bawani ostar*, is one of the few remaining active craftsmen in the profession. The members of the community bodies expressed their concern that they are not sure whether they will find such quality craftsmen when the next restoration will be required.

#### 7.4 Case Study Area 2: *Shankharibazar*

*Shankharibazar* is one of the oldest neighborhoods of Old Dhaka, dating back to about 300 years, according to local oral history. The traditional neighborhood has the highest population density in the city. Nearly 12,000 people live in about 4.6 acres of land, with 157 houses on both sides of a 600 foot long (see Figure 58) narrow street.<sup>378</sup> *Shankharibazar* is the traditional enclave of the *Shankharis*, the specialist craftsmen of *Shankha*, a special type of bangle made of conch shells, which the Hindu married women wear.<sup>379</sup> Almost the entire population is Hindu, most of them descendants of the original inhabitants. The narrow row houses are two to eight storied with some having more than 100 people sharing it. The width is as narrow as six feet, with the length up to 80 to 100 feet in some cases. The area has some significant architectural heritages representing various styles spanning three centuries. There is an active *Panchayet* in the area who manages the local architectural heritage.

*Shankharibazar* is an ensemble of heritage buildings of various types where the entire range of narrow row houses and temples share and impart the heritage value. Naturally, the issues of informal heritage management are different from individual heritage buildings. The case shows how relevant issues like informal community regulations, property subdivision, community co-operation, shared usage, etc. contribute to the continuity of heritage of the traditional neighborhood.

---

<sup>378</sup> . Imamuddin, 1990, pp. 121-123.

<sup>379</sup> . Glassie & Mahmud, 2008.

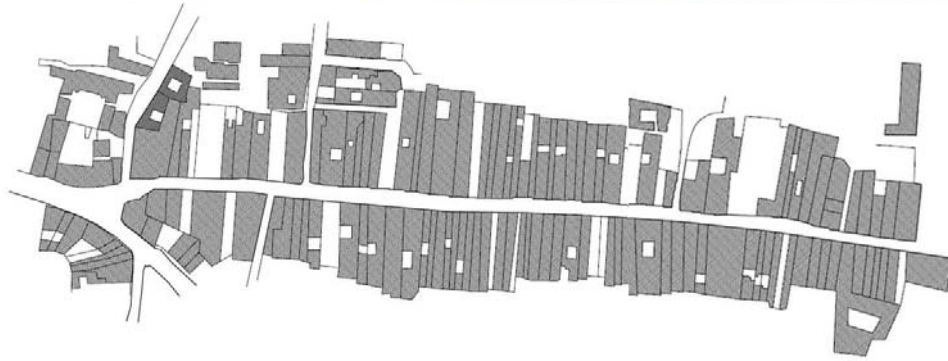
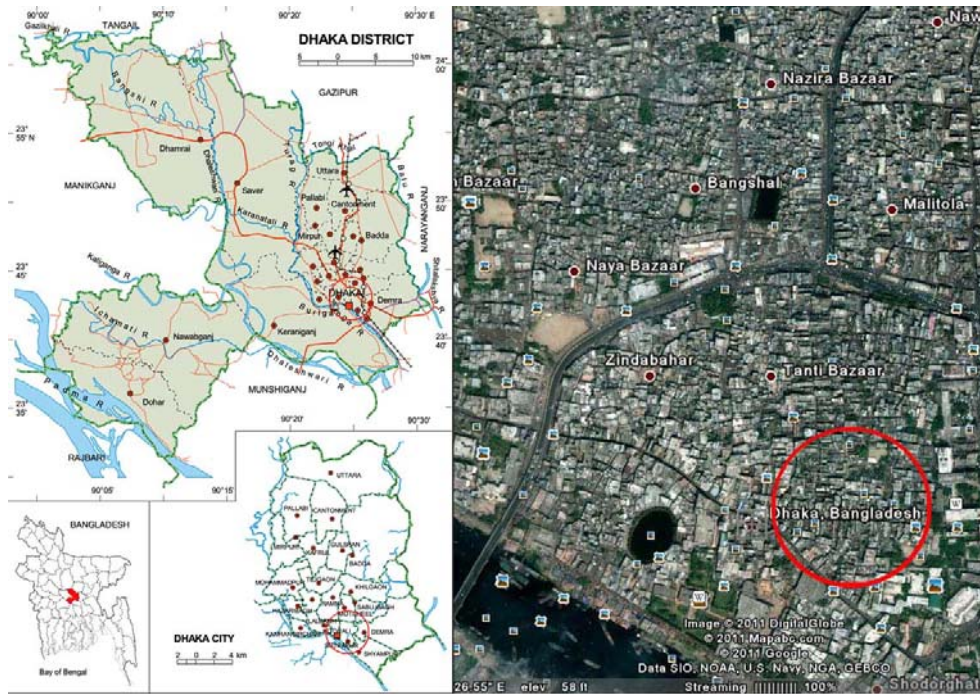


Figure 58: *Shankharibazar* location map in Dhaka city, *Shankharibazar* map and Aerial view, source: [www.banglapedia.org](http://www.banglapedia.org), accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2010 author and [www.google.com/earth/index.html](http://www.google.com/earth/index.html), accessed on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2010.



Figure 59: Vibrant street life and rich architectural heritage of *Shankharibazar*, source: author and [www.thedailystar.net](http://www.thedailystar.net), accessed on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2010.

#### **7.4.1 Linear Row Houses of Shankharibazar: Background and Significance**

The unique narrow row houses of *Shankharibazar* developed to meet the need of sharing the busy street front for business. The houses went through multiple property subdivision of subsequent generations. Some of the houses are as narrow as six to eight feet. As the neighborhood could not expand horizontally anymore, the extremely narrow plans led to vertical integration of various functions to accommodate the rising population. The inner spaces are horizontally segregated (with clearly defined public and private zones) by clever use of courtyards and formed by inward facing living spaces. Dating back as early as late 19<sup>th</sup> century, these row houses are the most significant architectural heritage of the area. The architecture is essentially hybrid with four distinct influences: Mughal, Late Mughal, Colonial, Raj style (see Figure 59). There are various architectural elements mainly influenced by architecture of various parts of India and Europe, primarily Britain. Despite the hybrid architecture, the houses are basically traditional in their arrangement and hierarchy of space. The services are set to the back with the street front reserved for the shops. The prominent

elements are narrow street facades, temples, deep courtyards; extremely narrow linear plan and hybrid architecture (see Figure 59, 60, 61 and 62).

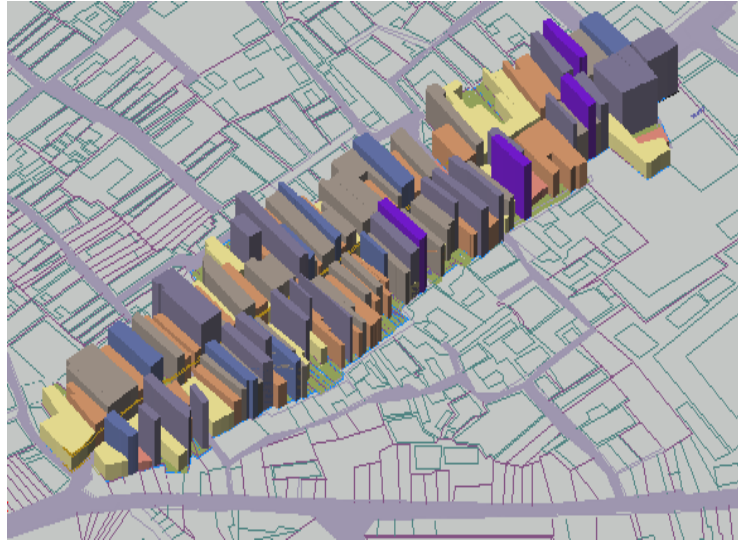


Figure 60: 3D animation showing the linear row houses of *Shankharibazar*, source: Urban Study Group

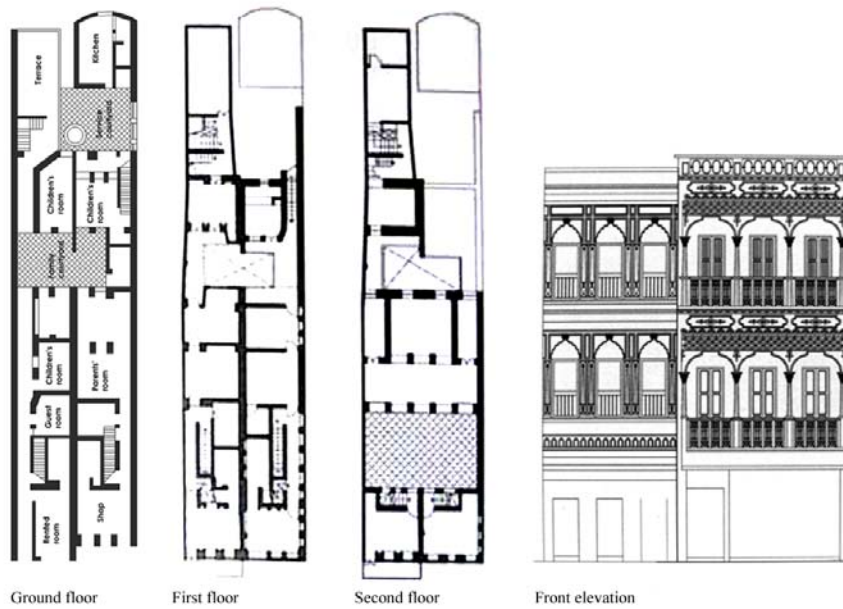


Figure 61: Plan and elevations of house 62 and 63 in *Shankharibazar*, source: author and Urban Study Group



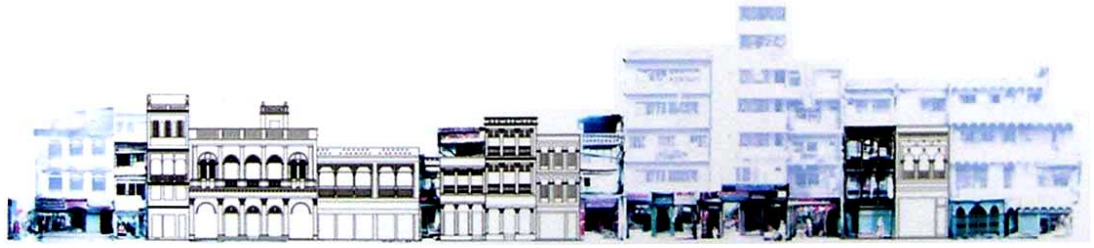


Figure 62: Combined elevation of liner row houses of *Shankharibazar*, Source: Urban Study Group

### 7.4.2 Intangible Elements and Cultural Events

The major *Puja* festivals of the Hindu religion like the *Durga*, *Swarashwati*, *Lakshmi*, *Kali*, *Janmashtami*, are the main religious events. They involve processions and cultural performance. Several of the heritage buildings are the main venue for arranging the *Puja* with their ground floor and roof temples. A vacant lot is kept for *Puja mandap* (stage). This is a community property, kept to arrange *Puja* for community interest. *Durga Puja*, *Lakshmi Puja* and *Swarashwati Puja* and other *Pujas* are arranged here. The Bengali festivals like the new year on *Pohela Baishakh* (14<sup>th</sup> of April) and *Poush Mela* (winter fair) are celebrated with cultural rallies, performances and street and wall paintings. The Government only provides limited funds during the *Durga Puja* and other major *Puja* celebrations. The local *Panchayet* plays a very important role in managing these cultural activities, which ensures the continuity of the intangible cultural links.

### 7.4.3 Informal Heritage Management Activities

In *Shankharibazar*, the *Panchayet* has been managing the local architectural heritage for over two centuries without any active support from the Government. There is no voting system in the *Shankharibazar Panchayet*; the members are selected through a

lottery. Currently there are 21 members of the *Shankharibazar Panchayet*. The members take care of different types of responsibilities like finance, records, etc. The decisions taken by the *Panchayet* are generally respected. As this is a close-knit community of Hindus, the entire social structure is run by the *Panchayet*. Though generally not required, the common members of the community get to express their opinion in the decisions taken by the *Panchayet* in special circumstances (like when there is an emergency).

### 1. Space Formation and Community Coordination

The aerial view of *Shankharibazar* (see Figure 63) shows that during the early settlement, religious norms governed the space formation of *Shankharibazar*.



Figure 63: Aerial view showing a clear shift to cardinal axis in space formation of *Shankharibazar*, source: Drawn by author, image source: [www.google.com/earth/index.html](http://www.google.com/earth/index.html), accessed on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2010.

Figure 63 shows the clear shift of axis compared to the surrounding urban fabric. The city fabric of Old Dhaka naturally followed the orientation towards the *Buriganga*

River, as it was the main trade route by water. *Shankharibazar* was established about 300 years ago by a majority of Hindu population who required house temples and temples within the residential fabric. The Hindu temples need to be placed to the cardinal axis. Thus, it was decided by the local community bodies that all the houses were to be placed by the North-South axis. This was possible as the entire population of the neighborhood was (and still is) Hindu and due to the strong presence of informal community bodies.

## 2. Property Subdivision

Property Subdivision and extension of the linear row houses are closely related to the architectural heritage management of the neighborhood. As the houses share boundary walls, the subdivision and extensions are generally done after consulting the local *Panchayet*, so that there are no disputes. Linear and backward subdivision can be seen in the following types as shown in Figure 64 and 65.

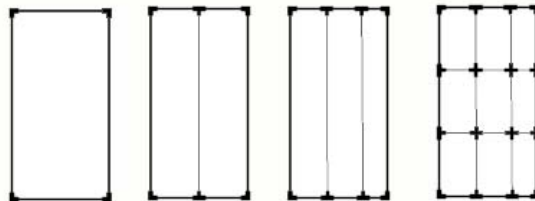


Figure 64: Diagrammatic representation of linear and transverse horizontal types of property subdivision in *Shankharibazar* (shown in plan), source: author.

Another important issue is the use of shared staircases where possible and it is generally determined by the *Panchayet*. As the spaces are very tight and the households are subdivided into multiple ownership it often becomes a critical issue to place the staircases and this conflict is often managed by the *Panchayet*. A common understanding is reached for shared usage of the staircase. This is a very critical issue

that has contributed to the greater compactness of the linear row houses with increased efficiency in the plans. Several examples can be seen in *Shankharibazar* as Figure 65 shows the linear houses.

Examination of the plans of the row houses reveals that there are at least three development stages where subdivision (by width) and/or extension (by length towards back) took place. Figure 65 shows these stages in the plans. For example, house number 29 and 30 used to be a single house. The three stages of subdivision by width are shown in light to dark grey, while the two stages of extension toward back are shown in brown. A similar subdivision is shown in Figure 61. In each of the stages, an additional courtyard and staircase was added where possible (see Figure 66).

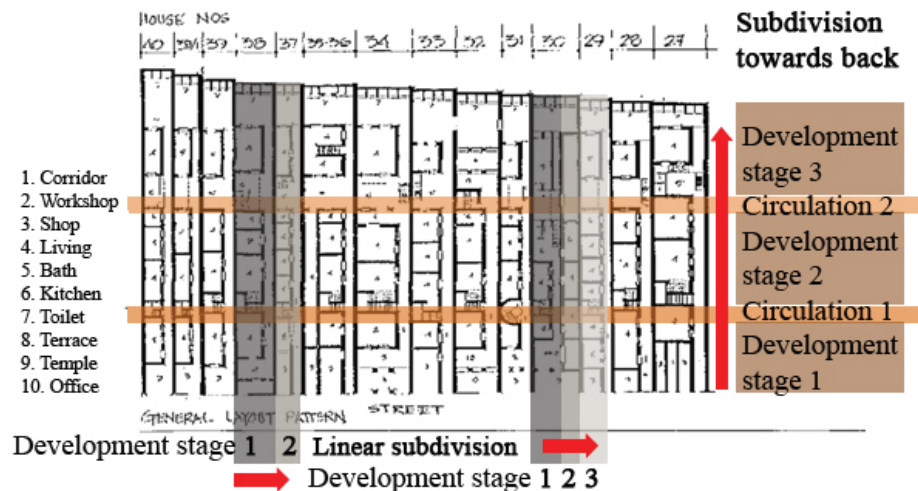


Figure 65: Developmental stages in the residential subdivision and extension, source: Drawn by the author, original plan: Imamuddin, 1991, p 123.



Figure 66: A row house of *Shankharibazar* with open to sky courtyard, source: [www.thedailystar.net](http://www.thedailystar.net), accessed on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2010.

The sketches in Figure 67 show the tentative three dimensional formations of the development stages where spaces like the courtyards, rooftop terraces and staircases were shared during the subdivision and/or extension.

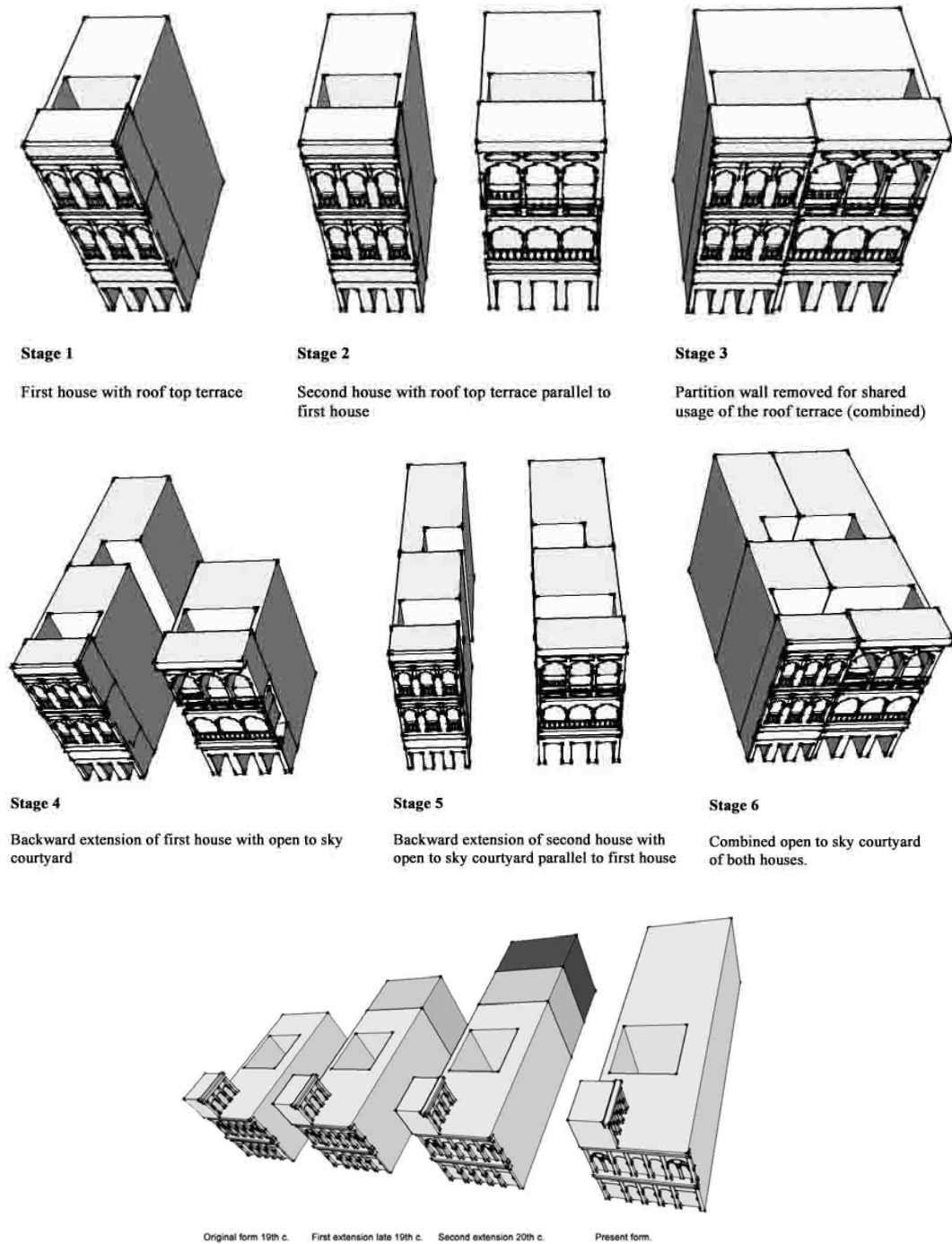
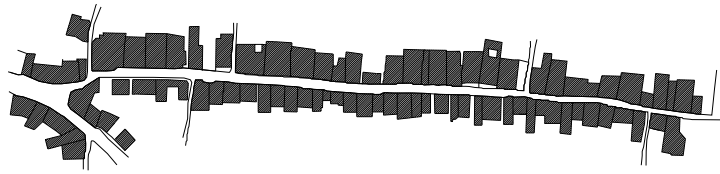


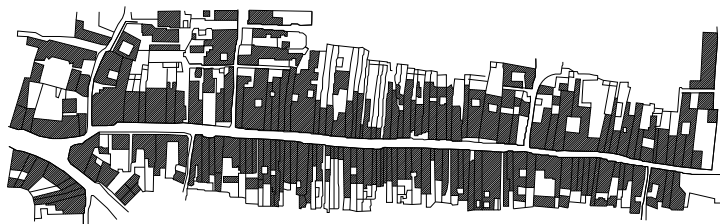
Figure 67: Sketch showing different stages of property subdivision and shared usage of courtyards and roof top terraces in *Shankharibazar*, source: Ahmed, 2011, p 81.



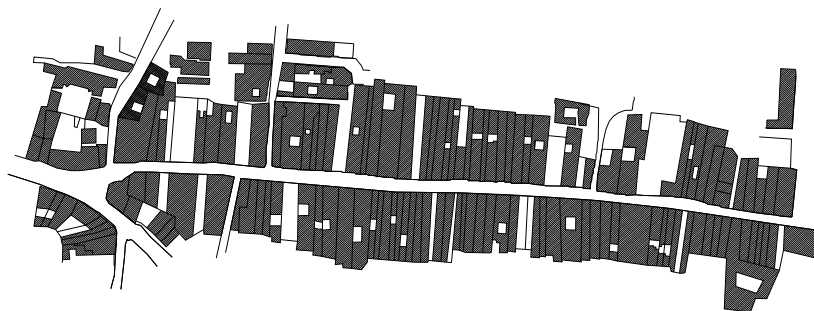
Map of Shankharibazar – late 18<sup>th</sup> century



Map of Shankharibazar – mid 19<sup>th</sup> century



Map of Shankharibazar – 1940



Map of Shankharibazar – 2006

Map 10: Maps showing transformation of linear row houses of *Shankharibazar*, source: author.

The maps ( Map 10) of *Shankharibazar* (from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to present) give an idea of how the original houses, which were significantly wider, were gradually

subdivided and extended towards the back into the linear row houses of today with property subdivision of subsequent generations, over the span of two to three centuries.

### 3. Other Activities Related to Heritage Management

Some of the important heritage management activities include regular surveys of heritage buildings before important religious or cultural events, survey of vulnerable heritage buildings (that require immediate action), deliberation and deciding the parts to be repaired, fund raising and finally the restoration and maintenance activities. In the following sections, some important activities related to the heritage management are discussed.

#### *Phasing of conservation activities for the living heritage*

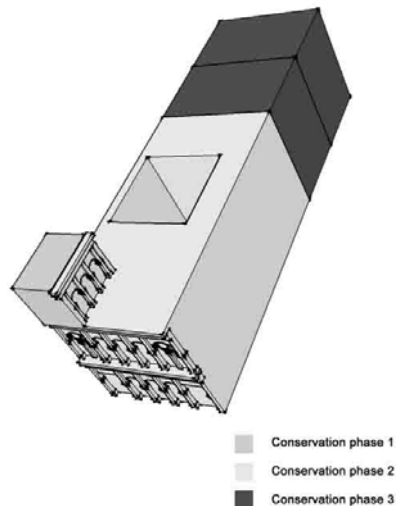


Figure 68: Different Conservation phases, source: author.

Most of the residences are *living heritage* and are actively inhabited. Due to the high number of residents, it is not possible to evacuate the residences during restoration or

other conservation activities. So, with coordination of the *Panchayet*, the conservation activities are phased as Figure 68 shows.

Phases 1 and 2 are more public in nature with access to roof temple. This can be called the Public part. The part towards the back can be called the Private part. When conservation Phases 1 and 2 take place, the owners shift to the Private part. When the maintenance is done in the Public part they shift to the Public part and then the maintenance of the Private part takes place.

***Sharing use of common space and utilities: community interest over self***

When it comes to shared use of common spaces (like shared temples and their access), in cases of conflict of interest, personal interest is sacrificed when community interest (even under the high density living conditions) is deemed of greater importance by the *Panchayet*. As the street is narrow and a setback was required for temples to be set, this type of space sharing is common for the community interest.

This system also helps in the continuity of intangible cultural heritage like customs, festival and rituals, which are generally organized and managed by the *Panchayet*. The sharing of common spaces is practiced during the major religious and cultural festivals like the *Puja* for different Hindu deities and the Bengali New Year celebrations. As the narrow street is often inadequate for holding such events, many of the households have their shop front converted into public activity space; this is arranged by the local *Panchayet* in consultation with the owner of the concerned residences.

Another important issue managed by the *Panchayet* is shared usage of utilities in the high density neighborhood (see Figure 69). Many of the residences have open to sky



courtyards with wells for supply of fresh water. As many of the houses still do not have a regular water supply or even modern plumbing, they have to rely on the wells. As many of the houses are too narrow to have a courtyard of their own, it is a common practice to share the wells. This arrangement is generally agreed upon among the owners of the concerned households agreeing to the common terms and conditions of use. If there is any conflict of interest, it is solved by the *Panchayet*. The implication is often seen in the shared maintenance of the courtyards; which are generally in better condition than other parts of the households, sometimes even the



Figure 69: Open to sky courtyards with shared utilities and their circulation. Source: Author and [www.thedailystar.net](http://www.thedailystar.net), accessed on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2010.

front. Also the growth pattern of the linear households when they are subsequently subdivided and extended towards back, is governed by this rule of shared usage of common space. In some cases the backyard is also shared under similar conditions. The maintenance is also shared by the respective users.

### ***Shared roof top temple***

Where space is too tight to construct a temple on the ground, it is a common practice to construct temples on the roof (see Figure 70) which also act as the ‘head’ for a house, being the most sacred and thus placed on top. Most of them are for family deities, but several are commonly worshipped and require common access. Though

they are located on the roof of a private property, it is a common practice to place a common staircase used both by the occupants of the house as well as worshippers coming from other households of the neighborhood. The location of such common staircases is generally determined by the *Panchayet* by discussion with the owner of the household and by consensus of the community.

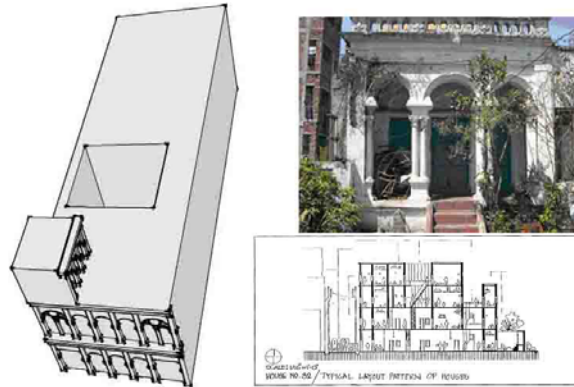


Figure 70: Shared roof top temples. Source: Imamuddin, 1991, p 122 and author.

### ***Overall neighborhood boundary management issues***

Unlike other communities, the spatial layout is special in *Shankharibazar* for religious reasons. As such, where the linear households end, there is a distinct change in urban



Map 11: Map showing neighborhood boundary condition in *Shankharibazar* with adjacent neighborhoods. Source: Urban Study Group.

pattern (Map 11) and often there are conflicts with surrounding neighborhoods over boundary issues. It is one of the important duties of the community *Panchayet* to look after, manage and settle the conflicts arising from the neighborhood boundary issues. Often the issues of conflict are solved in informal meetings between the two adjacent communities and ultimately the decision taken is accepted by the concerned parties.

### ***Multiple ownerships***

An important conflict management issue for the local *Panchayet* is that of multiple ownerships. The property subdivision of several generations and different types of occupancy often gives rise to conflict of property interest which often becomes very critical and needs greater community involvement. As there are no legal documents to prove ownership in many cases, the community relies on generations of wisdom passed on through the community bodies. As a united community of Hindus, the *Panchayet* decides on delicate issues related to property and often settles them in agreement to all, as there is the critical issue of multiple ownerships of several of the residences. It is almost impossible to resolve such critical issues without the involvement of the community bodies.

## **4. Living Heritage: Threats and Challenges**

The *Shankharibazar Panchayet* has been successfully managing the living heritage of *Shankharibazar* with several limitations, to the best of its abilities till now, enjoying community support along the way. Unfortunately, it is getting increasingly complicated with rising population, ageing buildings, limited resources, rising prices of construction materials, challenging economic conditions and increasing pressure

for urban development. The trade of *Shankha* is also dwindling due to the rising price of the raw materials. Assistance is required to help the *Panchayet* save the heritage and revitalize economic activities. The available fund in the community is not sufficient to take care of all types of maintenance and restoration. External financial support is required. Legal and technical support from the government is required to better maintain the community boundary and prevent illegal infringement.

#### **7.4.4 Pogose School**

##### ***Background and significance***

The Pogose School is located on Chittaranjan Avenue at *Shankharibazar* of old Dhaka. It is one of the oldest surviving schools of Dhaka from the British colonial period (see Figure 71). ‘Pogose High School was established in Dhaka in 1848 as the first private school in the country by N P Pogose, an influential Armenian merchant and *Zamindar* (landowner). First, it was housed in the ground floor of Pogose's residence and was known as *Pogose Anglo-Vernacular School at Dacca* and later shifted to the present building in the 1850s. In 1867, the school had 500 boys on its roll and became the largest school in Bengal.’<sup>380</sup> It has continued to be in use as a school for 163 years. The school compound is about 5-acre (20,000 m<sup>2</sup>). There are two new blocks along with the original heritage school building.

The school is one of the most important landmarks of Old Dhaka and *Shankharibazar*. It is one of the finest surviving examples of the colonial school architecture of the British colonial period (see Figure 71). Built in neo-classical order, there is an arcaded

---

<sup>380</sup> . Mamoon, 2008a, pp. 159-161.



Figure 71: Image collage showing different parts of the Pogose High School, source: author

veranda on the ground floor and colonnaded veranda on the first floor. Wooden lattice windows were constructed for shading. Portico with battlements, circular columns and triangular pediment are some important architectural features of the building. The building has circular columns in grand order with Ionic capitals. It has a triangular pediment to highlight the central entrance. The central portion of the veranda on the first floor is highlighted with three projected bays that include four columns. The heritage school building has some of the finest wood and iron craftsmanship of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the louvers, doors, windows, shades and railings. It has fine brick arches and other elegant details of brick work like the dentil range at the cornice.

### ***Intangible elements and cultural events***

The school compound has been the place of several historically significant incidents in Dhaka. The school and the adjacent field are witness to historic assemblies of poets, philosophers and prominent political personalities of the country. One of the most prominent Bengali poets, Michael Modhushudan Dutta, recited his famous poem on Dhaka in this school field.<sup>381</sup> The school has several prominent personalities in its list of alumni. It is closely associated with the Armenian community of Dhaka and has been a prominent school of Old Dhaka for over a century and continues to be one of the main social gathering places of the neighborhood and also of Old Dhaka.

The school yard is shared for important cultural events like the *Baishakhi Mela* (fair of Bengali New Year), *Poush Mela* (winter fair) and the kite festival. The local *Panchayet* arranges neighborhood events, festivals and performances in the school

---

<sup>381</sup> . Ibid, p 161.

compound. The school ground also serves as a community open space, especially after school hours.

### ***Informal heritage management activities***

The school is under private ownership and not protected by the Government. The school has survived in its original form for about 150 years, which is a testament to the success of the informal heritage management. With rising numbers of students and the need to increase capacity, it was decided by the school committee that the heritage building is not proper to school such a large number of students. Two new blocks were added for classrooms and the heritage building is only used for administrative and co-curricular activities now. This step ensured that there has been no alteration in the heritage buildings to increase capacity. The building is now used for administrative purposes only while classes are held in the other two blocks. Regular maintenance and a coat of pink paint ensure that there is no condensation on the surface and no vegetation growth.

The school is informally managed by the Pogose school committee with occasional help from the local *Panchayet*. Several members of the school committee also represent the local *Panchayet*. The school committee is selected through lottery from a pool of candidates who are considered respected and capable of the responsibility in the neighborhood. The school is managed by local private finance in the form of the school fund, formed through donations. The routine and yearly maintenance, repair and restorations are made from school funds. The cultural activities like the fairs earn limited revenue for the school fund.

Minor repair works are done based on need. There is no fixed time of the year. During the school vacation in the last two months of the calendar year, an annual survey is conducted by the school committee to detect the areas where major repair/restoration work is required. The local *Panchayet* helps with organizing specialist craftsmen and skilled labors who know the building's construction style. The original structural materials of the building (like the iron beams) are so good that rarely any replacement is required. The local *Panchayet* also help with other resources like offering the wisdom of previous generations about the heritage.

The school committee has representatives from the local community. The community expresses its views of local issues/ management of the heritage in two ways, through the chosen committee members and in annual meetings where all community members including the guardians can participate. The views of community members are generally considered in decision making. The select members of the community bodies are respected and their decision is generally accepted.

A major restoration work was undertaken during 2008-2009 on the roof of the building as it was becoming unstable. Authenticity of the original wooden and iron beams was maintained during the restoration. Some of the window shades, door louver and facade details were also restored. Other restoration works include varnish on the wooden fixtures, windows and doors, plank replacement at the staircase, interior paints and minor repair work of iron beams of roof, etc.

A summary of the informal heritage management activities is shown in Figure 72:



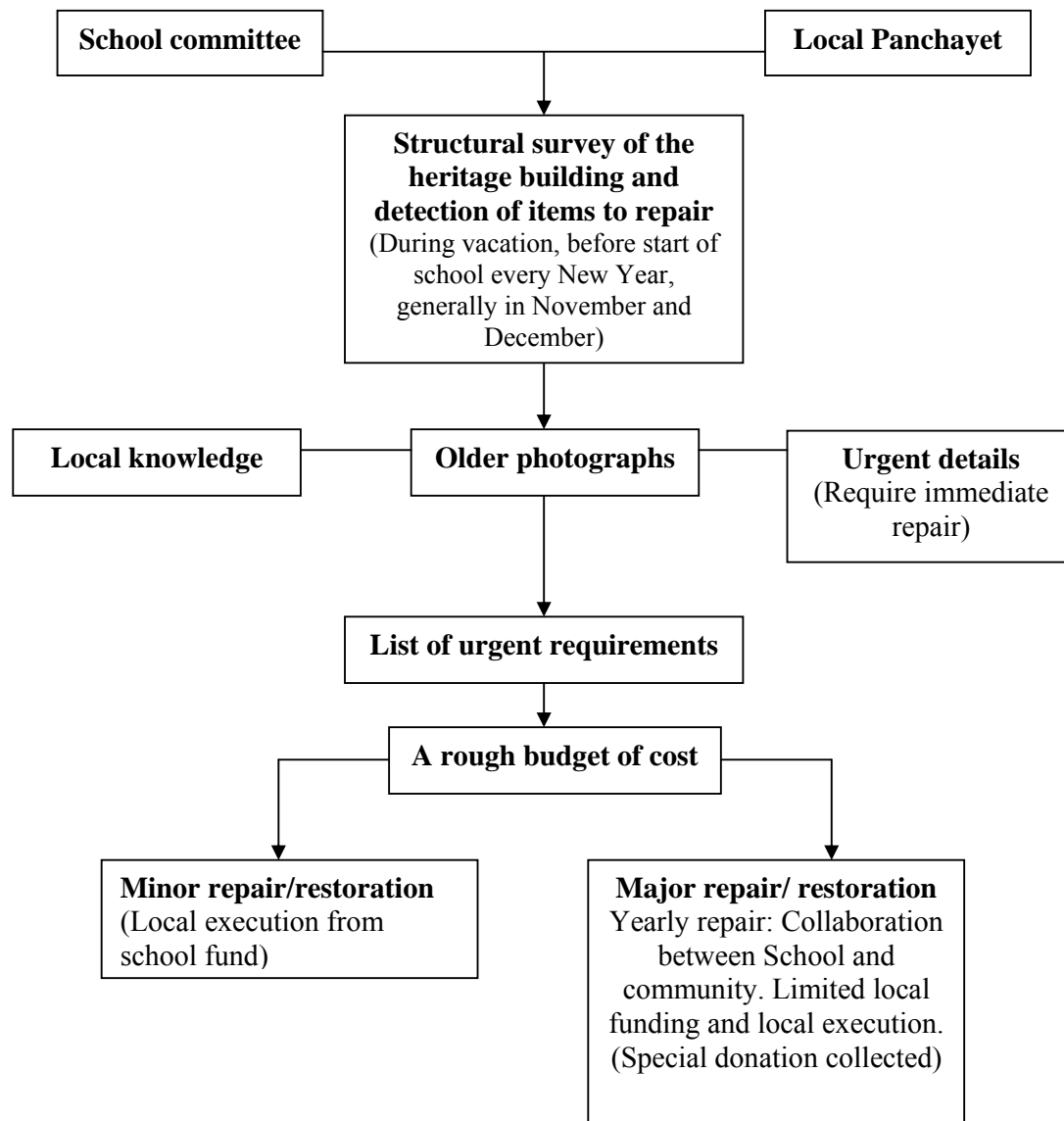


Figure 72: Informal heritage management activities at Pogose high school, source: author

### *Threats and challenges*

The large school compound ensured that there is enough set back in all directions of the heritage building, except the back where recent urban developments are taking place. Though the school is actively used and maintained by the school committee, the adjacent developments are a threat to the school building.

Because of the school's good reputation, a major challenge is the increasing number of students. This creates pressure on the capacity of the school compound and the heritage building. Extending the capacity is not always easy with safeguarding the heritage building. Lack of sufficient funds to execute major restorations remains another problem.

Limited funds and resources is a common problem. Even though the community bodies are successfully managing the heritage, they need financing and in cases advanced technical assistance to be more efficient. Government intervention is required to introduce and enforce laws regulating the development surrounding the heritage building to help the community bodies manage the heritage.

### **7.5 Case Study Area 3: Armanitola**

The name *Armanitola* came from the original inhabitants of the neighborhood (see Figure 73), the Armenians, who were persecuted by the Turks and Persians and migrated to Dhaka by the thousands since the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>382</sup> They were some of the wealthiest merchants and dominated the city's trade and commerce in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Fluent in Persian, they held influential social and business positions (like lawyers and senior public officials) in the Mughal court and later during the first half of the British Empire.<sup>383</sup> The Armenians built some of the most important architecture of the city during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, including their palatial houses, churches, civil buildings, etc. According to Muntasir Mamoon, a noted historian<sup>384</sup>, they were one of the most thriving and influential communities of Dhaka and in their heydays

---

<sup>382</sup> . Some oral histories trace their arrival in the region back to the 12th century.

<sup>383</sup> . Mamoon, 2008a, p 27.

<sup>384</sup> . Ibid.

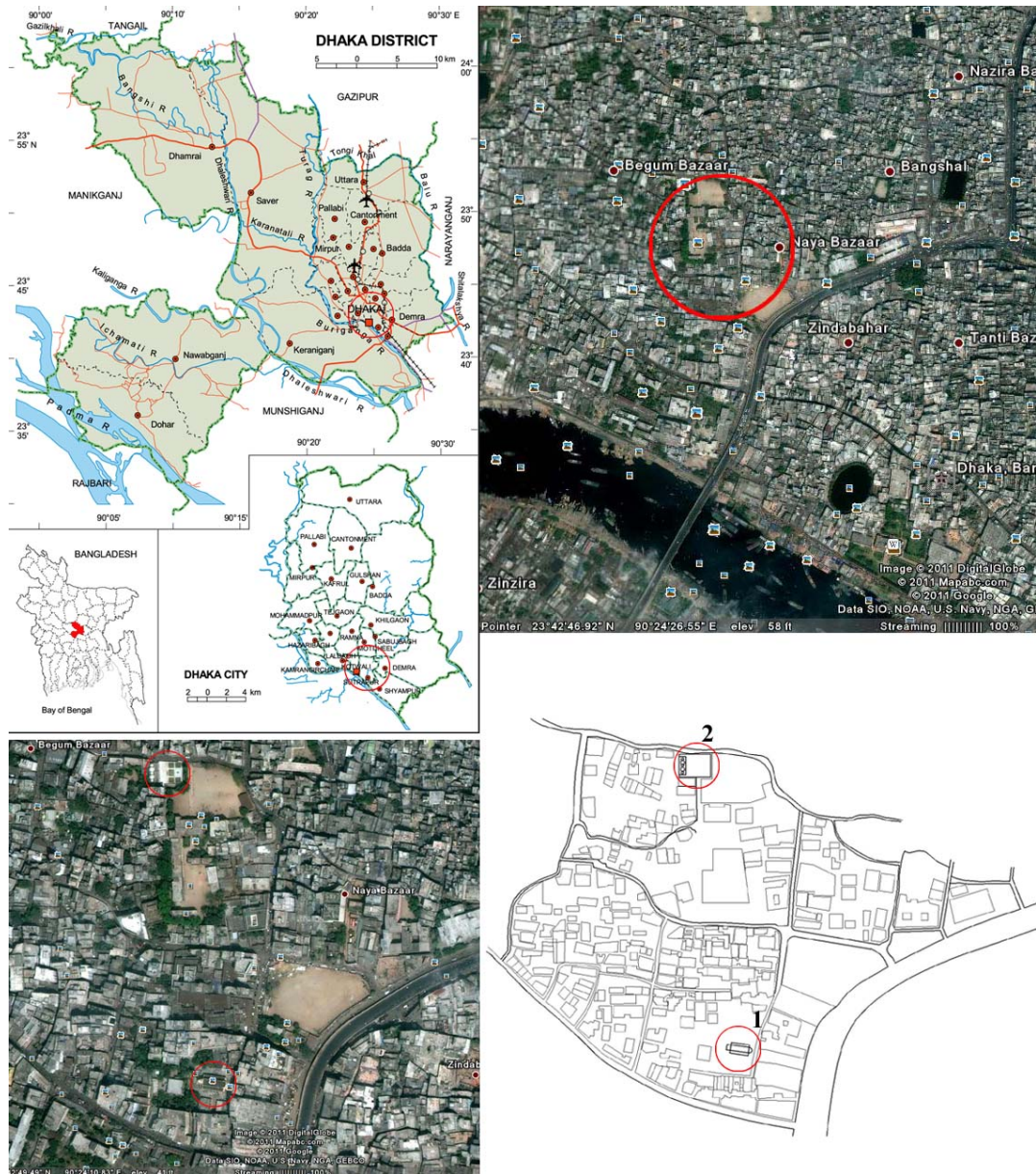


Figure 73: Armanitola location map in Dhaka city, Armanitola aerial view and map (circle showing location of 1. Armenian Church & 2. Star mosque), source: [www.banglapedia.org](http://www.banglapedia.org), accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2010, [www.google.com/earth/index.html](http://www.google.com/earth/index.html), accessed on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2010 and author.

many Armenians were active in the city's trade in Armanitola, a thriving business area. Most of the Armenians were Christians and celebrated the religious festivals in grandeur and style. They formed close business association with the British East India Company, which helped many of the Armenians become rich *Zamindars* (landlords)

with palatial houses. Armanitola has some of the important architectural heritage of Old Dhaka. The *chini-tikri* craft is the specialty of the area.

A number of the Armenian graves in the graveyard of the Armenian Church, a prominent Armenian heritage in the city (Figure 73), located on the Armenian street, tell the story of their legacy. The graveyard is a rich palimpsest of history, chronicling the rise and fall of the Armenians, giving a rough idea about the people and their timeline in the city. With the fluctuation of trading opportunities since the end of the colonial rule in the subcontinent, as the British left after partition in 1947, their number gradually declined until the 1970s. Even though the Armenians left Dhaka, the other original local communities continue to inhabit the traditional neighborhood. Along with the church there are several buildings like mosques, school and houses that have survived in relatively good shape. The architectural heritage of the area is managed by the informal community bodies and most has retained the original forms.

### **7.5.1 Armenian Church**

#### ***Background and significance***

*The Church of Holy Resurrection* at Armanitola of Old Dhaka or Armenian Church (as locally known), was constructed in 1781. It is one of the oldest (230 years) surviving architectural heritages of Old Dhaka (see Figure 74). The church proudly sits in the middle of a large compound which includes a large graveyard containing graves of prominent Armenians of the past two centuries. It is one of the major landmarks of Old Dhaka and Armanitola. The Armenian Church is possibly the best preserved church of the city that demonstrates the colonial architectural style of

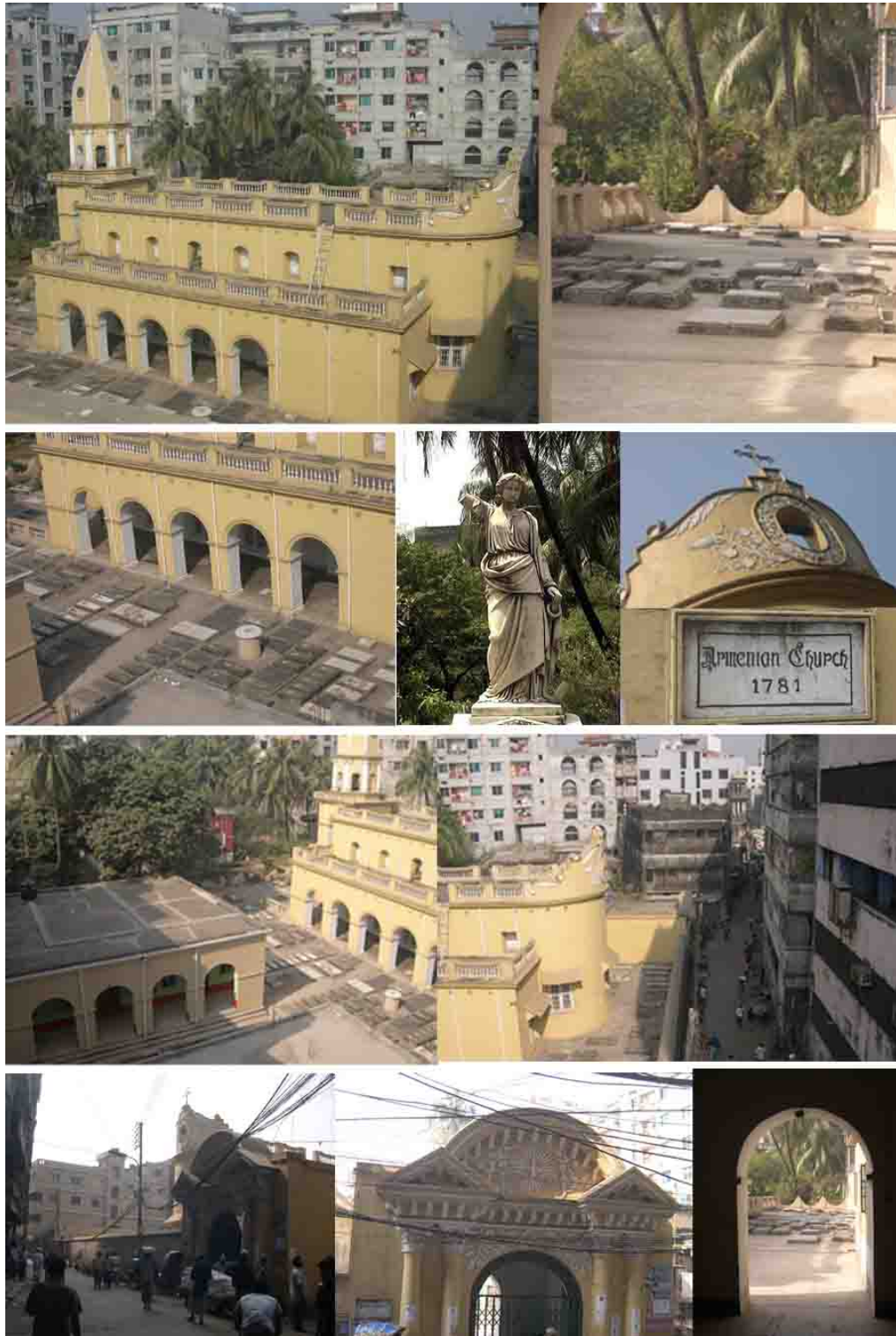


Figure 74: Image collage showing different parts of the Armenian Church, source: author.

18<sup>th</sup> century. The exterior has simple Art Deco moldings and yellow paint on plaster with white stripes (see Figure 74). The Armenian Church is about 150 feet long with four doors and seven windows on each side. The entire length is flanked by two fourteen feet wide arcaded verandah on both sides, each having five arches. The interior space has three divisions, with a gallery on the upper floor. The Church interior has some important works depicting the Crucifixion and the Last Supper by prominent European artists.

### ***Intangible elements and cultural events***

The Armenian Church is the first and also largest church of the devout Christians among the Armenian community in Bangladesh. It is also one of the older and larger churches in the country and a major landmark of the city. It contains about 400 graves of several important Armenians, with the earliest dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. There are graves of famous Armenian families like the *Sarkies*, *Manook* and *Aratoon*. The graveyard (see Figure 74) has the grave of Nicholas Peter Poghose, founder of Pogose School, the first private school in the country. The church committee keeps the centuries-old births, deaths and marriages register and look after the ancient tombstones that chronicle the history of the Armenian community in Bengal. Through this practice, centuries of Armenian tradition have been maintained through the church and the graveyard.

“In 1840, Lt. Cornel Davidson of East India Company visited the Armenian Church during the Christmas celebration. From his account we can understand the grandeur and importance of the church in the social life of the Armenians and also other

Christians of the locality.”<sup>385</sup> The church was the place for several historically significant incidents of the Armenian community. The church was also the centre for any social gathering of Armenians and is the last remaining meeting place for the Armenian society in Bangladesh. It has been the center of all activities of the Armanitola community for more than two centuries. Almost the entire Armenian community of the city would attend the Sunday service, irrespective of social position. The Christmas celebration in this church was one of the grandest ceremonies not only in Old Dhaka but also in the city. Nowadays the Armenian Archbishop of Australia flies twice a year to conduct Christmas and Easter ceremonies in Dhaka. During her visit to Dhaka in 1996, Mother Teresa also stayed in the Church compound.

#### ***Informal heritage management activities***

Even though it is one of the most important heritage of the city, the Armenian Church is not protected by government. The Church has been recently declared as a listed heritage building but the government has taken no action to support the church committee. The Church is not a priority of the Department of Archaeology as it is clearly owned by the Armenian community and they are currently managing it. It is owned and has been informally managed by the Church management committee representing the Armenian community of Bangladesh. Over the years, members of the church committee have been the most influential of the Armenian community and their opinion were generally always accepted. Michael Joseph Martin, one of the last in a long line of Armenians, is the main caretaker of the Armenian Church today representing the Armenian community committee managing the church and its graveyard. However, not all the current users are of Armenian origin. The heritage

---

<sup>385</sup> . Mamoon, 2008a, p 31.

building has been actively in use as a church for 230 years and has survived in its original form without any alteration which shows an efficient and regular heritage management. The additional functions of the church are housed in a single story block within the compound, so the church has been unaltered even though the number of churchgoers has changed over the years.

Due to the high humidity and condensation of the local climate, a new coat of paint is required after every few years. The church has undergone regular surveys and repair works overseen by the church management committee. Yearly restoration is done before Christmas and also when required. For a building which is over 200 years old, the church is in surprisingly good shape, which is a testimony to the successful heritage management. The most common heritage management activities include repair of damaged plaster and paint, maintaining and repairing the surrounding plaza and graveyard.

Generally, there are yearly meetings to decide on maintenance issues of the church. These meetings are especially held before Christmas every year. Beside the smaller repair work and maintenance done throughout the year, the church is surveyed by the committee members and the elements to be restored urgently are identified. On occasions where technical issues related to the structure of the building are involved, advice of a structural engineer is sought.

As the church is more than 200 years old, careful and regular maintenance is required to keep it in good shape. The church management committee is responsible for the careful survey and regular maintenance. As the building has been regularly maintained and restored, no major repair/restoration work was required. The heritage building is also structurally very sound. Care is taken to maintain the originality and



details of the church so that it can continue in its original grandeur. On occasions where specialist craftsmen are required for restoration, they are organized by the church committee. The mass is no longer held weekly due to declining number of church goers; rather held on special occasions only. The church is managed with regular fund of the Church management committee and donations from local church users and Armenians living abroad. There are regular donations from the Armenians living abroad and also the local churchgoers make the heritage management comparatively easier.

### ***Threats and challenges***

Mainly due to the clear property-ownership of the Armenian community, large compound, high boundary walls and an active management of the church committee, the church is fairly safe from any urban pressures or encroachments of adjacent properties. Recently there have been some cases of attempted vandalism, trespassing and infringement of property, but the level of threat is low. Government support is required in issues like this. Most of the Armenians have left the country as their business declined after the partition of 1947. As Mr. Martin is in his seventies and the future of the heritage management of the church remains uncertain in the case of his demise. But he is hopeful that other Armenians will take over the responsibility once he is gone.

## **7.5.2 Star Mosque**

### ***Background and significance***

The Star Mosque, also locally known as *Tara* mosque, is located at Armanitola in Old Dhaka. It is one of the earliest mosques of the British colonial period in the city (see Figure 75). The Mughal style three domed mosque was built by Mirza Ghulam, dating

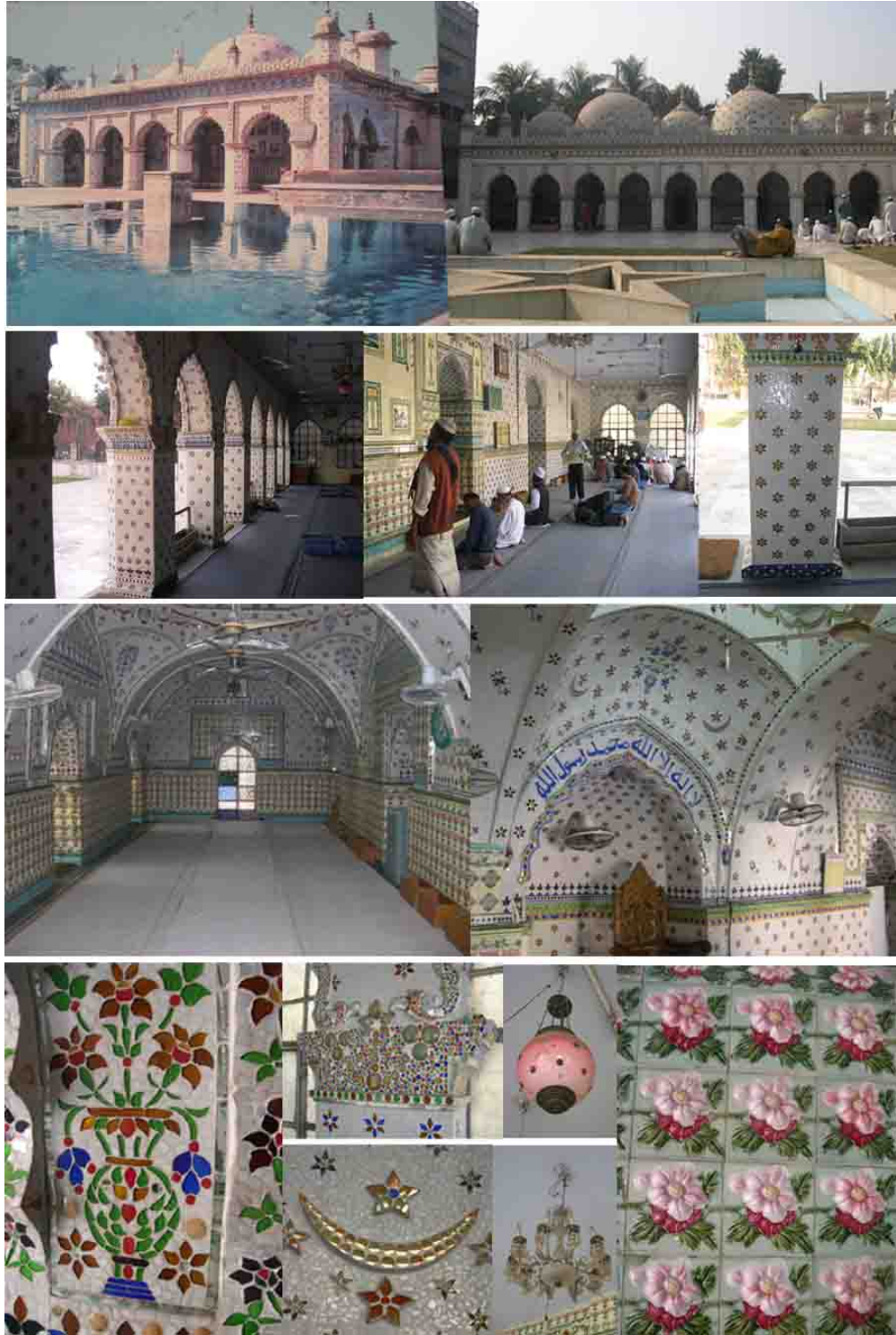


Figure 75: Different parts of the Star mosque at Armanitola, source; author.

back almost two centuries to 1819 A.D.<sup>386</sup> The heritage mosque is one of the oldest surviving mosques in Old Dhaka. In its original use for the entire period, it has been the main mosque of Armanitola neighborhood for two centuries. The Star Mosque is deemed to be the finest surviving example of mosque architecture from the colonial period. One of the most ornate mosques in the city, it is also considered one of the best examples of the *chini-tikri* work (Figure 75). The main feature of the mosque is the fine *chini-tikri* work of broken white porcelain pieces patterned by thousands of striking star shaped blue porcelain pieces on the domes that give the mosque its name. Some of the finest quality imported Japanese and English china porcelain pieces were used. The mosque also has some of the finest examples of early 20<sup>th</sup> century tiles in the interior. There is *chini-tikri* work of other decorative patterns on the interior.

### ***Intangible elements and cultural events***

The *chini-tikri* craft is the most important intangible element of the heritage mosque and the neighborhood. The continuity and authenticity of the heritage are directly related to the continuity of the craft. The first generation of *chini-tikri* craftsmen came about a hundred years back, mostly in the 1920s, during the time of Ali Jan Bepari, an influential businessman of the neighborhood. They came from different parts of Pakistan, which was then part of undivided India. The *chini-tikri* craft is carried on through generations with a system of apprenticeship. Normally, when *chini-tikri* work is not available (as it is not done commonly), the craftsmen do common masonry work to survive. The second and third generation (apprentices of the first generation) of craftsmen worked on the extension of 1987. The community bodies have ensured the continuity of the craft by engaging them in community and private buildings.

---

<sup>386</sup> . Hasan, 2003.

The Star Mosque compound is one of the main social gathering places in Old Dhaka and the focal point of the Armanitola Muslim community. One of the most recognized landmarks of Old Dhaka and Bangladesh, it was printed on the 100 taka bill in the 1980s. The mosque has been the center of several historically significant incidents of Armanitola.<sup>387</sup> The Mosque is directly related to several important religious events, like the *Ramadan*, the *Eid ul Fitar*, *Eid ul Azha* and the *Muharram* festival of the Arabic calendar. During these religious events, the mosque compound is used for the larger congregations and fairs. During the *Eid ul Azha*, the mosque committee organizes a temporary bazaar near the mosque for animals to be sacrificed for the *Eid*.

#### ***Informal heritage management activities***

The Star Mosque is one of the best preserved heritage mosque of Old Dhaka. The mosque has been owned by the community for nearly two centuries. Until recently, there has been no government intervention. The Star Mosque is now officially protected by the Department of Archaeology, but in a limited capacity. Practically the mosque is still managed by the informal community body Star mosque committee along with occasion help from the Armanitola *Panchayet*. Both Armanitola *Panchayet* and the Star mosque committee have several common members. The members are generally selected yearly from a pool of candidates who are respected and influential senior members of the local community.

The mosque committee members informed the author that two government officials represent the Department of Archaeology and attend important meetings, where

---

<sup>387</sup> . Hasan, 1983.

decisions about the restoration of the mosque are taken. Only in matters of significant restorations or maintenance, the Department of Archaeology's permission is required. Other than that, for day to day management, the community bodies have the authority. Important decisions are taken in regular meetings after *Jumma* (Friday) prayers, where community members also attend.

As *chini-tikri* work is relatively durable, lesser repair work is required than painting. Regular surveys and repair work are done during the Arabic month of *Ramadan*, before the two *Eid* festivals. Along with regular maintenance, two major restorations were done in 1926 and 1987.<sup>388</sup> In 1926, Ali Jan Bepari, an influential businessman of the neighborhood, solely financed the renovation of the mosque. A veranda was added to east and the exterior was redecorated with *chini-tikri* works with beautiful tiles in the interior, following the decorative style that was popular during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>389</sup>

A politically motivated initiative to increase the capacity of the older mosques of Dhaka led to an expansion project of the Star Mosque in 1987 undertaken by the Government's Department of Architecture. During the expansion, two new domes were added to the north of the original three domed mosque. Even though the extended part blends with the original part in exterior with the original *chini-tikri* work carefully imitated, the distorted proportion of the extra domes has been criticized by the experts. The space has increased, but the new *chini-tikri* work at the

---

<sup>388</sup> . Hasan, 1993.

<sup>389</sup> . Hasan, 1983 and 1993.

interior is not consistent with the beautiful older tiles; as the expansion had to be finished within a short period due to political pressure.<sup>390</sup>

The old tiles (about 80 years old) manufactured during the restoration undertaken by Ali Jan Bepari are not in production anymore. It may have been possible to produce them if there was sufficient time. As it was not possible to match the original tiles, it was decided to replicate the *chini-tikri* work of other parts of the interior. This is significantly disturbing the authenticity of the mosque (see Figure 75). The intricate *chini-tikri* work takes long time and is a slow process, otherwise the quality suffers. During the extension, the craftsmen had to hurry to finish the detail of the extended part for political pressure to complete faster. So, the quality of the work could not be like the original at places. Also, the original square fountain in Mughal style was harmonious and balanced with the mosque. It has been replaced by a strange star shaped fountain during the hasty extension. To cope with the increasing pressure of the neighborhood population and the house the additional facilities a new six story building was constructed in south. This has ensured that the authenticity of the mosque is not disturbed.

The mosque committee looks after the periodic restoration and maintenance. The survey, detection and execution of the maintenance work are also done by the mosque committee. Regular maintenance work is done before the important religious events like the *Eids*. The Government has been involved in the maintenance issues of the mosque only for the last twenty years. Other than the special one-time fund allotted by the Government during the 1987 expansion, there is very limited occasional fund available from the Department of Archaeology, even after declaring the mosque as

---

<sup>390</sup> . Ahmed, 2010.

protected heritage. The Department provides very limited funds for maintenance only after the mosque committee submits the estimate for the maintenance work. The main source of funding is regular and special donations from the local mosque users and property owners. In special cases, where the regular fund is not sufficient, special announcements are made for voluntary donations in larger amounts. On several instances during the last two centuries, funds were jointly raised by the local *Panchayet* and the Star Mosque committee for repair and restorations.

### ***Threats and challenges***

There are no major threats to the mosque as it is actively used and well managed. The *chini-tikri* work ensured that there is no condensation or vegetation growth on the exterior surface. The original proportion of the heritage mosque has been disturbed by unsympathetic additions through government intervention of the 1980s. The two extra domes were added on political decision rather than by community demand. There is always the threat of another formal intervention which may further damage the authenticity of the mosque. The ever increasing population has been a major threat. Also, more financial and technical assistance is required to successfully manage the heritage, as there is increasing number of heritage management issues to deal with today.

A senior craftsman, probably from the second generation of craftsmen that came to Dhaka, was head of the group that did the *chini-tikri* work of Star mosque, Kosaituli mosque and *Kamranga* mosque. He has now retired and the members of the community bodies are concerned that craftsman of his quality is becoming increasingly rare and the number of apprentices is diminishing due to lack of work.

## 7.6 Internal Conflicts and Problems of Informal Heritage Management

Like any sociopolitical network, conflicts and problems are part of the informal heritage management activities in Old Dhaka. The conflicts vary according to the strength of the existing social capital in the communities. Generally, there are greater conflicts in terms of heritage management in the communities, where the social capital is weaker. This happens when the traditional population is gradually replaced by a new group of people, as has happened in several neighborhoods of Old Dhaka, an example is *Churihatta*. Examples like the *Shankharibazar* are rather rare, where the entire community is descendants of the original inhabitants. Replacement of the original population often leads to clashes in values of community members, as the community unity becomes weaker. Except in the few traditional neighborhoods, conflicts at individual or group level are common, especially during the last few decades, when the urban development pressures became more intense. One of the common causes of conflict is the territorial turf tensions, as the original inhabitants are challenged by the new. Absence of a strong functioning community body also leads to greater conflicts within the community.

The existence of the community bodies is not free of problems. One of the common sources of conflict is the leadership of community bodies, like the *Panchayet* or the Religious committees; which is deemed highly prestigious in the traditional communities of Old Dhaka. The conflict can arise during the selection process of a new group of leaders for the community bodies, as the selection may not be acceptable to a part of the community or selection may not be accepted as fair. Another source of conflict is that of difference of ideals. Often a new group of leaders



shares conflicting ideas (compared to the conventional ones) about what the correct approach to heritage management should be. This often gives rise to conflicts or group clashes at the communities, which in cases have led to violence in the past.

A similar situation of great conflict was created over the selection of the *Kosaituli Mosque committee* simultaneous to the last major restoration work done in the mosque during 2004-2005. The current *Mosque committee* members replaced the long serving older committee members. To accommodate the increased number of worshippers an additional block had been added to the east of the heritage mosque. The major source of conflict was created between the newly selected *Mosque committee* members and the former committee members, who held opposing views on the restoration work and its continuity in the newly added block. The former committee members strongly felt that for the authenticity of the heritage mosque, the additional surfaces of the new block including the ablution space, should have the *chini-tikri* ornamentation. This was strongly opposed by the newly selected members of the *Mosque committee* the grounds of greater expenses. This issue and few other similar issues related to community leadership, created a great tension in the *Kosaituli mahalla*. On a few occasions, there were near violent clashes between the followers of the two groups. Fortunately, the situation gradually became normal with the intervention of the elders of the *mahalla* and further discussion. This incident shows that even the active community bodies are not beyond internal conflicts and problems.

There have been cases where the existence of a community body couldn't ensure the continuity of a heritage structure. The *Binat Bibi Mosque* at Narinda of Old Dhaka was constructed in 1456. It is arguably the oldest surviving structure in the city and a

rare example that shows Dhaka at least 600 years old. The highly important heritage mosque consisted of two square chambers with single domes over each; one of which was added about 80 years ago, according to the mosque inscriptions (see Figure 76). In 2005, a multi-storey block was added to increase the capacity of the mosque (the third extension done in the mosque). During the process, the original single domed square heritage building was partially demolished and overshadowed by the new block. The alteration was a clear violation of the existing conservation legislation. The working Mosque committee at the *Binat Bibi* Mosque didn't show the slightest regard for the historic heritage building during the repeated extensions, renovation and repair work and denied any wrongdoing in terms of harmful extension or alteration. It shows two major problems, the negligence of the formal authorities to safeguard important heritage (the mosque was not listed as protected heritage) and the consequences of diminishing social capital evident in a weaker community body.

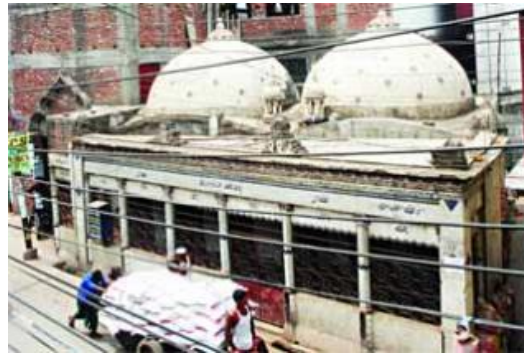


Figure 76: The new extension overshadowing the original *Binat Bibi* mosque, source: <http://newagebd.com/newspaper1/metro/13662.html>

A more extreme example is that of the 360 year old *Churihatta* mosque at *Churihatta*, Old Dhaka. Built in 1649, the *Churihatta* mosque was the only mosque in Dhaka with a *chou-chala* or bungalow type roof.<sup>391</sup> This type of roof was not commonly used in the mosques, making it unique. Some of the important heritage elements of the

---

<sup>391</sup> . Ghias, 2008b, July 28.

mosque were four corner towers, three doorways with successive arches, geometrical façade motifs, blind merlons on the cornice, ornamental battlements, etc. The unique



Figure 77: The demolished *Churihatta* mosque site showing the construction of the new block, source: Ghias, 2008b, July 28.

feature of the mosque was the interior hall, covered with an intersecting vaulted roof mimicking the local *chou-chala* roof of Bengal; the exterior roof was flat.

The mosque was last restored in 1961, when the original features still remained intact. Unfortunately, the heritage mosque was demolished in 2008 (see Figure 77), when an extension project was undertaken by the *Churihatta Mosque committee* to increase the capacity of the mosque (the original mosque was merely 30x16 feet). The *Mosque committee* justified their action by stating that the original mosque was replaced by another structure back in 1962, so the structure they demolished didn't have much historical value. Most of the local community has shifted here more recently. They were not aware of the heritage value of the mosque and thought that the original mosque was demolished in the 1960s. Several noted historians oppose this and confirm that the mosque was intact in its original form in 1961.<sup>392</sup> The case clearly shows the importance of the continuity of traditional knowledge and social capital and the consequences when it diminishes. The case of *Churihatta* mosque shows that when the social capital is low in a community and the original inhabitants are

---

<sup>392</sup> . Dani, 2008.

gradually replaced by a new group of people, the community bodies may not be effective anymore.

### **7.7 Public-Private Collaboration in Dhaka: Solid Waste Management by *Waste Concern***

Public-private partnerships in heritage conservation are rather in Dhaka. But there are successful examples of public-private partnerships in the other sectors. One such example of public-NGO collaboration with community involvement is the solid waste management by the NGO *Waste Concern*. Working with the local communities since 1998, *Waste Concern* has served 30,000 people in Dhaka city and 100,000 people in 14 other cities and towns in Bangladesh, including slums and low and middle-income communities.<sup>393</sup>

They are one of the more successful NGOs providing services like waste collection, separation and composting. The overall waste management of the city is the responsibility of the Dhaka City Corporation, which is highly stressed to manage the waste generated by a huge population. *Waste concern* took the opportunity and started to work with the local governments, the private sector, international organizations and the local communities to implement a cost-effective and highly efficient community-based composting system. The system became so successful that it has been replicated in several other cities in Bangladesh.

The financing of the project was developed to foster community involvement and public private cooperation. The communities benefited as they received door-to-door

---

<sup>393</sup> . [www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.php?page=view&type=99&nr=249&menu=20](http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.php?page=view&type=99&nr=249&menu=20)

waste collection service and shared the cost of waste collection by paying a moderate monthly fee. “The private stakeholder had joint venture partners that included Waste Concern and its financial partners (banking institutions). The total investment required for the project was Euro 12 million. The mode of finance was 38 per cent equity, 45 per cent as soft loan and 17 per cent as loan from a local bank in Bangladesh. 75 per cent of the total revenue of the project came from sale of compost.”(Ibid)The impact of the community based waste collection is evident in the various social, environmental and economic benefits. Besides creating new jobs in the communities, the project has improved the living standards in several neighborhoods of the city, where it operates.

The case shows that even though there is almost no successful collaboration between the formal and informal, the NGOs have the capacity to create such a platform. The success in the others sectors like slum development or waste management can be transferred to the area of heritage management.

### **7.8 General Observation: From All Case Study Areas Combined**

The informal heritage management activities in the traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka do not have any particular pattern. Most of the heritage management activities are need based and neighborhood and heritage specific. It is also determined by the social, cultural and religious preferences of the particular community. The activities, though community specific and socio-culturally determined, can be broadly categorized into few activity types, as Table 13 shows:

Table 13: Summary of activities related to heritage management in Old Dhaka

Event type	Activity type	Heritage Building type/ Example	Source of funding	Mode of Collection	Community bodies involved	Type of Local workforce involved	Conservation activities
<i>Eid ul fitar</i> (major Muslim religious festival)	Religious Congregations	Mosque (Star mosque and Kosaituli mosque)	Mosque donations & (zakat : mandatory religious alms)	Regular and special collection with announcement	Panchayet & mosque committee	Unskilled and skilled craftsmen and masons. Community members.	Regular repair and restoration. Surface Cleaning, repair work of damaged parts.
<i>Eid ul Azha</i> (major Muslim religious festival)	Religious Congregations & slaughtering	Mosque (Star mosque and Kosaituli mosque)	Mosque donations	Regular and special collection with announcement	Panchayet & mosque committee	Unskilled and skilled craftsmen and masons. Community members.	Regular repair and restoration. Surface Cleaning, major repair work of damaged parts.
<i>Durga puja</i> (major Hindu religious festival)	Puja & Processions, Cultural performance	Hindu temples (All major temples at <i>Shankhari-bazar</i> and at streets)	Temple donations/ personal /organizational contributions	Regular and special collection with announcement	Panchayet & temple committee	Unskilled and skilled craftsmen and masons.	Regular repair and restoration. Surface Cleaning, major repair work of damaged parts.
<i>Janmashtomi</i> (major Hindu religious festival)	Puja & Processions, Cultural performance	Hindu temples (Krishna temples at Shankharibazar)	Temple donations/ personal contributions	Regular and special collection with announcement	Panchayet & temple committee	Unskilled and skilled craftsmen and masons.	Regular repair and restoration. Surface Cleaning, major repair of damaged parts.
<i>Christmas</i> (major Christian religious festival)	Christmas mass and other related celebrations	Churches (Armenian church)	Regular fund and donations from local church users and church Armenians living abroad.	Regular and special collection with announcement	Church management committee	Unskilled and skilled craftsmen and masons	Regular repair. Surface Cleaning, plastering and painting.
<i>Pohela Baishakh</i> (major cultural event: Bengali new year)	Fairs, Cultural rallies, wall paintings.	Community buildings and private residences (Armanitola uddyan (field), Pogose school yards and residences of Shankhari bazar)	Toll collected from the fair, Profit from business in the fair	Special collection with announcement	Panchayet & craftsmen's guilds	Unskilled and skilled craftsmen and masons. Community members.	Regular repair and restoration. Surface Cleaning, major repair work of damaged parts.

Event type	Activity type	Heritage Building type/ Example	Source of funding	Mode of Collection	Community bodies involved	Type of Local workforce involved	Conservation activities
<i>Poush</i> mela (important cultural event: winter fair)	Fairs, Cultural rallies, cake festivals.	Community buildings and private residences (Pogose school yards and residences of Shankhari-bazar)	Toll collected from the fair, Profit from business in the fair	Special collection with announcement	Panchayet & craftsmen's guilds	Unskilled and skilled craftsmen and masons. Community members.	Regular repair and restoration. Surface Cleaning, major repair work of damaged parts.

Table 13 continued, Source: author

The Table 13 shows that, despite the diverse sociocultural and religious backgrounds of different neighborhoods, spontaneous heritage management activities follow a natural pattern which is often determined by the importance of the festivals and events and availability of funds. The solutions to problems like collection of extra fund are generally found within the resources of the community. It also shows the integral relationship of the intangible elements (like the cultural and religious festivals and events) with heritage management activities.

## 7.9 Chapter Conclusion

In order to depict the actual realities and fluctuating future of the local heritage under constant pressure of urban development, this research has examined selected case studies in the traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka in detail. Heritage as identity and an essential element for the survival of the traditional communities becomes apparent when the realities of the informal heritage management are revealed. The

case studies demonstrate both the informal heritage management processes as well as their importance in the sociocultural sphere of the local communities. The case studies examine the place of different players like the community bodies, formal authorities, users and landlords in the heritage management process. They also demonstrate the importance of the continuity of cultural enclaves with their identity, richness and complexities in the traditional neighborhoods for the survival of the local heritage. The most vital element for success of the informal heritage management process is the sense of ownership by the community, as the case studies reveal. The sense of ownership makes collection of fund from the local communities convenient. The continuity of the original use also helps the management process as the integrity of the buildings, their identity and meaning have also survived in most of the cases.



## Chapter 8

### SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

#### 8.1 Summary of Heritage Management Activities by Community Bodies

The community heritage management is informal in nature. There is no set activity pattern or agenda. Two major factors generally decide the heritage management activities. First, important religious or cultural events and festivals: when the buildings are restored or maintained more urgently (compared to the rest of the year). Second is the availability of funds: when the funds become available or is especially collected, the overdue and more vulnerable parts of the heritage are restored and maintained. Even though there are no set pattern of heritage management activities, analysis of several case studies and activities of the informal community bodies reveal a few common activities of informal heritage management. Familiarity with the community heritage means that the decision making is spontaneous and there are no bureaucratic delays. Generally there are regular and special (before special religious or cultural events or in cases of vulnerable heritage) inspections followed by detection of more urgent problems. The issue is raised in general or special meetings discussed and deliberated among the members of the community bodies and in some cases, with community members and property owners. Next, how the fund will be collected is decided in cases where the general fund is deemed insufficient. Decision is made on the possible actions to be taken with the possible workforce including the paid masons, paid specialized local craftsmen and unpaid voluntary help from community members. Finally, conservation activities like restoration and repair is undertaken. The process

is summarized in Figure 78, showing the major stages of informal heritage management.

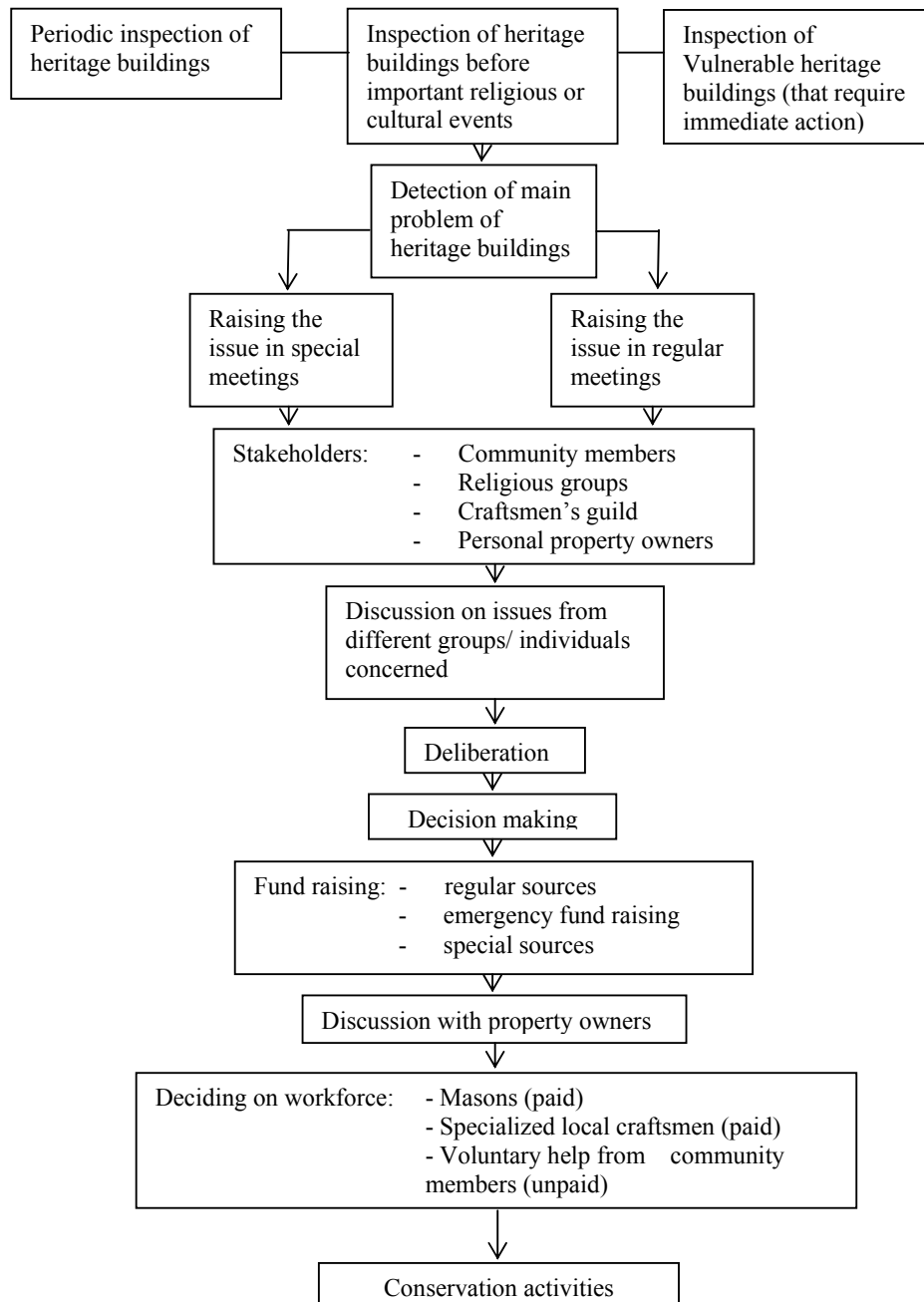


Figure 78: Summary of Heritage management activities by Informal community bodies, source: author

## **8.2 Interpreting Ownership, Continuity of Traditional Wisdom and Heritage Management**

The selected case studies demonstrate that informal heritage management is integrated with the identity of the communities and their heritage. The everyday socioeconomic and cultural activities revolve around the heritage. The system directly involves cultural and ‘community ownership’. The ‘ownership’ is vital for the survival of the heritage and continuity of the intangible heritage elements. The informal ‘community ownership’ roots the heritage in their place in the traditional neighborhoods; it validates their authenticity and cultural value with the intangible cultural links. Any intervention or effort to conserve the heritage must acknowledge the complexities of the sociocultural context in the local communities. This intangible quality is dynamic. As the physical environment changes, economic forces impart transformation; the delicate balance between community and their heritage also evolves. The case studies demonstrate that where the delicate balance is maintained, heritage has survived better.

The informal community bodies have successfully represented the local concerns and values (including matters of architectural heritage management). The members are from the local community and are most familiar with the local traditions and culture. They also have the support and respect of the entire community, unlike interventions by formal authorities; which have created great resentments in most of the communities. Thus the decisions taken by the informal community bodies represent the community values and consider the socio-economic realities of the traditional neighborhoods.

The informal heritage management supports the continuity of the traditional construction crafts like the *chini-tikri* work by employing and organizing the specialist craftsmen. It takes years to master the intricate craft and specialization is only possible through continuity of this system of apprenticeship. The heritage management activities create job opportunities for the new generations of *sagrids* (apprentices) learn from their *ustad* (master). The skill is passed on and it survives. Discontinuity of the heritage management process, as has happened with several formal interventions, means discontinuity of the traditional construction crafts and master-apprentice relationship. For example, an important effort of the informal community bodies (like *Panchayet* and mosque committee) is the support (through employment) of the *chini-tikri* work that has been running for over two centuries through the system of *ustad- sagrid* (master-apprentice).

### **8.3 Religious Values and Beliefs**

Religion plays a central role amidst the socioeconomic forces in the physical context of the traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka. This realization sheds a new light on the dynamic relationships that exist within the communities of Old Dhaka. It transcends the everyday sociopolitical conflicts and reaches even beyond tough economic challenges. There exists a horizontal relationship among socioeconomic forces, physical context and the architectural heritage in the everyday social life, while the relationship of heritage and religious values and beliefs is rather vertical in nature (see Figure 79). The vertical expresses the religious values and beliefs that transcend the everyday realities in hope of something greater

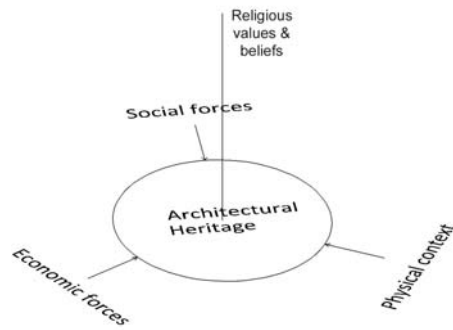


Figure 79: The horizontal-vertical relationship between socioeconomic forces, physical context and religious values and beliefs, source: author.

A good part of the heritage, especially the religious heritage, management activities reveal the important role of the religious values and beliefs. In the religious buildings like the mosques, temples or churches, the religious faith of the local population plays an important role in management of fund and labor. The heritage management activities involved are not always material, they are voluntary in nature and there is no immediate return. They transcend earthly gains in the hope of gaining in the afterlife.

This value system is even stronger in the traditional neighborhoods of a particular religious community, like the Hindus of Shankharibazar. The strong presence of religious values and beliefs are directly manifested in the management of the religious heritage like temples, which are generally better maintained. On a secondary level, this influence is also reflected in the management of secular heritage buildings. The religious relationship generally influences the social system of these communities. Several cases show, conflicts are resolved more amicably with a neighbor sharing the same religion. The close-knit co-existence and survival of the heritage buildings of Shankharibazar (like the linear row houses) has been possible due to this relationship.

The research shows that not many formal conservation efforts of the past have been sensitive to this system. Any future initiative or collaboration for heritage management or conservation in the traditional neighborhoods should consider this value system.

#### **8.4 Depopulation, Intervention and Diminishing Social Capital**

Unlike many other cities, where a good part of the traditional communities have been uprooted almost instantly by hazards (like fire) or development interventions, most parts of the traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka has survived in their original form. Most of the heritages in these communities are *living* heritage, which are actively used and an integral part of the everyday social life. The communities that have survived in their original form show a sharp contrast compared to the ones where the majority of the traditional population has been dislocated, either by urban development or gradually by changing the economic forces. This contrast is manifested in the form of diminishing social capital, as clearly evident in the depopulated communities compared to the traditional communities, which has retained their original form.

A major concern for the future of Old Dhaka's heritage is the depopulation of the traditional communities. This research shows that the local heritage is protected and managed better where the traditional communities continue to exist. There is a stark difference between the traditional neighborhoods where the population has been living for centuries, with those that are relatively new. The traditional neighborhoods have definite religious and socioeconomic undertones, the absence of which makes the identity of contemporary communities rather ambiguous.

There are several factors behind depopulation, like loss of traditional craft and business, major housing developments, improper interventions by developers, lack of protective laws, lack of tourism to sustain the traditional crafts and business, etc. The diminishing sizes of the traditional communities are directly related to the fate of the local heritage. In most cases the informal heritage management system is a legacy of several generations and are mostly absent in the relatively new depopulated communities. The definite ‘community ownership’ of the local heritage also became diluted. As a result, several important heritages (like the 360 year old *Churihatta* Mosque) have been reconfigured or partly demolished by the more contemporary depopulated communities.

In other cases, the local heritage became vulnerable even when the traditional communities survived, where there were formal interventions in a rather ‘forceful’ nature. In such cases, there are hardly any consultations with the community bodies about heritage management. As a result, in most cases, informal community bodies became a shadow of their former self. Heritage suffered accordingly as important intangible links are discontinued due to lack of inclusion of the local communities.

The gradual loss of traditional craft and business makes the economic conditions challenging. While the traditional crafts and business still survive in traditional communities, this problem is even more critical in the depopulated communities where a good part of traditional craft and business has already been replaced. In several neighborhoods of Old Dhaka, the diminishing traditional craft and business has led to depopulation of the original community.

With challenging economic conditions, development priorities also change accordingly. The research shows that even under economic pressures the traditional communities survive and resist the ‘temptation’ to develop better than the depopulated communities. As a result many owners give away their heritage which is ultimately replaced by improper new interventions. This degrades both the physical fabric and social system.

The social capital that exists in the traditional communities is the product of several generations’ sociocultural relationships. As a direct result of the diminishing craft and business and improper external interventions, the social capital also diminishes. The informal heritage management is only possible when a strong base of social capital exists in the communities. Gradual loss of social capital ultimately replaces the entire informal heritage management system.

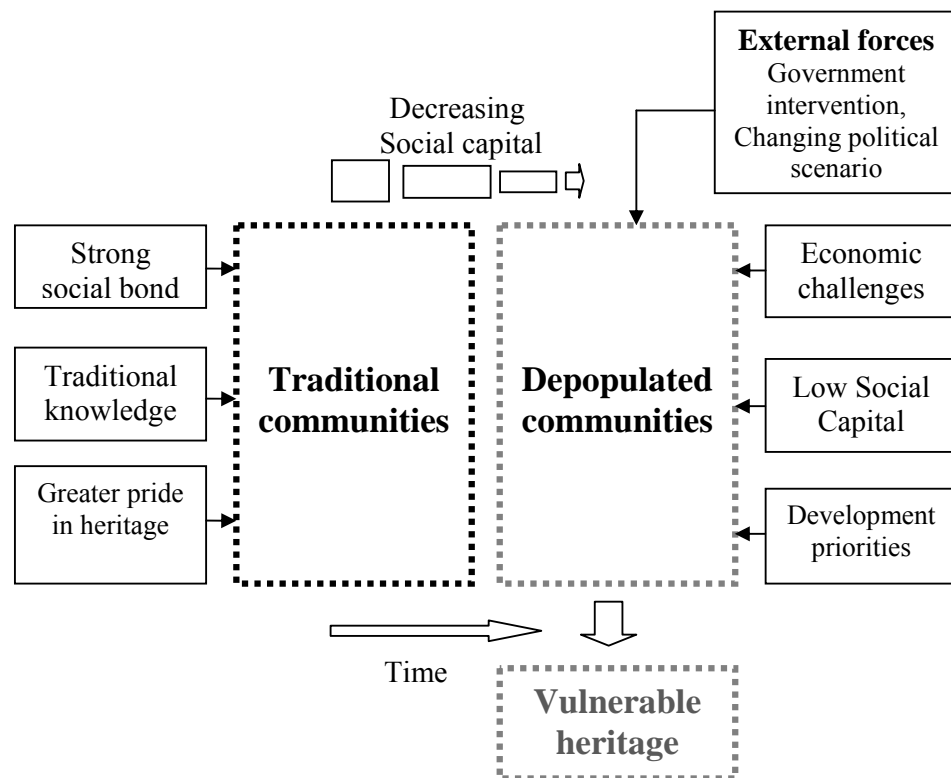


Figure 80: Depopulation, intervention and diminishing social capital, source: author



As shown in Figure 80, there are other forces working (along with decreasing social capital) in the communities of Old Dhaka. Strong external forces like government intervention, changing political scenario, challenging economic conditions and urban development priorities are gradually degrading the social-physical fabric and local heritage. Over a longer span of time, the heritage becomes highly vulnerable in the depopulated communities, where the original community members have been gradually replaced. Comparatively, the traditional communities are still withstanding these forces successfully with their strong social bond, traditional knowledge and greater pride in heritage.

### **8.5 Spheres of Community Control: Problems and Challenges of Managing the Living Architectural Heritage of Old Dhaka**

Study of the selected architectural heritage in the traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka show, even though the informal heritage management system is continuing with a considerable degree of success till now, the community bodies are facing several major problems and challenges. Some of the main threats for the architectural heritage are the decreasing interest of young community members in working in the traditional crafts and trade, diminishing traditional knowledge, rising population and urban density, lack of finance and improper formal intervention. Most of the architectural heritage in Old Dhaka is *living* and in use, which makes the situation more complex.

The community bodies like the *Panchayet* and the mosque committee have to decide on the scope of restoration and maintenance works to be undertaken, based on the limited funds available. Beyond the voluntary contribution by labor, in certain cases,

funding is related to the potential availability of suitable materials and labor force. The lack of funds means it is not always possible for the community bodies to adequately restore and maintain the architectural heritage, which makes the heritage more vulnerable. The problem is made more complex by the increasing number of heritage buildings requiring support in their maintenance. Financial management, which is one of the main responsibilities of the community bodies, is becoming increasingly difficult with the rising economic pressure, especially in the last decade. For example, the rising price of *Shankha*, which has increased exponentially after the 2004 Tsunami, has put the entire craft of *Shankha* under threat.

The community bodies play an important role in the continuity of the traditional crafts and trade with their support and co-ordination. For example, the community bodies support the *chini-tikri* craft by organizing the skilled craftsmen and their special materials. Unfortunately, the system is becoming increasingly vulnerable. Loss of interest in working in the traditional crafts and trades, often due to the lower yield, compared to other businesses, is a major threat to the architectural heritage management. Many of the traditional crafts and trades that used to sustain the communities and are directly or indirectly related to the architectural heritage management have already disappeared.

Some of the communities that have no community bodies (but used to have one), are hit harder by the threats mentioned here. The non-existence of the community bodies are often the result of the large size of these communities, as the informal community management system may not work with too large a population. The situation is worsened by improper formal interventions, which in cases has severed the intangible links of the heritage with the community.

As a combined effect of the threats discussed here, the social capital that exists and binds the traditional communities, is ever decreasing with the loss of traditional knowledge and social ties. This threat not only affects the architectural heritage, but can ultimately disintegrate the communities themselves.

A common pattern that emerges from all the case studies is the relationship between the sizes of the communities with the degree of community control, in terms of informal heritage management. The case studies show that heritage is effectively managed when the communities are more close-knit; conversely communities become ‘loose’ in terms of control once they become larger beyond a certain range of population as shown in Figure 81.

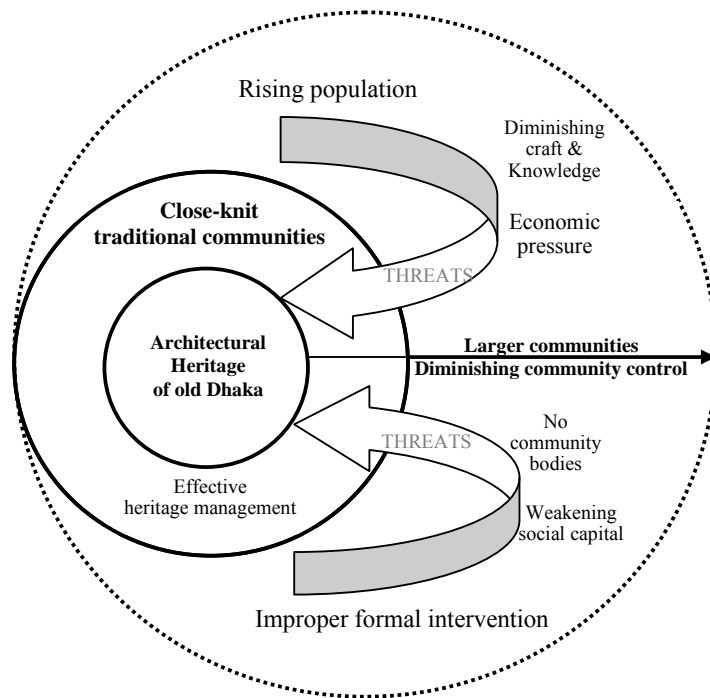


Figure 81: Spheres of community control: problems and challenges of managing the living architectural heritage of Old Dhaka, source: author.

The major threats as mentioned here play with greater force, once the community reach beyond a certain size (Figure 81), which varies from community to community. The diagram shows a summary of the issues discussed here with the varying degrees of community control with the size of the communities (as spheres) and related threats. The research shows that the informal heritage management system has been continuing but struggling with these problems and challenges. It is becoming increasingly difficult for the community bodies to manage heritage building in the traditional neighborhoods on their own.

Not surprisingly, religious community buildings like mosques and temples seem to support themselves better (as the involvement is more direct) compared to the other heritage buildings (like the private owned), where the community bodies are involved indirectly. Still, the community bodies are doing their best to manage the architectural heritage with limited resources available. It has been possible mainly due to the strong community support and involvement. But it remains uncertain how long they will be able to continue.

### **8.6 Formal vs. Informal: Government Intervention and Conflicts**

The heritage of Old Dhaka is an integral part of the community identity in terms of social, cultural, economic and political activities. This research tries to give a holistic overview highlighting the complexities, policies and practices of traditional urban communities of Old Dhaka and their informal heritage management. This research examines the complexities of the informal heritage management system in the face of changing urban forces and formal intervention by the formal authorities. There is a

strong ambivalence between the informal heritage management system and the formal conservation interventions, especially after formally declaring several heritage buildings and areas as ‘protected’. This has created a major dilemma in the sense that on one hand, there is the fear of losing ‘community ownership’ and heritage management rights; on the other, the authorities are highly ill equipped to actively protect and ensure the continuity of the heritage. Table 14 compares between the formal and informal heritage conservation based on a number of important issues:

Table 14: Comparison between the issues of formal and informal heritage conservation

Conservation Issues	Formal	Informal
Institutions	Department of Archaeology	Informal community bodies
Personnel involved	Site engineers and common masons	Members of informal community bodies, master craftsmen and apprentices
Selection of projects	List of protected buildings and sites	Traditional neighborhood based heritage projects
Funding	Limited Government funding	Community contribution
Stakeholder involvement	Minimum/None	Full
Monitoring	Irregular/minimum	Regular
Types of Buildings conserved /managed	Generally monuments or ‘famous’ buildings	Any local heritage that is important to the community
Intangible elements /Cultural components/crafts	Not considered	Considered
Type of authority	Legal/Formal	Informal
Material and restoration method used	Authentic material and construction style is replaced in cases	In most cases, authentic material and construction style used, where fund permits
Phasing	Generally done at a faster pace, in single phase due to fund restriction	Gradual process of several phases as the fund is collected in small amounts
Community involvement	Rare	Full
Traditional craftsmen	Generally not involved	Involved
Social issues	Not considered	Considered
Surrounding site conditions	Not considered	Considered

Source: author

As Table 14 shows, the difference between the two systems is stark. The situation at present is highly contested. In several cases; formal interventions by government bodies have made the situation more complex, especially over the last two decades and the results are alarming. One example is the gradual replacement of the traditional *lime-surki* work with paint, which has seriously disturbed the authenticity of the heritage structures like the Khan Mohammad Mridha Mosque. The value and continuity of the local heritage, which has been solely dependent on the informal management system for centuries is increasingly becoming vulnerable. The changing social, political and economic forces are working rapidly, mostly against the survival of the heritage. For example, the rising price of *shankha* (the raw material) post-Tsunami (of 2004) has been seriously threatening the survival of the craft of *shankha*.

As shown in the Table 14, not surprisingly, the formal interventions are mostly failing to protect the architectural heritage; rather they are disrupting the informal heritage management system. Under these circumstances, the survival of architectural heritage cannot be taken for granted anymore.

## Chapter 9

### CONCLUSION

#### 9.1 Informal Heritage Management: a Problem of Identity

The research finds that there is a problem with the identity of spontaneous community participation in the form of informal heritage management. The problem has two layers. First, the idea of community participation is recognized or practiced in Bangladesh limitedly. In most of the cases, the initiative comes from NGOs. Examples can be found in the fields like rural agricultural co-operatives, etc. Even in these limited efforts, where the formal authorities are rarely involved, the process is essentially 'top-down', meaning the initiative is taken by the organizations; the initiative does not come from the community itself, as has happened in the communities of Old Dhaka. The second problem is that of the formal authority's reluctance to investigate whether any informal heritage management system already exists, before any steps like conservation are taken. Amidst these two layers, the informal community management system remains in the shadow in the formal process, even though it remains active at the heart of the community. This creates a major disparity as exclusion of the local community, their traditional wisdom, local practices, values and beliefs leads to the failure of most of the conservation project undertaken by the formal authorities.

A deeper understanding of the informal heritage management system is required to appreciate the ways that the community bodies have been maintaining the local heritage, with their distinct management and decision making. This research tries to

reveal the activity pattern of the informal community bodies and their heritage management system in the form of a ‘bottom-up’ approach, where no external resources are used. Here, the community involvement is spontaneous, active and effective in most cases. The informal community bodies are representative of the communities and their decision making process is generally rational, as they are based on traditional wisdom of generations. Analysis of the heritage management system in the traditional neighborhoods shows that the informal approach to heritage conservation in the local context has been successful in many cases. But it does not mean that the informal approach is always successful and beyond problems and challenges. As discussed in section 7.6, conflicts and problems are part of the informal heritage management system. With changing urban forces and challenging economic conditions, problems are ever increasing in the form of internal conflicts in communities, depopulation of the original population, weakening social capital, etc. Accepting this reality, additional support from the external organizations (not necessarily the government) may be required for the continuity of the local heritage. A better understanding of the informal heritage management system will be vital for any future collaboration (possibly with limited involvement) for external organizations like NGOs in continuing with similar results.

## **9.2 ‘Community Ownership’ and Cultural Tourism**

The *living* architectural heritage of Old Dhaka is ‘community owned’. This ‘ownership’ and the intangible cultural connections to the place and people is the key to the continuity and authenticity of the architectural heritage. This is evident in several cases like the linear row houses of *Shankharibazar*, where the physical fabric



has grown over centuries and is never static. The corresponding intangible heritage elements have also evolved with time. It is these intangible cultural elements that help the communities in their struggle against contemporary challenges like pressure of modern development, diminishing social capital and the gradual loss of traditional craft and business. This intangible connectivity and *rootedness* to the neighborhoods are the most important qualities beyond the tangible heritage elements.

Even with possible future support from external agents like NGOs, the major challenge will be the survival of the traditional communities in a challenging economic condition. A common approach used in many heritage sites throughout the world is promoting cultural tourism to improve the economic conditions of the local communities. Cultural tourism has been successful in many Asian cities as well. One such city is Bhaktapur, a 12th century small Royal city in the Kathmandu Valley in Nepal. The historic city spreads over an area of 6.88 sq. km, with a population of 225,000.<sup>394</sup> It is considered a living heritage city, due to its centuries-old living traditions of art, culture, craftsmanship, traditional lifestyle and colorful festivals; which attracts a great number of tourists. Bhaktapur is considered a successful case of cultural tourism, where tourism brings about 60% of its revenues.<sup>395</sup> Bhaktapur is a strong case of public participation in heritage conservation and cultural tourism; supported by the Bhaktapur Municipality. The majority of the tourism entrepreneurs and craftsmen are locals.<sup>396</sup> The majority of the heritage buildings (345)<sup>397</sup> in Bhaktapur belongs to the public. They are actively used for varied religious and social purposes. “Although the cultural revival has its main root in the widening horizon of people's cultural awareness, the role being played by tourism in that direction can

---

<sup>394</sup> . [www.bhaktapur.com](http://www.bhaktapur.com)

<sup>395</sup> . Ibid.

<sup>396</sup> . [www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/culture/Tourism/bhaktapur-2.pdf](http://www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/culture/Tourism/bhaktapur-2.pdf).

<sup>397</sup> . Ibid.

never be ruled out.”<sup>398</sup> The success of cultural tourism in Bhaktapur mainly owes to the active involvement of the local communities.

Cultural tourism is virtually non-existent in the traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka at present. Cultural tourism has been used to improve the economic condition of heritage sites by revitalizing the heritage buildings with new functions and adaptive reuse. While cultural tourism has been implemented as a survival strategy for dwindling heritage sites,<sup>399</sup> it has its drawbacks as well. Cultural tourism can be compared to the *Shankher Korat*, a special moon shaped cutter used by the *Shankharis* of *Shankharibazar* that cuts both when it goes forward and comes back. It is used as a local proverb meaning the benefits are accompanied by problems. There are very few rare examples where cultural tourism has been controlled or executed strategically so that they do not ‘overpower’ the heritage itself. In most cases, the new economic activities and the influx of a great number of tourists that ultimately destroy the intangible links that gave the sites their heritage value in the first place. The ‘community ownership’ as already mentioned is also the key element of successful informal community heritage management in the traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka. A possible overkill of cultural tourism will mean the ‘community ownership’ will be gradually replaced by the lucrative instant profit based economic ventures. The architectural heritage of Old Dhaka has survived for centuries due to the community ownership, control and informal management. A loss of this quality will mean only the ‘shell’ of the heritage will remain with no ‘soul’.

---

<sup>398</sup> . Ibid.

<sup>399</sup> . McCool and Moisey, 2001.

While cultural tourism can be an essential element for survival of the struggling architectural heritage of Old Dhaka, an uncontrolled cultural tourism can threaten to destroy the heritage communities themselves. A relevant example can be found at Angkor Wat, where an extreme cultural tourism has put the traditional communities and their ethnic lifestyle under the threat of extinction. There is potential for cultural tourism to support the continuity of the heritage of Old Dhaka. It can be supported by the local NGOs. But the execution should be balanced, limited and controlled. Care should be taken so that the ‘community ownership’ remains intact. A possible cultural tourism should be promoted keeping the informal community heritage management framework intact, rather it can be integrated into the system.

### **9.3 A Possible Support System**

The architectural heritage of Old Dhaka has been managed by the informal community bodies for centuries. The system has been self-sufficient; no external support was required. The financial and material resources have been collected and the craftsmen hired and managed from within the community. This self-sufficiency has not only maintained the authenticity of the architectural heritage, keeping the intangible cultural links intact, it also safeguarded the community identity, pride and ‘ownership’.

The case studies show that even though the informal heritage management has been continuing in the traditional neighborhoods; managing the heritage is becoming increasingly difficult for the community bodies. They find themselves in a highly challenging situation where the traditional craft and business is gradually diminishing under increasing socioeconomic and urban development pressures. The heritage is

becoming increasingly vulnerable through the onslaught of urban development, often illegal. With a rising population and expanding community size, the control that community bodies have is ever diminishing. A good number of the architectural heritage has been taken over by the Department of Archaeology. But in the name of 'protection', the architectural heritages are either losing their authenticity by improper formal intervention or kept in a limbo where neither they are protected by the Department of Archaeology, nor do the community bodies have the authority to manage them anymore. Amidst the emerging agents of changes in the twenty-first century, social capital, a bond that holds the traditional communities together, is gradually diminishing. In some of the communities, some of the major problems are depopulation of the original inhabitants and rising population. There is also the threat of infringement from the neighboring communities and the lack of law to protect the heritage.

While there is no denying that external support has become essential for the continuity of the informal heritage management system by the community bodies, the situation is rather delicate. Several community members expressed that they do not want to lose their 'community ownership' in the case of a formal intervention. Out of this concern, several community bodies have actually refrained from asking support from formal authorities (to manage the architectural heritage) for this reason.

The situation demands that any possible support from formal authorities or NGOs has to be arranged in such a way that there is minimum influence on the existing informal heritage management system in order to ensure their continuity. The diagram (see Figure 82) above summarizes the forces working against the vulnerable architectural

heritage with a possible support system (with limited involvement of public and private sector) which may enable the informal community bodies to continue with their heritage management. The possible support system can work with short and long term initiatives.

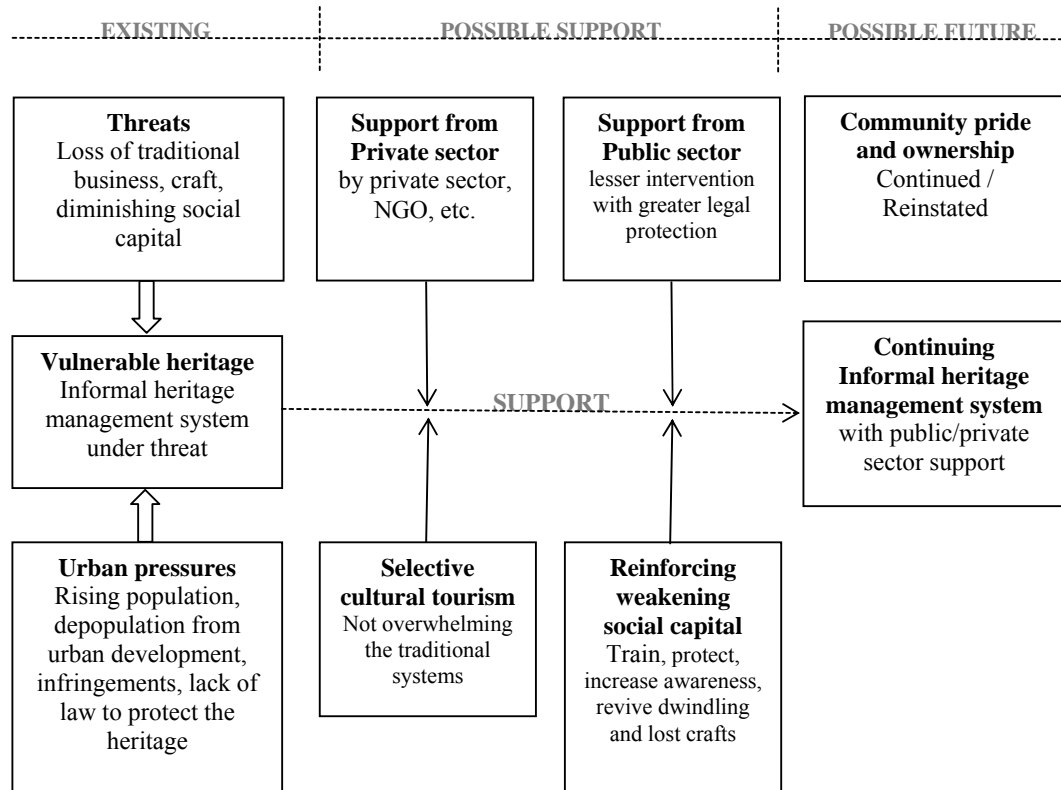


Figure 82: A possible support system for vulnerable informal heritage management system in Old Dhaka, source: author.

The short term initiatives may include better legal protection of the architectural heritage with new and effective legislation and their implementations by the formal authorities, selective cultural tourism aided by the NGOs that does not overwhelm the traditional systems. The long term initiatives may be organized by NGOs and include training in contemporary heritage conservation techniques, better protection of the traditional knowledge, increasing awareness about the local heritage and reviving

dwindling and lost crafts. These long term initiatives may in turn restore the lost social capital in the traditional communities.

There is a strong infrastructure already established by several prominent NGOs working in the urban areas in Bangladesh. This infrastructure can be effectively used to support the informal community bodies in managing the architectural heritage. But unlike other cases like slum up-gradation, as undertaken by the local NGOs of Bangladesh rather successfully with policy implementation and financial support, heritage management in the traditional communities is a completely different matter. A slight imbalance in the social system (e.g. the new economic forces disturbing the socio-economic systems of traditional businesses) and forced intervention can sever the delicate intangible cultural links that are so important for the survival of the architectural heritage.

For a possible support system by the NGOs, a completely new approach has to be formulated considering the unique situation of the traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka. Possible cultural tourism as a survival strategy has to be executed with caution and restraint. The heritage management of the community bodies should not be superseded. Rather it should become a harmonious addition to the existing informal heritage management system. The 'community ownership' should remain intact. NGO's support can be financial, organizational and technical. They can come up with limited financial support for the struggling traditional craft and business, organizational training and workshops to increase awareness about the local heritage. Some of the older heritage buildings are nearly two hundred years old, advanced technical assistance is required to help the community bodies save them. The NGOs

can support with advanced technical help where the restoration demands more advanced (rather than traditional) methods should be used.

The direct intervention and conservation projects undertaken by the formal authorities have not been successful as the traditional knowledge of local material and construction methods have not been effectively used and the intangible heritage elements were largely ignored in these projects. Rather than direct interventions (that often disrupts the community management system), the formal authorities can support by training advanced restoration techniques and set better legislations and regulations with strict enforcement to better protect the architectural heritage of Old Dhaka and support the informal heritage management system of Old Dhaka with better protection.

#### **9.4 Possible Areas for Future Research**

##### **9.4.1 Possible Areas for Future Research on the Informal Heritage Management System in Old Dhaka**

This study identified the key issues and challenges of informal heritage management in Old Dhaka. Any future effort to conserve/manage the heritage must adopt more extensive and rigorous methods and means to identify and document the vital heritage elements, both tangible and intangible. Some possible areas for future research can be as follows:

1. Identify the cultural significance of the architectural heritage of Old Dhaka by various categories through comprehensive historical research and detail analysis of the significance of the heritage through technical and qualitative surveys. The survey can identify and assess tangible qualities like design, color scheme, material, location and context, associated landscape traditional construction system and building

techniques used (often different than the contemporary ones), technical equipment used, etc. The intangible qualities like the social, spiritual, scientific and historic value, aesthetic quality, community ownership, etc. should also be explored.

2. Study of the relationship between heritage and the traditional crafts and business with detail survey.

3. The possibility of using modern technologies including 3D modeling, mapping and sampling, photography, technical and measured drawings, etc. to accompany the intangible data collection with oral histories, in depth interview and focus group discussions with the community members, etc.

4. Using the approaches mentioned, a detailed inventory of the architectural heritage and their associated intangible values can be developed through future research. A multidisciplinary approach including architecture, archaeology, history, sociology, engineering, can be adopted. This can be complemented with the study of local crafts and building techniques. Findings of such research can be used as reference for any future intervention.

#### **9.4.2 Possible Issues to be Explored in Relation to the Proposed Support System**

Considering the proposed support system as mentioned in the earlier section, the following are some of the issues that can be explored in future research:

1. The NGOs are primarily engaged in policy advocacy and financial support in the current urban projects like slum up-gradation. Supporting (and not organizing from scratch, as they generally do) will demand a fresh policy framework. The focus must be shifted from the existing institutional framework of NGOs, to make them more sensitive to the needs (in terms of informal heritage management) of communities of



Old Dhaka. A shift from the existing role of NGOs as ‘community development leaders’ to ‘heritage management supporters’ will be required.

2. NGOs should fill up the gap left by the formal authorities and co-ordinate all sources of external support and stakeholder involvement in facilitating the continuity of the informal heritage management system. The mechanism of how this coordination among different players and stakeholders can take place with support from NGOs needs to be worked out.

3. Formal authorities like the Department of Archaeology are ill-equipped and overloaded with a long list of vulnerable heritage to conserve. A possible scenario can be expanding the Department’s capacity by hiring more skilled personnel in heritage conservation. However, it will require greater funds from the government. As long as there is no additional funds, rather than overloading the limited organizational capacity, the Department can work as a possible ‘support’ in heritage conservation with the main responsibility continuing with the informal community bodies in the neighborhoods of Old Dhaka, where the heritage can be managed by the local communities. The strategy should be ‘support when required’ not intervene or takeover.

4. The local NGOs have several successful strategies in other areas of community development. Some of these are micro and others are macro by the nature of the policy undertaken. Given the special context of Old Dhaka, NGOs need to decide which strategy suites the traditional neighborhoods of Old Dhaka better in terms of heritage management and conservation. Also, NGOs, especially the large ones, follow a particular type of bureaucracy and work policy. Comparatively, the informal community bodies have their own system of informal heritage management. It will

have to be a curious balance where NGOs must adapt to their general work policy to cooperate and support the informal heritage management.

5. A balance of power and influence has to be reached between the NGOs and the public sector. A conflict of power balance will deter the main cause; i.e. supporting the existing informal heritage management system in the communities of Old Dhaka.

The findings of this research show two clear issues. First, the informal heritage management system with all their local traditional resources has been continuing to protect and manage the local heritage while fighting several challenges. Second, though they require external support, they want to keep the 'community ownership'. No formal intervention or conservation effort could successfully provide this support yet. The formal authorities like the Department of Archaeology are overloaded with a long list of vulnerable heritage to protect, with limited resources. There are a good number of heritage in this list which by their nature are beyond the scope of community heritage management. For example, forts, palaces, etc. fall in this category. Trusting the heritages that are already managed by the informal community bodies (with possible support and less intervention), will enable the formal authorities to better conserve the other heritages.

Amidst this context, it may be useful to consider a possible future support system involving a lesser authoritative body like the NGOs. This research identifies the issues that are more delicate or urgent which have to be considered before implementing any possible future support system, involving NGOs and others. This may facilitate the continuity of the informal heritage management system and ensure the survival of the heritage of Old Dhaka.

## Bibliography

- 93 heritage buildings, sites listed for preservation. (2009, 28 January). *The Daily star*, retrieved from <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=73198>, accessed on 28 January, 2009.
- Acharya, K. (2008). "Conservation in India: Panchayets show the way" online article published on 21 April 2008 in the website: [www.southasia.oneworld.net/Article/conservation-in-india-panchayats-show-the-way-1](http://www.southasia.oneworld.net/Article/conservation-in-india-panchayats-show-the-way-1).
- Adams, J. L. (2001). *Conceptual blockbusting: a guide to better ideas*, Cambridge, Mass.: Perseus Pub.
- ADB. (2010). "Participation of the Civil Society in Public Decision-making", Asian Development Bank, retrieved from [http://www.adb.org/Governance/gov\\_pcsdpd.asp](http://www.adb.org/Governance/gov_pcsdpd.asp).
- Adler, P. S, and Kwon, S. W. (2002). "Social Capital: Prospects For a New Concept" in *Academy of Management. The Academy of Management Review* 27: 17-40.
- Ahmed, I. (2011) "Lifestyle and affordability choices in traditional housing of Old Dhaka" in *Open House International*, special theme issue on Housing Affordability, Quality, and Life Style Theories, V 36 no 3.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2010) "The state of Religious heritage in Dhaka: challenges for maintaining authenticity in urban mosques", at International Conference on 'First International Conference for Urban & Architecture Heritage in Islamic Countries: Its role in Cultural & Economic Development', Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, May 23-28, 2010.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2006). "A Participatory Approach to Conservation: Working with Community to Save the Cultural Heritage of Panamnagar", *BRAC University Journal*, Volume III, Number 2, pp 25-33.
- Ahmed, N. & Khan, N. (2004, February 20). The transformation of the old houses of Dhaka. *The Daily Star*.
- Ali, T. (2006, November 18). 150-yr-old building goes down for high-rise, *The Daily Star*, retrieved from <http://www.thedailystar.net/2006/11/18/d6111801119.htm>
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2007, 26 April). Panamnagar Unscientific restoration defacing heritage, *The Daily Star*, retrieved from <http://www.thedailystar.net/2007/04/26/d7042601107.htm>

- Anderson, B. (1983). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Antoniou, J. (1981). *Islamic cities and conservation*, Paris: The UNESCO Press.
- Aplin, G. (2002). *Heritage: identification, conservation, and management*, South Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
- Arnstein, S. R. (1969). "A Ladder of Citizen Participation", in *JAIP*, Vol. 35, No. 4, July 1969.
- Askew, M. and Logan, W. S. (Eds) (1994). *Cultural identity and urban change in Southeast Asia: interpretative essays*, Geelong, Victoria: Deakin University Press.
- Austin, M. J. & Lowe, J.I. (eds.) (1994). *Controversial issues in communities and organizations*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Australian Heritage Commission. (2000). *Protecting Local Heritage Places: A Guide for Communities*, Australian Heritage Commission.
- Azam, K.. (1907). *The Panchayet System of Dhaka*. Dhaka. (reprinted by Asiatic Society of Bangladesh).
- Azam, K. M. and Hollander, A.N.J.D. (1990). *The Panchayat System of Dhaka*. Translated by Willem van Schendel and Nazrul Islam, Muntassir Mamoon (ed.), Dhaka Study Series 3, Dhaka: The Dhaka City Museum.
- Backman, K. and Kyngäs, H. (1999). "Challenges of the grounded theory approach to a novice researcher" in *Nursing and Health Sciences* 1, no. 3: 147-153.
- Bagguley, P., Mark-Lawson & J., Urry, J., et. al. (1990). *Restructuring: Place, Class and Gender*, London: Sage Publications.
- Barbour, R.S. (2008). *Introducing qualitative research: a student's guide to the craft of qualitative research*, Los Angeles: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Barrett, N. E. & Barrett. J. P. (1997). "Reserve design and the new conservation theory", in S.T.A. Pickett (ed.) *The Ecological Basis of Conservation: heterogeneity, ecosystems, and biodiversity*, New York: Chapman & Hall.
- Barth, F. (1969). "Introduction", in *Ethnic groups and boundaries, the social organization of culture difference*, Fredrik Barth (ed.), Bergen and Oslo: Universities Forlaget and London: George Allen and Unwin, pp 9-38.
- Beins, B. C. (2004). *Research methods: a tool for life*. Boston: Pearson/ Allyn and Bacon.
- Biswas, A.K. (1995). "Paradox of anti-partition agitation and Swadeshi movement in Bengal (1905)", in *Social Scientist*, Vol 23, Nos 4-6, April-June 1995.

- Bleiker, H., and Bleiker, A. (1994). *Citizen Participation Handbook for Public Officials and Other Professionals Serving the Public*, Monterey, Calif.: Institute for Participatory Management and Planning.
- Brenner, M., Brown, J. & Canter, D.(eds) (1985) *The Research interview, uses and approaches*, London ; Orlando : Academic Press.
- Briggs, X.D.S., (2003a). "Organizing Stakeholders, Building Movement, Setting the Agenda", The Community Problem-Solving Project @ MIT Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A. June 2003, retrieved from <http://www.community-problem-solving.net>.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2003b). "Planning Together: How (and How Not) to Engage Stakeholders in Charting a Course." The Community Problem-Solving Project @ MIT Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A. June 2003, retrieved from <http://www.community-problem-solving.net>.
- Burke, E.M. (1979). *A participatory approach to urban planning*, New York: Human Sciences Press.
- Cantacuzino, S. (Ed.) (1975). *Architectural conservation in Europe*, London: Architectural Press.
- Chandra, S. and Taqui, R. (2006). *Conservation of Lucknow heritage: Preservation methodology and international dimensions*, New Delhi : Tech Books International.
- Chapman, W. (2007). "Determining appropriate use" in *Asia conserved: lessons learned from the UNESCO Asia-Pacific heritage awards for culture heritage conservation (2000-2004)*. Bangkok: UNESCO.
- Charmaz, K. C. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: a practical guide through qualitative analysis*, London: SAGE.
- China principles (2002), retrieved from [www.international.icomos.org](http://www.international.icomos.org)
- Chowdhury, A.M. and Faruqui, S. (1991). "Physical Growth of Dhaka City" in *Dhaka: Past Present and Future*, edited by Sharif Uddin Ahmed, Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.
- Citizenship DRC. (2007). *Champions of Participation: Engaging Citizens in Local Governance*, International learning event report 31 May to 4 June 2007 UK, Development Research Centre on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability (Citizenship DRC) at the University of Sussex, retrieved from <http://www.drc-citizenship.org/news%20and%20events/2007/archive/championspacklaunch.htm>.
- Clarke, A. and Johnston, C. (2003). "Time, memory, place and land: Social meaning and heritage conservation in Australia" in *ICOMOS 14th General Assembly*

- and Scientific Symposium on "Place – memory – meaning: preserving intangible values in monuments and sites", 28 - 31 October, 2003, Victoria falls, Australia.*
- Cnaan, R. A. and Milofsky, C. (Eds.) (2007). *Handbook of community movements and local organizations*, New York , London : Springer.
- Cohen, A.P. (1985). *The symbolic construction of community*, Chichester: Ellis Horwood limited and New York: Tavistock publications.
- Coleman, J. (1988). "Social capital in the creation of human capital", in *American Journal of Sociology*, 94: 95–120.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1990). *Foundations of Social Theory*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Convention of the protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe.(1985). Granada, retrieved from [http://www.international.icomos.org/centre\\_documentation/coe\\_eng.htm](http://www.international.icomos.org/centre_documentation/coe_eng.htm).
- Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage. (2003). UNESCO: Paris, 29 September-17 October, 2003, retrieved from [www.unesdoc.unesco.org](http://www.unesdoc.unesco.org)
- Cooke, P. (1989). "Locality, economic restructuring and world development", in *Localities*, P.Cooke, (ed.), London: Unwin Hyman.
- Creighton, J. L. (1992). *Involving Citizens in Community Decision Making*. Washington, D.C.: Program for Community Problem Solving, National League of Cities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2005). *The public participation handbook: making better decisions through citizen involvement*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Cullingworth, B. (Ed.). (1999). *British planning: 50 years of urban and regional policy*, New Brunswick, N.J. : Athlone Press.
- Dani, A. H. (2008). *Dhaka: A Record of Its Changing Fortune*, Dhaka: The Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1961). *Muslim architecture in Bengal*, Dhaka: Paramount Press.
- David, M. (Ed). (2006). *Case study research*, London, Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE.
- Davidson, C. C. and Serageldin, I.(1995). *Architecture beyond Architecture: Creativity and Social transformations in Islamic Cultures*, Aga Khan.
- Dekker, P. and Uslaner, E.M. (2001). "Introduction" in *Social Capital and Participation in Everyday Life*, edited by Eric M. Uslaner. London: Routledge.
- Doig, D. (1968). "An artists impression", in *The statesman Calcutta*, Calcutta.

- Dutta, A. and Billah, W. (2009, March 23). 93 structures, 7 sites declared protected, some destroyed, others illegally occupied, *The Prothom Alo*, Dhaka.
- Engelhardt, R. A. (1998a). "Can Penang Become a World Heritage Site? The Role of Public-Private partnership in the Conservation of Living Heritage", public lecture, Penang, unpublished paper, cited in Jenkins, G. (2008). *Contested space: cultural heritage and identity reconstructions: conservation strategies within a developing Asian city*, Berlin: Lit, p 159.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1998b). "Heritage for the Future: The Challenge of Preserving the Historic Environment in the Rapidly Modernizing Context of Asia: An Introduction to UNESCO's "LEAP" Programme for Integrated Community Development and Cultural Heritage Preservation in Asia and the Pacific Through Local Effort" in the 7th Seminar on the Conservation of Asian Cultural Heritage: "The World Cultural Heritage in Asian Countries - Sustainable Development and Conservation", Tokyo National Research Institute of Cultural Properties.
- ESCWA. (2009). "Guide for promoting participation between governments and social society organizations in public policy processes", Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, retrieved from <http://www.escwa.un.org>
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2010) "Enhancing civil society participation in public policy process", Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, retrieved from <http://www.escwa.un.org/information/publications/edit/upload/sdd-10-TP1.pdf>
- Fisher, P. (2005). "The property development process: case studies from Grainger Town", *Property Management*. Vol. 23, No.3.
- Fukuyama, F. (1995). *Trust: the social virtues and the creation of prosperity*. London: Hamish Hamilton.
- Fung, A. and Wright, E.O. (et al.). (2003). *Deepening democracy: institutional innovations in empowered participatory governance*, London ; New York : Verso.
- Gerring, J. (2007). *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*, New York: Cambridge University press.
- Ghias, D. (2008a, May 28). Heritage buildings vanishing fast from city's skyline, *The Daily Prthom-alo*, retrieved from <http://www.thedailystar.net/story.php?nid=38468>.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2008b, July 28). Death of a heritage site: Churihatta mosque still evokes sad memory, *The Daily Star*, retrieved from <http://www.thedailystar.net/story.php?nid=47697>
- Ghosh, S. (2002). "Calcutta, India: Heritage and Government priorities", in *The Disappearing Asian City. : protecting Asia's Urban Heritage in a globalizing world*, William S. Logan (ed) , Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Giddens, A. (1990). *The Consequences of Modernity*, California, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Glaser, B.G. & Strauss, A. L. (1968). *The discovery of grounded theory: strategies for qualitative research*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968.
- Glaser, B.G. (1978). *Theoretical sensitivity: advances in the methodology of grounded theory*, Mill Valley, California: Sociology Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1998). *Doing grounded theory: issues and discussions*, Mill Valley, California: Sociology Press.
- Glassie, H. & Mahmud, F. (2008). *Living Traditions: Cultural Survey of Bangladesh Series-II*. Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.
- Govt. sits idle as Shankharibazar houses get more vulnerable (2009, 4 February). *The Daily star*.
- Hafiz, R. (1990). "Workshop Projects: Khan Mohammad Mridha's Mosque" in *Architectural and Urban Conservation in the Islamic World*, A. H. Imamuddin and K. R. Longeteig, (Eds.), Geneva: The Aga Khan Trust for Culture.
- Hanlon, M. (2010). "World population becomes more urban than rural", retrieved from <http://www.gizmag.com/go/7334/>
- Hardy, M. (Ed.) (2009). *The Venice Charter Revisited: Modernism, Conservation and Tradition in the 21st Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publisher.
- Harvey, D. (1989). *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Cambridge: Blackwell.
- Haque et.al (Eds.) (1998). *Pundranagar to Sher-e-banglanagar*, Dhaka: Chetona Sthapatya Unnoyon Society.
- Hasan, A. (1995). "Shelter and conservation in an urbanizing Islamic world" in *Architecture beyond Architecture: Creativity and Social transformations in Islamic Cultures*, Cynthia C Davidson and Ismail Serageldin (eds.), Aga Khan.
- Hasan, S.M. (2003). *Muslim monuments of Bangladesh*, Dhaka: Islamic Foundation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1993). *Mosjider itihis (History of mosque)*, Dhaka: Islamic Foundation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1983). *Glimpses of Muslim art and architecture*, Dhaka: Islamic Foundation.
- Heritage in wrong hands. (2007, March 19). *The Daily Star*, retrieved from <http://www.thedailystar.net/2007/03/19>.
- Herzog, T. (1996). *Research methods and data analysis in the social sciences*, New York : HarperCollins Colege Publishers.



- Hoi An Protocols for best conservation practice in Asia (2001), retrieved from [www.international.icomos.org](http://www.international.icomos.org)
- Holdar, G.G. and Zakharchenko, O. (Eds). (2002). *Citizen participation handbook*, People's Voice Project, International Centre for Policy Studies, Kyiv: iMedia Ltd.
- Holod, R. and Rastorfer, D. (Eds). (1983). *Architecture and community: building in the Islamic world today, the Aga Khan Award for Architecture*, Millerton, N.Y. : Aperture : Distributed by Viking Penguin.
- Hossain, N. (1992). *Kingbadantir Dhaka*, Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.
- Howard, P. (2003). *Heritage: management, interpretation, identity*, New York: Continuum.
- Howe, R and Logan, W.S. (2002). "Protecting Asia's Urban Heritage: The Way Forward" in *The Disappearing Asian City. : protecting Asia's Urban Heritage in a globalizing world* Logan, W.S. (ed), Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ibrahim, S. (1997). "Civil society and transition to democracy in the Arab world", Introduction to a series of studies on the Project of civil society and transition to democracy in the Arab world, Cairo: Ibn Khaldoun Centre for Development Studies and Al-Ameen publishing.
- ICOMOS. (2003). *ICOMOS 14th General Assembly and Scientific Symposium on "Place – memory – meaning: preserving intangible values in monuments and sites", 28 - 31 October, 2003, Victoria falls, Australia.*
- ICOMOS Canada. (1982). Conseil des monuments et des sites du Québec-*The Deschambault Declaration* April 1982: *Charter for the preservation of Quebec's heritage*, Quebec: ICOMOS Canada French-Speaking Committee.
- ICOMOS New Zealand Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Value (2002), retrieved from [www.international.icomos.org](http://www.international.icomos.org)
- Imam, S.R. and Mamoon, M. (1993) "Architectural conservation in practice" in A.H. Imamuddin (Ed.), *Architectural Conservation Bangladesh*, Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.
- Imamuddin, A.H., Hassan, S.A. & Alam, W. (1990). "Shakhari Patti: A Unique Old City Settlement, Dhaka" in *Architectural and Urban Conservation in the Islamic World*. (Abu H. Imamuddin and Karen R. Longeteig, eds.) Geneva: The Aga Khan Trust for Culture.
- Imamuddin, A.H. (Ed.) (1993) *Architectural Conservation Bangladesh*, Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.
- Imamuddin, A. H. (1982). *Bengali House in Urban Context*, Dhaka: BUET Technical Journal.

- Imon, S. S. (2006). Sustainable Urban Conservation: The Role of Public Participation in the Conservation of Urban Heritage in Old Dhaka, Unpublished PhD Thesis, The University of Hong Kong.
- IRIN News. (2010). "Asian Cities at Risk", retrieved from <http://www.politicalaffairs.net/asian-cities-at-risk/>
- Islam, N. (1998). "Dhaka City: Some general concerns", in *Asian Cities in the 21st Century: Contemporary Approaches to Municipal Management Vol. 3 Reforming Dhaka City Management*, retrieved from [www.adb.org/Documents/Conference/Asian\\_Cities\\_3/vol\\_3no6.pdf](http://www.adb.org/Documents/Conference/Asian_Cities_3/vol_3no6.pdf).
- Islam, K.A. and Sharmeen, T. (2005, July 5). Panam among world's 100 endangered historic sites, retrieved from <http://www.bangladesh-web.com/view.php?hidRecord=51154>.
- Islam, S. (1991). *Social life in Dhaka, 1763-1800*, edited by Sharif Uddin Ahmed, Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.
- Islam, T. and Zaman, H. (2006, April 03). Conservation of a Historic *Mohalla*, *The Daily Star*, retrieved from <http://www.thedailystar.net/magazine/2006/04/03/cover.htm>.
- Jamil, S.M. (2005, August 4). Dhakaiyyas: Losing Their Traditions, *The Daily Star*, Dhaka.
- Jenkins, G. (2008). *Contested space: cultural heritage and identity reconstructions: conservation strategies within a developing Asian city*, Berlin: Lit.
- Jigyasu, R. (2003). "Protecting and Managing 'Living' Heritage in South Asia: Issues and Challenges." Paper presented at *ICCROM Living Heritage Sites Programme Strategy Meeting*, held in Bangkok.
- Jokilehto, J. (1999). *A History of architectural conservation*, Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Johnston, R. J. (1991). *The Question of place: Exploring the Practice of Human Geography*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Kabir, K. H. (2000). *Shakhari Bazar Rethought*, Unpublished B. Arch. Thesis, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology.
- Kamal Q. S., et al. (1990). *Social formation in Dhaka city*. Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.
- Kamel, E., Shams, A., Hale, J. and Hanks, L. (2007). *The 'Conflict of Interpretations': physical conservation versus storytelling and meaning - an analytical study of WH Convention and ICOMOS charters*, PhD research project, School of the Built Environment, University of Nottingham.

- Karim, A. (1991). "Origin and Development of Mughal" Dhaka in *Dhaka Past Present and Future*, edited by Sharif Uddin Ahmed, Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1964). *Dacca: The Mughal Capital*. Dacca: Asiatic Society of Pakistan.
- Karim, A.K. N. (1996). *Changing society in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh*, Dhaka: Nawroze Kitabistan.
- Karim, M. F. (2010). "Problems and prospects of *Awqaf* in Bangladesh: A legal perspective", retrieved from <http://www.iefpedia.com/english/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/PROBLEMS-AND-PROSPECTS-OF-AWQAF-IN-BANGLADESH-A-LEGAL-PERSPECTIVE-Muhammad-Fazlul-Karim.doc.>, accessed on 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2011.
- Khan, F.K and Islam, N. (1964). "High Class Residential Areas in Dacca City" in *The Oriental Geographer*, vol III, No. 1, p 4.
- Khan, I. M. (1991). "Livability in Old Dhaka: Evolving residential patterns in Mohollas" in *Architectural and Urban Conservation in the Islamic World*. (Abu H. Imamuddin and Karen R. Longeteig, eds.) Geneva: The Aga Khan Trust for Culture.
- Khan, I. M. (1982) *Alternative Approach to the Redevelopment of Old Dhaka*. Doctoral Dissertation, Vol.1 Katholieke University Leuven.
- Khan, N. (2010). "Strategy for the Revival and Sustenance of Artisanship: A Critical Parameter for Conservation", First International Conference for Urban & Architecture Heritage in Islamic Countries: Its role in Cultural & Economic Development, Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities, Riyadh, May 23-28.
- Keys, P. (1981). "Conservation as an integral part of Urban Renewal" in *PLANEWS, The journal of Singapore Institute of Planners*.
- Kong, L. and Yeoh, B.S.A. (1995). "The Meaning and Making of Place: Exploring History, Community and Identity." in *Portraits of Places: History, Community and Identity in Singapore*, ed. Lily Kong and Brenda S.A. Yeoh, pp 18, Times Editions: Singapore.
- Kothari, A. et al (eds). (1996), *People and protected areas: towards participatory conservation in India*, New Delhi; Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Kretzmann, J. and McKnight, J. *The asset-based community development institute*, school of education and social policy, Northwestern University, retrieved from <http://www.abcdinstitute.org/> accessed on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2010.

- Kron, Z. M. (1996). "Conservation of the Urban Fabric Walled City of Lahore, Pakistan", retrieved from <http://web.mit.edu/akpia/www/AKPSite/4.239/lahore/lahore.html>.
- Kulterman, U. (1997). *Cultural Identity and Human Survival*, Earth, Vol. V III, Dhaka.
- Kvale, S. (1996) *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*, Sage Publications.
- Lane, L.W. (1958). "The Planning Problems of Central London" in *Journal of the Town Planning Institute* 44.
- Larsen, H.E. (ed.). (1995). *Nara Conference on Authenticity in Relation to the World Heritage Convention, November 1-6, 1994, Nara, Japan*. Trondheim, Norway: Tapir Publishers (in association with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Tokyo; the Japan Agency for Cultural Affairs, Tokyo; ICCROM, Rome; and ICOMOS, Paris).
- LDA. (1980). Lahore Development Authority /Metropolitan Planning Wing, with the World Bank/IDA. "Lahore Urban Development and Traffic Study," Final Report/vol. 4. Walled City Upgrading Study. August 1980.
- Leedy, P. D. & Ormond, J. E. (2010). *Practical research: planning and design*, Upper Saddle River, NJ : Merrill.
- Leung, M. (2008, October 12). Architects fear destruction of Dhaka's Shakhari Bazaar, *The Daily star*, retrieved from <http://www.joybangla.info/2008/10/12/architects-fear-destruction-of-dhakas-shakhari-bazaar>
- Lewcock, R. (1994). "Conservation in the Islamic World" in *Building for tomorrow: the Aga Khan award for architecture*, Azim A. Nanji (ed), London : Academy Editions.
- Lewis, J.P. (1965). *Buildings Cycles and Britain's Growth*, London: Macmillan.
- Logan, W. S. (ed). (2002). *The Disappearing Asian City. : protecting Asia's Urban Heritage in a globalizing world*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Loh, L. (2007). "Conveying the Spirit of Place" in *Asia conserved: lessons learned from the UNESCO Asia-Pacific heritage awards for culture heritage conservation (2000-2004)*, pp 9-12, Bangkok: UNESCO.
- Loury, G. (1992). "The economics of discrimination: Getting to the core of the problem" in *Harvard Journal for African American Public Policy* 1: 91 - 110.
- Low, S.M (1992). 'Symbolic ties that bind: Place attachment in the plaza', in I. Altman and S.M. Low (eds.), *Place Attachment*. New York: Plenum Press.

- Lowenthal, D. (1993). "What makes the past matter?" in *Companion to Contemporary Architectural Thought*, Farmer, B. & Louw, H. (eds.) London; New York: Routledge.
- LUDTS and the World Bank/IDA. (1980). "Lahore Urban Development and Traffic Study," Final Report/vol. 4, Walled City Upgrading Study, August 1980, preface. Lahore Development Authority /Metropolitan Planning Wing, with the World Bank/IDA.
- Lung, D. (2007). "Interpreting the Significance of Heritage sites" in *Asia conserved: lessons learned from the UNESCO Asia-Pacific heritage awards for culture heritage conservation (2000-2004)*, pp 21-27, Bangkok: UNESCO.
- Lynch, K. (1972). *What time is this place?* Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Mahmud, A. (2008, October 28). The oldest cinema hall *Azad* being demolished. *The Daily Prothom-alo*, retrieved from <http://www.prothom-alo.com/detail/date/2009-11-20/news/6400>.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2009, September 16). 360 year old Churhatta mosque demolished, *The Prothom Alo*, retrieved from <http://www.prothom-alo.com/detail/date/2009-11-20/news/6397>.
- MacManamon, F. P. & Hatton, A. (2000). *Cultural resource management in contemporary society: perspectives on managing and presenting the past*, New York: Routledge.
- Mamoon, M. (2008a). *Dhaka: Smriti Bismritir Nagari*, Dhaka: Anannya.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2008b). *Dhaka Shomogro- 3*, Dhaka: Anannya.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1991). *Dhaka tale of a city*, Dhaka: Dhaka city Museum.
- Martin-Brown & Serageldin, I. (Eds.) (1999). *Proceedings: Culture in Sustainable Development; Investing in Cultural and Natural Endowments*, Washington DC: World Bank and UNESCO.
- Mathur, S. (2010). "Monumental glory, now a sad story.. [Lucknow]", *The Times of India*, Mar 30, 2010, retrieved from [http://findarticles.com/p/news-articles/times-of-india-the/mi\\_8012/is\\_20100330/monumental-glory-sad-story-lucknow/ai\\_n52976683/](http://findarticles.com/p/news-articles/times-of-india-the/mi_8012/is_20100330/monumental-glory-sad-story-lucknow/ai_n52976683/)., accessed on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2010.
- Matsuura, K. (2007). "Our living heritage", in *The Guardian*, 8 July, 2007, retrieved from [www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2007/jul/08/ourlivingheritage](http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2007/jul/08/ourlivingheritage).
- McCool, S. F. and Moisey, R. N. (eds). (2001). *Tourism, recreation, and sustainability: linking culture and the environment*, Wallingford, Oxon, UK; New York, NY, USA: CABI Pub.
- McNamara, C. (1999) *General Guidelines for Conducting Interviews*, Minnesota.

- McNeely, J. A. (Ed.) (1995). *Expanding partnerships in conservation*, ICUN--the World Conservation Union. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.
- Meyer, B. & Geschiere, P. (Eds.). (1999). *Globalization and Identity: Dialectics of flow and Closure*, Malden, Ma: Blackwell.
- Moore, N. (2006). *How to do research: a practical guide to designing and managing research projects*, London : Facet Publishing.
- Mostyn, B. (1985) "The content analysis of Qualitative Research Data: A Dynamic Approach" in *The Research interview, uses and approaches*, Michael B., Jennifer B., David C. (eds), London ; Orlando : Academic Press.
- Mui, L. Y. *et al.* (2008). "Kuala Lumpur Georgetown as a Heritage City: The Voices of the Residents", 14th Pacific Rim Real Estate Society Conference, 20-23 January 2008, Universiti Sains Malaysia.
- Mumtaz, K. K. (1985). *Architecture in Pakistan*, Singapore: Mimar.
- Nahapiet, J. and Ghoshal, S. (1998). "Social capital, intellectual capital, and the organizational advantage" in *Academy of Management Review* 23: 242-3.
- Nelson, J. G. *et. al* (eds.) (1989). *Urban heritage: preserving, planning and managing historical heritage in communities*, Waterloo, Ont.: Heritage Resources Centre, University of Waterloo.
- OECD. (2001). *Citizens as partners: information, consultation and public participation in policy-making*, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Paris : OECD.
- Orbasl, A. (2008). *Architectural conservation: principles and practice*, Oxford ; Malden, MA : Blackwell Pub.
- Panamnagar declared archeological site. (2003, March 23). The Daily New Age, *The Daily New Age*, Dhaka.
- PBS Newshour. (2010). "Rise of a Megacity: Bangladesh's Dhaka Sees Population Boom", published on September 8, 2010, retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/2010/09/bangladesh-megacity.html#>
- Peoples Republic of Bangladesh. (1968). "The Antiquities Act", 1968 (Act No. XIV of 1968, amended 22 September 1976).
- PEPAC. (1986). Pakistan Environmental Planning and Architectural Consultants Ltd. and Lahore Development Authority. *Conservation Plan for the Walled City of Lahore*. Final Report. vol. 1. Plan Proposals.
- Piven, F.F. & Cloward, R. A. (1979). *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail*, New York : Vintage books.

- Powell, R. (1994). *Living legacy: Singapore's architectural heritage renewed*, Singapore: Singapore Heritage Society.
- Prusina, O. (1999). *Heritage conservation as a vital urban strategy: examining the role of urban heritage in the contemporary city*, Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms International.
- Putnam, R. (1993). *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Qadir, M.A. (1981). "The newly discovered Madrasah Ruins at Gaur and its inscriptions" in *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh*, Vols, XXIV-VI, 1979-1981, Dhaka: The Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.
- \_\_\_\_\_(1993). "Conservation and restoration of historic Dhaka: It's future proposals and limitations" in *Architectural Conservation Bangladesh* A.H. Imamuddin (Ed.), Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.
- Quebec Declaration (2008), retrieved from [www.international.icomos.org](http://www.international.icomos.org)
- Raiffa, H. (1982). *The art and science of negotiation*, Cambridge, Mass. : Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- RAJUK. (2008). *Dhaka Metropolitan Building Construction Rules 2008*, article 61.
- Redfield, R. & Singer, M. (1954). "The cultural roles of cities", *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, Vol. 3, pp. 53-73.
- Regional Seminar for Cultural Personnel in Asia and the Pacific. (1998). "Preservation and Promotion of the Intangible Cultural Heritage" in 1998 *Regional Seminar for Cultural Personnel in Asia and the Pacific*, Tokyo, 24 February - 2 March.
- Robson, C. (2002). *Real world research: a resource for social scientists and practitioner-researchers*. Oxford, England; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers.
- Rose, G. (1995). Place and Identity: a sense of place. In *A Place in the World*, edited by D. Massey and P. Jess, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sander, T. H. (2002). "Social capital and new urbanism: leading a civic horse to water" *National Civic Review* 91: 213-221.
- Save Lalbagh Fort, Mohasthangarh (2011, March 5), *The Daily Star*, retrieved from <http://www.thedailystar.net/story.php?nid=176448>.
- Schudson, M. (1995). "Dynamics of distortion in collective memory" in Daniel L. Schacter (ed.), *Memory Distortion: How Minds, Brains and Societies Construct the Past*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

- Schuster, M. et. al. (eds.) (1997). *Preserving the built heritage: tools for implementation*. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England.
- Serageldin, I. (1999). *Very Special Places: The Architecture of and Economics of Intervening in Historic Cities*, Culture in sustainable Development Series, Washington DC: World Bank.
- Shaw, B. J. and Jones, R. (eds.) (1997). *Contested urban heritage: voices from the periphery*, Aldershot, Hants, England : Brookfield, Vt., USA : Ashgate.
- Siew, T. T. (2010). “The Sustainability of Urban Heritage Conservation: The Case of George Town, Penang”,
- Sim, D. (1982). *Change in the City Centre*, Hampshire: Gower Publishing Co. Ltd.
- Srinivas, H. (1999). “Prioritizing Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region: Role of City Governments”, retrieved from <http://www.gdrc.org/heritage/heritage-priority.html>.
- Starn, R.(2002). “Authenticity and historicpreservation: towards anauthentic history”, in *History of the Human Sciences*, Vol. 15 No. 1, London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New DelhiSAGE Publications, pp. 1–16.
- Strauss, A. L. and Corbin, J.M. (1998). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Tainter, J. and Lucas, J.G. (1983).“Epistemology of the significance concept”, in *American Antiquity*, v.48, n.4, p. 707-719.
- Taylor, J. (1840). *A sketch of the Topography & Statistics of Dacca*, Dhaka. (reprinted by Asiatic Society of Bangladesh).
- The 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.
- The Burra Charter. (1999). *The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance*, Australia: Australia ICOMOS Inc.
- The Daily New Age. (2003, March 23). Panamnagar declared archeological site, *The Daily New Age*.
- The Nara Document on Authenticity (1994), *Nara Conference on Authenticity in Relation to the World Heritage Convention*, held at Nara, Japan: UNESCO, ICCROM and ICOMOS, 1-6 November.
- The Venice Charter. (1966) *International Charter for Conservation and Restoration ofMonuments and Sites*, Venice: ICOMOS Inc.



- The Washington Charter. (1987). The Washington Charter on the Conservation of Historic Towns and Areas retrieved from [www.international.icomos.org](http://www.international.icomos.org)
- Tirmizi, M.A. (2010). "Conserving the Urban & Architectural Heritage of Lahore Walled City", First International Conference for Urban & Architecture Heritage in Islamic Countries: Its role in Cultural & Economic Development, Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities, Riyadh, May 23-28.
- Tunbridge, J. E. & Ashworth, G.J. (1996). *Dissonant heritage: the management of the past as a resource in conflict*, Chichester ; New York : J. Wiley.
- Ugochukwu, C. C. (2006). *Urban neighbourhood revitalization and heritage conservation: the architecture of urban redesign*, Lewiston, N.Y. : Edwin Mellen Press.
- UNESCO. (1972). The 1972 UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, UNESCO.
- UNESCO. (1982). *World Conference on Cultural Policies*, Mexico City, 1982. Paris.
- UNESCO. (1989). *Draft Medium Term Plan*, Paris: UNESCO.
- UNESCO. (1996). UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 'Cities of Asia: Heritage for the future' (press release), Paris: UNESCO.
- UNESCO. (2007). *Asia conserved: lessons learned from the UNESCO Asia-Pacific heritage awards for culture heritage conservation (2000-2004)*. Bangkok: UNESCO.
- UNRISD. (2002). *Visible Hands: Taking Responsibility for Social Development*, United Nations Research Institute for Sustainable Development.
- Uslaner, E. M. (2001). "Volunteering and social capital: how trust and religion shape civic participation in the United States" in *Social Capital and Participation in Everyday Life*, edited by Eric M. Uslaner. London: Routledge.
- Vines, E. (2005). *Streetwise Asia: a practical guide for the conservation and revitalisation of heritage cities and towns in Asia*, Bangkok : UNESCO.
- Watt, D. (2007). *Architectural conservation: principles and practice*, Blackwell Science Ltd.
- Whitehand, J.W.R. (1978). "Long-term Changes in the Form of the City Centre: the Case of Redevelopment" in *Geografiska Annaler Ser. B. 60*.
- Widodo, J. (2007). "Contributing to the Community's Cultural Continuum", in *Asia conserved: lessons learned from the UNESCO Asia-Pacific heritage awards for culture heritage conservation (2000-2004)*. Bangkok: UNESCO.

Wise, J. (1883). *History of Dhaka city*, Dhaka. (reprinted by Asiatic Society of Bangladesh).

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: design and methods*, Los Angeles, Calif. : Sage Publications.

Zancheti, S.M.; Hidaka, L.T.F.; Ribeiro, C.; Aguiar, B. (2009), "Judgement and validation in theBurra Charter process: introducing feedback in assessing the cultural significance of heritage sites", in *City & Time* 4 (2): 5., retrieved from [www.ct.ceci-br.org](http://www.ct.ceci-br.org).

Zipfel, T. and Gaventa, J. (2007) Policy Perspectives: Citizen Participation in local governance, retrieved from <http://www.drc-citizenship.org/news%20and%20events/2007/archive/championspacklaunch.htm>.

### **Websites**

[www.123rf.com](http://www.123rf.com), accessed on 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2010.

[www.3.bp.blogspot.com](http://www.3.bp.blogspot.com), accessed on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2010.

[www.abcdinstitute.org/docs/Communities%20in%20Control-%20Developing%20Assets.pdf](http://www.abcdinstitute.org/docs/Communities%20in%20Control-%20Developing%20Assets.pdf), accessed on 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2010.

[www.archaeology.gov.bd](http://www.archaeology.gov.bd), accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2010.

[www.banglapedia.org/httpdocs/HT/N\\_0118.HTM](http://www.banglapedia.org/httpdocs/HT/N_0118.HTM), accessed on 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2011.

[www.banglapedia.org/httpdocs/HT/L\\_0026.HTM](http://www.banglapedia.org/httpdocs/HT/L_0026.HTM), accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2010.

[www.banglapedia.org/httpdocs/HT/N\\_0057.HTM](http://www.banglapedia.org/httpdocs/HT/N_0057.HTM), accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2010.

[www.banglapedia.org/httpdocs/HT/P\\_0063.HTM](http://www.banglapedia.org/httpdocs/HT/P_0063.HTM), accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2010.

[www.bbs.gov.bd/Home.aspx](http://www.bbs.gov.bd/Home.aspx), accessed on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2010.

[www.bhaktapur.com](http://www.bhaktapur.com), accessed on 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2011.

[www.cache.virtualtourist.com](http://www.cache.virtualtourist.com), accessed on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2010.

[www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00maplinks/colonial/constable1893/xlucknowmap.jpg](http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00maplinks/colonial/constable1893/xlucknowmap.jpg), accessed on 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2010.

[www.commons.wikimedia.org](http://www.commons.wikimedia.org), accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2010.

<http://communitybuildinginstitute.org/archives/author/billpotap>, accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2010.

[www.confidenceint.com/bangledsh-glance.html](http://www.confidenceint.com/bangledsh-glance.html), accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2010.

[www.dhakacity.org](http://www.dhakacity.org), accessed on 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2010.

[www.dhakadailyphoto.blogspot.com](http://www.dhakadailyphoto.blogspot.com), accessed on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2010.

[www.daveliu.com](http://www.daveliu.com), accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2010.

[www.defence.pk/forums/general-images-multimedia/3743-pictures-cities-lahore-21.html](http://www.defence.pk/forums/general-images-multimedia/3743-pictures-cities-lahore-21.html), accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2010.

<http://www.everyneededinfo.com/content/northbrook-hall-lalkuthi-bangladesh-old-dhaka-excellent-mixture-mughal-and-european-style>, accessed on 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2011.

[www.facebook.com/pages/Urban-Study-Group/241851761085](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Urban-Study-Group/241851761085), accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2011.

[www.farm1.static.flickr.com](http://www.farm1.static.flickr.com), accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2010.

[www.farm2.static.flickr.com](http://www.farm2.static.flickr.com), accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2010.

[www.farm3.static.flickr.com](http://www.farm3.static.flickr.com), accessed on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2010.

[www.farm4.static.flickr.com](http://www.farm4.static.flickr.com), accessed on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2010.

[www.farm5.static.flickr.com](http://www.farm5.static.flickr.com), accessed on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2010.

[www.funonthenet.in](http://www.funonthenet.in), accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2010.

[www.google.com/earth/index.html](http://www.google.com/earth/index.html), accessed on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2010.

[www.img181.imageshack.us](http://www.img181.imageshack.us), accessed on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2010.

[www.international.icomos.org](http://www.international.icomos.org), accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2010.

[www.iap2.org](http://www.iap2.org), accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2010.

[www.international.icomos.org](http://www.international.icomos.org), accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2010.

<http://jishankhan.wordpress.com/2009/02/16/bara-katra-choto-katra/>, accessed on 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2010

[www.lucknow.org.uk/history.html](http://www.lucknow.org.uk/history.html), accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2010.

[maps-of-bangladesh.blogspot.com/2010/12/political-map-of-savar-upazila.html](http://maps-of-bangladesh.blogspot.com/2010/12/political-map-of-savar-upazila.html), accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2010.

[www.mdb1.ibibo.com](http://www.mdb1.ibibo.com), accessed on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2010.

[www.moca.gov.bd](http://www.moca.gov.bd), accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2010.

<http://newagebd.com/newspaper1/metro/13662.html>, accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2011.

[www.pakistaniat.com](http://www.pakistaniat.com), accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2010.

[www.paklinks.com/gs/culture-literature-and-linguistics/319419-khapalu.html](http://www.paklinks.com/gs/culture-literature-and-linguistics/319419-khapalu.html), accessed on 23<sup>rd</sup> of November, 2010.

[www.photo.outlookindia.com](http://www.photo.outlookindia.com), accessed on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2010.

[www.simpleindulgence-learnmakeup.blogspot.com](http://www.simpleindulgence-learnmakeup.blogspot.com), accessed on 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2010.

[www.squidoo.com](http://www.squidoo.com), accessed on 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2010.

[www.ruhanisatsangusa.org](http://www.ruhanisatsangusa.org), accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2010.

[www.tc.alivenotdead.com](http://www.tc.alivenotdead.com), accessed on 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2010.

[www.thedailystar.net/story.php?nid=31354](http://www.thedailystar.net/story.php?nid=31354), accessed on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2010.

[www.thumbs.dreamstime.com](http://www.thumbs.dreamstime.com), accessed on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2010.

[www.travelony.wordpress.com](http://www.travelony.wordpress.com), accessed on 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2010.

[whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/1210](http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/1210), accessed on 5<sup>th</sup> January, 2011.

[www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco), accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2010.

[www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/culture/Tourism/bhaktapur-2.pdf](http://www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/culture/Tourism/bhaktapur-2.pdf), accessed on 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2011.

[www.urbanpk.com](http://www.urbanpk.com), accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2010.

[www.urfashions.com](http://www.urfashions.com), accessed on 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2010.

[www.wmf.org](http://www.wmf.org), accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2010.

[www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.php?page=view&type=99&nr=249&menu=20](http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.php?page=view&type=99&nr=249&menu=20), accessed on 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2011.

## Selected key bibliography categorized by the research concepts

### *Community identity, involvement and locality*

- Askew, M. and Logan, W. S. (Eds) (1994). *Cultural identity and urban change in Southeast Asia: interpretative essays*, Geelong, Victoria: Deakin University Press.
- Barth, F. (1969). "Introduction", in *Ethnic groups and boundaries, the social organization of culture difference*, Fredrik Barth (ed.), Bergen and Oslo: Universitets Forlaget and London: George Allen and Unwin, pp 9-38.
- Cohen, A.P. (1985). *The symbolic construction of community*, Chichester: Ellis Horwood limited and New York: Tavistock publications.
- Jenkins, G. (2008). *Contested space: cultural heritage and identity reconstructions: conservation strategies within a developing Asian city*, Berlin: Lit.
- Kong, L. and Yeoh, B.S.A. (1995). "The Meaning and Making of Place: Exploring History, Community and Identity." in *Portraits of Places: History, Community and Identity in Singapore*, ed. Lily Kong and Brenda S.A. Yeoh, pp 18, Times Editions: Singapore.
- Loh, L. (2007). "Conveying the Spirit of Place" in *Asia conserved: lessons learned from the UNESCO Asia-Pacific heritage awards for culture heritage conservation (2000-2004)*, pp 9-12, Bangkok: UNESCO.
- Meyer, B. & Geschiere, P. (Eds.). (1999). *Globalization and Identity: Dialectics of flow and Closure*, Malden, Ma: Blackwell.
- Mui, L. Y. *et al.* (2008). "Kuala Lumpur Georgetown as a Heritage City: The Voices of the Residents", 14th Pacific Rim Real Estate Society Conference, 20-23 January 2008, Universiti Sains Malaysia.
- Widodo, J. (2007). "Contributing to the Community's Cultural Continuum", in *Asia conserved: lessons learned from the UNESCO Asia-Pacific heritage awards for culture heritage conservation (2000-2004)*. Bangkok: UNESCO.
- Rose, G. (1995). Place and Identity: a sense of place. In *A Place in the World*, edited by D. Massey and P. Jess, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

### ***Formal heritage conservation in Dhaka***

- 93 heritage buildings, sites listed for preservation. (2009, 28 January). *The Daily star*, retrieved from <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=73198>, accessed on 28 January, 2009.
- Ahmed, I.(2010) “The state of Religious heritage in Dhaka: challenges for maintaining authenticity in urban mosques”, at International Conference on ‘First International Conference for Urban & Architecture Heritage in Islamic Countries: Its role in Cultural & Economic Development’, Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, May 23-28, 2010.
- Ali, T. (2007, 26 April). Panamnagar Unscientific restoration defacing heritage, *The Daily Star*, retrieved from <http://www.thedailystar.net/2007/04/26/d7042601107.htm>
- Dutta, A. and Billah, W. (2009, March 23). 93 structures, 7 sites declared protected, some destroyed, others illegally occupied, *The Prothom Alo*, Dhaka.
- Ghias, D. (2008a, May 28). Heritage buildings vanishing fast from city's skyline, *The Daily Prthom-alo*, retrieved from <http://www.thedailystar.net/story.php?nid=38468>.
- Hafiz, R. (1990). “Workshop Projects: Khan Mohammad Mridha's Mosque” in *Architectural and Urban Conservation in the Islamic World*, A. H. Imamuddin and K. R. Longeteig, (Eds.), Geneva: The Aga Khan Trust for Culture.
- Imam, S.R. and Mamoon, M. (1993) “Architectural conservation in practice” in A.H. Imamuddin (Ed.), *Architectural Conservation Bangladesh*, Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.
- Imamuddin, A.H. (Ed.) (1993) *Architectural Conservation Bangladesh*, Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.
- Islam, K.A. and Sharmeen, T. (2005, July 5). Panam among world’s 100 endangered historic sites, retrieved from <http://www.bangladesh-web.com/view.php?hidRecord=51154>.
- Leung, M. (2008, October 12). Architects fear destruction of Dhaka’s Shakhari Bazaar, *The Daily star*, retrieved from <http://www.joybangla.info/2008/10/12/architects-fear-destruction-of-dhakas-shakhari-bazaar>
- Qadir, M.A. (1993). “Conservation and restoration of historic Dhaka: It’s future proposals and limitations” in *Architectural Conservation Bangladesh* A.H. Imamuddin (Ed.), Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.

RAJUK. (2008). *Dhaka Metropolitan Building Construction Rules 2008*, article 61.

### ***Heritage conservation***

Aplin, G. (2002). *Heritage: identification, conservation, and management*, South Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Cantacuzino, S. (Ed.) (1975). *Architectural conservation in Europe*, London: Architectural Press.

Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage. (2003). UNESCO: Paris, 29 September-17 October, 2003, retrieved from [www.unesdoc.unesco.org](http://www.unesdoc.unesco.org).

Engelhardt, R. A. (1998a). "Can Penang Become a World Heritage Site? The Role of Public-Private partnership in the Conservation of Living Heritage", public lecture, Penang, unpublished paper, cited in Jenkins, G. (2008). *Contested space: cultural heritage and identity reconstructions: conservation strategies within a developing Asian city*, Berlin: Lit, p 159.

\_\_\_\_\_ (1998b). "Heritage for the Future: The Challenge of Preserving the Historic Environment in the Rapidly Modernizing Context of Asia: An Introduction to UNESCO's "LEAP" Programme for Integrated Community Development and Cultural Heritage Preservation in Asia and the Pacific Through Local Effort" in the 7th Seminar on the Conservation of Asian Cultural Heritage: "The World Cultural Heritage in Asian Countries - Sustainable Development and Conservation", Tokyo National Research Institute of Cultural Properties.

Hoi An Protocols for best conservation practice in Asia (2001), retrieved from [www.international.icomos.org](http://www.international.icomos.org)

Howe, R and Logan, W.S. (2002). "Protecting Asia's Urban Heritage: The Way Forward" in *The Disappearing Asian City. : protecting Asia's Urban Heritage in a globalizing world* Logan, W.S. (ed), Oxford: Oxford University Press.

ICOMOS. (2003). *ICOMOS 14th General Assembly and Scientific Symposium on "Place – memory – meaning: preserving intangible values in monuments and sites"*, 28 - 31 October, 2003, Victoria falls, Australia.

Jigyasu, R. (2003). "Protecting and Managing 'Living' Heritage in South Asia: Issues and Challenges." Paper presented at *ICCROM Living Heritage Sites Programme Strategy Meeting*, held in Bangkok.

Jokilehto, J. (1999). *A History of architectural conservation*, Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Larsen, H.E. (ed.). (1995). *Nara Conference on Authenticity in Relation to the World Heritage Convention, November 1-6, 1994, Nara, Japan*. Trondheim, Norway:

Tapir Publishers (in association with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Tokyo; the Japan Agency for Cultural Affairs, Tokyo; ICCROM, Rome; and ICOMOS, Paris).

Logan, W. S. (ed). (2002). *The Disappearing Asian City. : protecting Asia's Urban Heritage in a globalizing world*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lowenthal, D. (1993). "What makes the past matter?" in *Companion to Contemporary Architectural Thought*, Farmer, B. & Louw, H. (eds.) London; New York: Routledge.

Lung, D. (2007). "Interpreting the Significance of Heritage sites" in *Asia conserved: lessons learned from the UNESCO Asia-Pacific heritage awards for culture heritage conservation (2000-2004)*, pp 21-27, Bangkok: UNESCO.

Lynch, K. (1972). *What time is this place?* Cambridge: The MIT Press.

McNeely, J. A. (Ed.) (1995). *Expanding partnerships in conservation*, ICUN--the World Conservation Union. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.

Orbasl, A. (2008). *Architectural conservation: principles and practice*, Oxford ; Malden, MA : Blackwell Pub.

Powell, R. (1994). *Living legacy: Singapore's architectural heritage renewed*, Singapore: Singapore Heritage Society.

Sim, D. (1982). *Change in the City Centre*, Hampshire: Gower Publishing Co. Ltd.

Redfield, R. & Singer, M. (1954). "The cultural roles of cities", *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, Vol. 3, pp. 53-73.

Serageldin, I. (1999). *Very Special Places: The Architecture of and Economics of Intervening in Historic Cities*, Culture in sustainable Development Series, Washington DC: World Bank.

Siew, T. T. (2010). "The Sustainability of Urban Heritage Conservation: The Case of George Town, Penang",

The 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

The Burra Charter. (1999). *The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance*, Australia: Australia ICOMOS Inc.

The Nara Document on Authenticity (1994), *Nara Conference on Authenticity in Relation to the World Heritage Convention*, held at Nara, Japan: UNESCO, ICCROM and ICOMOS, 1-6 November.

The Venice Charter. (1966) *International Charter for Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites*, Venice: ICOMOS Inc.



- The Washington Charter. (1987). The Washington Charter on the Conservation of Historic Towns and Areas retrieved from [www.international.icomos.org](http://www.international.icomos.org)
- Tirmizi, M.A. (2010). "Conserving the Urban & Architectural Heritage of Lahore Walled City", First International Conference for Urban & Architecture Heritage in Islamic Countries: Its role in Cultural & Economic Development, Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities, Riyadh, May 23-28.
- UNESCO. (1972). The 1972 UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, UNESCO.
- UNESCO. (1982). *World Conference on Cultural Policies*, Mexico City, 1982. Paris.
- UNESCO. (1996). UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 'Cities of Asia: Heritage for the future' (press release), Paris: UNESCO.
- UNESCO. (2007). *Asia conserved: lessons learned from the UNESCO Asia-Pacific heritage awards for culture heritage conservation (2000-2004)*. Bangkok: UNESCO.
- Vines, E. (2005). *Streetwise Asia: a practical guide for the conservation and revitalisation of heritage cities and towns in Asia*, Bangkok : UNESCO.

### ***Informal community bodies and heritage management***

- Adler, P. S, and Kwon, S. W. (2002). "Social Capital: Prospects For a New Concept" in *Academy of Management. The Academy of Management Review* 27: 17-40.
- Austin, M. J. & Lowe, J.I. (eds.) (1994). *Controversial issues in communities and organizations*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Azam, K.. (1907). *The Panchayet System of Dhaka*. Dhaka. (reprinted by Asiatic Society of Bangladesh).
- Azam, K. M. and Hollander, A.N.J.D. (1990). *The Panchayat System of Dhaka*. Translated by Willem van Schendel and Nazrul Islam, Muntassir Mamoon (ed.), Dhaka Study Series 3, Dhaka: The Dhaka City Museum.
- Cnaan, R. A. and Milofsky, C. (Eds.) (2007). *Handbook of community movements and local organizations*, New York , London : Springer.
- Coleman, J. (1988). "Social capital in the creation of human capital", in *American Journal of Sociology*, 94: 95–120.
- Dekker, P. and Uslaner, E.M. (2001). "Introduction" in *Social Capital and Participation in Everyday Life*, edited by Eric M. Uslaner. London: Routledge.

- Howard, P. (2003). *Heritage: management, interpretation, identity*, New York: Continuum.
- Imon, S. S. (2006). *Sustainable Urban Conservation: The Role of Public Participation in the Conservation of Urban Heritage in Old Dhaka*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, The University of Hong Kong.
- Kabir, K. H. (2000). *Shakhari Bazar Rethought*, Unpublished B. Arch. Thesis, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology.
- Karim, M. F. (2010). "Problems and prospects of *Awqaf* in Bangladesh: A legal perspective", retrieved from <http://www.iefpedia.com/english/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/PROBLEMS-AND-PROSPECTS-OF-AWQAF-IN-BANGLADESH-A-LEGAL-PERSPECTIVE-Muhammad-Fazlul-Karim.doc.>, accessed on 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2011.
- Khan, N. (2010). "Strategy for the Revival and Sustenance of Artisanship: A Critical Parameter for Conservation", First International Conference for Urban & Architecture Heritage in Islamic Countries: Its role in Cultural & Economic Development, Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities, Riyadh, May 23-28.
- MacManamon, F. P. & Hatton, A. (2000). *Cultural resource management in contemporary society: perspectives on managing and presenting the past*, New York: Routledge.
- Nelson, J. G. et. al (eds.) (1989). *Urban heritage: preserving, planning and managing historical heritage in communities*, Waterloo, Ont.: Heritage Resources Centre, University of Waterloo.
- Piven, F.F. & Cloward, R. A. (1979). *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail*, New York : Vintage books.
- Shaw, B. J. and Jones, R. (eds). (1997). *Contested urban heritage: voices from the periphery*, Aldershot, Hants, England : Brookfield, Vt., USA : Ashgate.
- Tunbridge, J. E. & Ashworth, G.J. (1996). *Dissonant heritage: the management of the past as a resource in conflict*, Chichester; New York: J. Wiley.
- Uslaner, E. M. (2001). "Volunteering and social capital: how trust and religion shape civic participation in the United States" in *Social Capital and Participation in Everyday Life*, edited by Eric M. Uslaner. London: Routledge.

## *Old Dhaka*

- Ahmed, I. (2011) "Lifestyle and affordability choices in traditional housing of Old Dhaka" in *Open House International*, special theme issue on Housing Affordability, Quality, and Life Style Theories, V 36 no 3.
- Chowdhury, A.M. and Faruqui, S. (1991). "Physical Growth of Dhaka City" in *Dhaka: Past Present and Future*, edited by Sharif Uddin Ahmed, Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.
- Dani, A. H. (2008). *Dhaka: A Record of Its Changing Fortune*, Dhaka: The Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1961). *Muslim architecture in Bengal*, Dhaka: Paramount Press.
- Glassie, H. & Mahmud, F. (2008). *Living Traditions: Cultural Survey of Bangladesh Series-II*. Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.
- Haque et.al (Eds.) (1998). *Pundranagar to Sher-e-banglanagar*, Dhaka: Chetona Sthapatya Unnoyon Society.
- Hasan, S.M. (2003). *Muslim monuments of Bangladesh*, Dhaka: Islamic Foundation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1993). *Mosjider itihis (History of mosque)*, Dhaka: Islamic Foundation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1983). *Glimpses of Muslim art and architecture*, Dhaka: Islamic Foundation.
- Hossain, N. (1992). *Kingbadantir Dhaka*, Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.
- Imamuddin, A.H., Hassan, S.A. & Alam, W. (1990). "Shakhari Patti: A Unique Old City Settlement, Dhaka" in *Architectural and Urban Conservation in the Islamic World*. (Abu H. Imamuddin and Karen R. Longeteig, eds.) Geneva: The Aga Khan Trust for Culture.
- Imamuddin, A. H. (1982). *Bengali House in Urban Context*, Dhaka: BUET Technical Journal.
- Islam, N. (1998). "Dhaka City: Some general concerns", in *Asian Cities in the 21st Century: Contemporary Approaches to Municipal Management Vol. 3 Reforming Dhaka City Management*, retrieved from [www.adb.org/Documents/Conference/Asian\\_Cities\\_3/vol\\_3no6.pdf](http://www.adb.org/Documents/Conference/Asian_Cities_3/vol_3no6.pdf).
- Islam, S. (1991). *Social life in Dhaka, 1763-1800*, edited by Sharif Uddin Ahmed, Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.
- Kamal Q. S., et al. (1990). *Social formation in Dhaka city*. Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.

- Karim, A. (1991). "Origin and Development of Mughal" Dhaka in *Dhaka Past Present and Future*, edited by Sharif Uddin Ahmed, Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.
- Karim, A. (1964). *Dacca: The Mughal Capital*. Dacca: Asiatic Society of Pakistan.
- Khan, I. M. (1991). "Livability in Old Dhaka: Evolving residential patterns in Mohollas" in *Architectural and Urban Conservation in the Islamic World*. (Abu H. Imamuddin and Karen R. Longeteig, eds.) Geneva: The Aga Khan Trust for Culture.
- Khan, I. M. (1982) *Alternative Approach to the Redevelopment of Old Dhaka*. Doctoral Dissertation, Vol.1 Katholieke University Leuven.
- Mamoon, M. (2008a). *Dhaka: Smriti Bismritir Nagari*, Dhaka: Anannya.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2008b). *Dhaka Shomogro- 3*, Dhaka: Anannya.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1991). *Dhaka tale of a city*, Dhaka: Dhaka city Museum.
- Taylor, J. (1840). *A sketch of the Topography & Statistics of Dacca*, Dhaka. (reprinted by Asiatic Society of Bangladesh).
- Wise, J. (1883). *History of Dhaka city*, Dhaka. (reprinted by Asiatic Society of Bangladesh).

### ***Public participation***

- Adams, J. L. (2001). *Conceptual blockbusting: a guide to better ideas*, Cambridge, Mass.: Perseus Pub.
- ADB. (2010). "Participation of the Civil Society in Public Decision-making", Asian Development Bank, retrieved from [http://www.adb.org/Governance/gov\\_pcsdpd.asp](http://www.adb.org/Governance/gov_pcsdpd.asp).
- Arnstein, S. R. (1969). "A Ladder of Citizen Participation", in *JAIP*, Vol. 35, No. 4, July 1969.
- Bleiker, H., and Bleiker, A. (1994). *Citizen Participation Handbook for Public Officials and Other Professionals Serving the Public*, Monterey, Calif.: Institute for Participatory Management and Planning.
- Briggs, X.D.S., (2003a). "Organizing Stakeholders, Building Movement, Setting the Agenda", The Community Problem-Solving Project @ MIT Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A. June 2003, retrieved from <http://www.community-problem-solving.net>.

- \_\_\_\_\_ (2003b). "Planning Together: How (and How Not) to Engage Stakeholders in Charting a Course." The Community Problem-Solving Project @ MIT Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A. June 2003, retrieved from <http://www.community-problem-solving.net>.
- Citizenship DRC. (2007). *Champions of Participation: Engaging Citizens in Local Governance*, International learning event report 31 May to 4 June 2007 UK, Development Research Centre on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability (Citizenship DRC) at the University of Sussex, retrieved from <http://www.drc-citizenship.org/news%20and%20events/2007/archive/championspacklaunch.htm>.
- Creighton, J. L. (1992). *Involving Citizens in Community Decision Making*. Washington, D.C.: Program for Community Problem Solving, National League of Cities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2005). *The public participation handbook: making better decisions through citizen involvement*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- ESCWA. (2009). "Guide for promoting participation between governments and social society organizations in public policy processes", Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, retrieved from <http://www.escwa.un.org>
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2010) "Enhancing civil society participation in public policy process", Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, retrieved from <http://www.escwa.un.org/information/publications/edit/upload/sdd-10-TP1.pdf>
- Holdar, G.G. and Zakharchenko, O. (Eds). (2002). *Citizen participation handbook*, People's Voice Project, International Centre for Policy Studies, Kyiv: iMedia Ltd.
- OECD. (2001). *Citizens as partners: information, consultation and public participation in policy-making*, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Paris : OECD.
- Zipfel, T. and Gaventa, J. (2007) *Policy Perspectives: Citizen Participation in local governance*, retrieved from <http://www.drc-citizenship.org/news%20and%20events/2007/archive/championspacklaunch.htm>.

## **Publications by author in the research area**

### **Journal Paper (Refereed)**

- Ahmed, I. (2011) “Lifestyle and affordability choices in traditional housing of Old Dhaka”, *Open House International special theme issue on Housing Affordability, Quality, and Life Style Theories*. V: 36, No: 3.
- Ahmed, I. (2007) “The Heritage of Shankharibazar: Peoples Participation in the Conservation Process to promote Cultural Tourism”, *BRAC University Journal*, Volume IV, Number 2. pp 7-16.
- Ahmed, I. (2006) “A Participatory Approach to Conservation: Working with Community to Save the Cultural Heritage of Panamnagar”, *BRAC University Journal*, Volume III, Number 2, pp 25-33.

### **Chapters of Conference Proceedings and Books**

- Ahmed, I. (2010) “The state of Religious heritage in Dhaka: challenges for maintaining authenticity in urban mosques”, at International Conference on ‘First International Conference for Urban & Architecture Heritage in Islamic Countries: Its role in Cultural & Economic Development’, Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, May 23-28, 2010.
- Ahmed, I. (2009) “Community participation in Sustainable heritage conservation: Integrating ‘Sense of Place’ and Participatory conservation to save the heritage of Old Dhaka”, at International Conference on ‘Heritage in Asia: Converging Forces and Conflicting Values’, National University of Singapore, Singapore, 2009.
- Ahmed, I. (2007) “Panamnagar: a participatory approach of conservation to save the cultural heritage”, in *18<sup>th</sup> CAA Conference Book* (on Society, Architects and Emerging issues), Mahbubur Rahman (ed). Dhaka, 2007. pp 95-102.
- Ahmed, I. (2006) “Working with people: A Proposal for Community Participation in Conserving the Cultural Heritage of Panamnagar” In S.R. Eghbali (Ed) *Urban Design from Theory to Implementation* 1st Urban Design International Congress (UDIC1), Isfahan, Iran, pp. 23.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A: Open ended interview questions.....	393
Appendix B: The Antiquities Act, 1968.....	395
Appendix C: 93 heritage buildings, sites listed for preservation.....	397
Appendix D: Panam Nagar: Unscientific restoration defacing heritage.....	401
Appendix E: 150-yr-old building goes down for high-rise.....	405



## **Appendix A**

### **Open ended interview questions**

#### **Initial open ended questions**

1. How long have you been a resident of this community?
2. Are you aware of the presence of Panchayet or any other informal community management bodies/ guilds in your neighborhood?
3. What type of activities are they involved in?
4. Are you involved with the community bodies or do you know any members?
5. How is the community bodies selected?

#### **Intermediate questions**

1. Do you think there are architectural heritage in your community?
2. What, to the best of your knowledge, are the (important) attributes of the neighborhoods architectural heritage (built/ tangible)?
3. What are the most important cultural events, festivals, rituals that are celebrated regularly and actively participated by the community?
4. How are these activities related to the architectural heritage?
5. Are the community bodies involved in the management of these events?
6. What do you think is the current state of the heritage buildings of the neighborhood?
7. Who manages and maintains the heritage buildings?
8. What is your opinion about the management/organization of the Panchayet or any other community bodies/ guilds in your neighborhood?
9. What do you think about the Community bodies' involvement in managing the local heritage and conservation issues?
10. What are the most important roles played by the community bodies to help the community in managing its architectural heritage?

11. Do you think only particular types of buildings/ events are managed / organized by the community bodies? If so, what are they?

12. What do you think about the Government's effort in managing the local architectural heritage compared to the local community bodies?

**Concluding questions**

1. What do you think are the main problems of the community and its architectural heritage and how well the community bodies deal with them?

2. Do you think all members of the community get to express their opinion in the decisions taken by the community bodies (in the meetings of community bodies)?

3. Do you think assistance is required to help the local community bodies/ Panchayet save the heritage and revitalize economic activities?

4. What advice/suggestion do you have for the community bodies to develop their activities?

5. Is there anything else that you think I should know to better understand the community bodies and their roles?

6. Is there anything you would like to add or ask me?

## Appendix B

### *The Antiquities Act, 1968* (amended 1976)

AND WHEREAS the national interest of Pakistan in relation to the achievement of uniformity within the meaning of clause (2) of Article 131 of the Constitution requires Central legislation in the matter; It is hereby enacted as follows :-

**1. Short title, extent and commencement .** (1) This Act may be called the Antiquities Act, 1968.

- It extends to the whole of Pakistan .
- It shall come into force at once.

**2. Definitions.** - In this Act, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context, -

- a. "Advisory Committee" means the Advisory Committee constituted under section 3 ;
- b. "ancient" means belonging or relating to any period prior to May, 1857 ;
- c. "antiquity" means -
  - i. any ancient product of human activity, movable or immovable, illustrative of art, architecture, craft, custom, literature, morals, politics, religion, warfare, science or of any aspect of civilization or culture,
  - ii. any ancient object or site of historical, ethnographical, anthropological, military or scientific interest, and
  - iii. any other ancient object or class of such objects declared by the Central Government, by notification in the official Gazette, to be an antiquity for the purposes of this Act ;

**3. Advisory Committee.** - For the purposes of this Act, the Central Government shall constitute an Advisory Committee consisting of the following members, namely :-

- a. the Director, who shall also be its Chairman ;
- b. two members of the National Assembly of Pakistan, one being from each Province ; and
- c. (c) three other persons having special knowledge of antiquities.

**4. Dispute as to whether any product, etc., is an antiquity.** - If any question arises whether any product, object or site is an antiquity within the meaning of this Act, it shall be referred to the Central Government which shall, after consultation with the Advisory Committee, decide the same ; and the decision of the Central Government shall be final.

**5. Custody, preservation etc. of ownerless antiquity.** - Where the Director receives any information or otherwise has the knowledge of the discovery or existence of an antiquity of which there is no owner, he shall, after satisfying himself as to the correctness of the information or knowledge, take such steps as he may consider necessary for the custody. Preservation and protection of the antiquity.

\*\* Note: It can be assumed that the country contains more than 2,500 archaeological sites. What so ever, to date only 360 sites and monuments have been declared protected on priority basis under the provisions of the Antiquities Act (XIV of 1968) keeping pace with the financial allocation in this sector. Some of them are as follows.  
1861 arch. Survey of India. Now 397

Source: Department of Archaeology, Bangladesh Government.

## Appendix C

Source: <http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=73198>

### 93 heritage buildings, sites listed for preservation



Ruplal House in Farashganj is now a storehouse of spices. Photo: Star File  
PhotoTawfique Ali

At long last, a government-formed expert body has come up with a preliminary list of heritage buildings and sites in the 400-year old capital city for preservation.

“We have prepared the first list of 93 heritage buildings and four areas in Dhaka city and submitted it to the works ministry on December 4,” said Chief Architect of Bangladesh ASM Ismail adding that they will prepare more lists in phases.

The list has been made in consideration of historical, aesthetic, scientific, social, cultural, religious, political and heritage value of the structures and sites.

Government's Nagar Unnayan Committee, headed by the public works secretary, formed a standing committee for the job with the chief architect as convenor on June 23 last year.

The committee at its 19th meeting on December 28, 2008 endorsed the list.

The Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) is expected to recognise the list officially through a gazette notification and issue public notice in this regard soon.

The development control wing of Rajuk will now notify the private owners of the heritage properties asking them to be cautious in any development intervention.

The Nagar Unnayan Committee has decided that the listed buildings and areas could not be fully or in part be demolished, rebuilt, altered or modified without its approval.

The standing committee has representatives from the Department of Archaeology, Buet, Dhaka University history department, Institute of Fine Arts, Bangladesh Institute of Planners, Institute of Architects Bangladesh, Asiatic Society, Dhaka City Corporation Public Works Department and a heritage conservationist Urban Study Group (USG).

Prof Muntasir Mamoon, a noted historian who has extensively worked on Dhaka, said that it was a praiseworthy initiative. The committee should make a complete list and send it to the experts concerned. He suggested for a heritage council.

“They should seek and accommodate opinion and recommendations from the architects, planners, historians and those who have worked on Dhaka's heritage treasure to set a modus operandi for conservation,” said Prof Mamoon.

Architect Taimur Islam, who represents USG in the standing committee, expressed disappointment over delay in the committee's function.

The works ministry initially directed the standing committee to come up with a preliminary list within a month but the spirit of urgency did not work and it took six months, he said.

Crucial jobs like setting development guidelines, categorisation of the listed buildings and gazette notification are yet to be done.

He suggested speedy introduction of the concept of TDR (Transfer of Development Right) to compensate the private owners of the listed heritage properties and persuade them to cooperate with the conservation move. The TDR system has been in practice in India and Hong Kong in Asian region, he said.

The chief architect said that they are thinking of TDR system to compensate the private owners so that they cooperate with the government move.

They will get a certificate by means of TDR and will be able to sell it in certain areas allowing construction of building floors beyond existing ceiling.

Until the TDR comes in practice under legal arrangement, the Nagar Unnayan Committee will look into development proposal at enlisted sites.

The standing committee covered primarily 1528 square kilometres of Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan (DMDP) area. It was formed as outlined in the Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC), Antiquities Act 1976, and Dhaka Metropolitan Building Rules 2008.

Apart from specific significant buildings, the committee has enlisted particular roads in four areas including Farashganj, Shankharibazar, Sutrapur and Ramna.

The listed heritage properties will be categorised roughly in three groups of structures in consideration of their heritage value. One group will include structures unalterable at all, another group will contain those could be reconstructed partly and the last group will comprise those could be rebuilt completely, sparing a symbolic part as a relic.

As per provision in the Antiquities Act (Ancient Monuments Preservation Act of 1904), the Department of Archaeology can consider enlisting a historic or archaeological edifice only if it is 100 years old.

But the standing committee is mandated to enlist such an edifice considering historical, architectural, political, aesthetic and cultural value even if it is not 100 years old.

There are only 13 archaeological sites enlisted by the Department of Archaeology in Dhaka city.

Conservation of heritage properties in Dhaka has always been in a deplorable state.

According to Prof Mamoon, successive governments have allowed destruction of country's priceless cultural properties one after another.

According to Shamsul Wares, a noted architect, there would be hardly any testimony to the history, past traditions and lifestyle if heritage properties are not preserved.

Panamnagar, a township set up by Hindu merchants during colonial era in Sonargaon near Dhaka, has lost its originality and uniqueness as an architectural heritage site in the way of restoration carried out by the government, said experts.

The World Monuments Fund rated Sonargaon-Panam City as one of the most endangered heritage sites in 2006.

Conservationist architect Abu Sayeed M Ahmed said that Unesco refused to declare Lalbagh Fort as a world heritage site because of wrong restoration.

Dhaka University authorities have mutilated original architectural features of historic Curzon Hall in the name of 'repair and maintenance,' according to experts.

Private occupants have demolished inner block of Barabari, a grand building of colonial architecture at BK Das Lane in Farashganj. Ruplal House in Shyam Bazar has been occupied by traders. Shankhanidhi House, an enlisted heritage site, has been leased out by Dhaka district administration for commercial use.



## Appendix D

Source: <http://www.thedailystar.net/2007/04/26/d7042601107.htm>

Thu. April 26, 2007

### **Panamnagar: *Unscientific restoration defacing heritage***

Tawfique Ali



*Panamnagar, a township set up by Hindu merchants in the colonial era in Sonargaon on the outskirts of the capital, losing its unique architectural features due to improper restoration and conservation measures taken by the Department of Archaeology.*  
**PHOTO: STAR**

Panamnagar, a township set up by Hindu merchants in the colonial era in Sonargaon, is virtually losing its originality and uniqueness as an architectural heritage site, in the name of restoration and conservation.

The Department of Archaeology (DoA) has not involved any historian, archaeologist or an architect in the conservation work, rather hired masons are carrying out the job, distorting and defacing a proud heritage of the country, experts said.

The government's approach is just arbitrary, unplanned and aimless, said conservation architect Dr Abu Sayeed M Ahmed adding that the government is carrying out the conservation project without any proper and authentic documentation, which is a prerequisite to conservation of a heritage site.

An office assistant at the site office of DoA, Md Anisur Rahman, told this correspondent, "We are carrying out the restoration work hiring masons on a daily basis. The masons know how to do the job."

According to conservation architects, friezes and other ornamental features of the old buildings are all being replaced with dissimilar and odd-looking features.

The original lintels of these buildings were made of bricks and of semi-arch shape.

Details of the ornamental works, their sizes and proportions are lost in the present intervention. The decorated pilasters in the original buildings had molded curves on the capitals.

The masons who had built the buildings left a lasting imprint of their craftsmanship creating aesthetic beauty in the decorative moldings on the walls, which are strikingly missing in the restored buildings, making them flat and dull, the experts said.

Original cornices were styled with moldings on the surface but the repaired ones are now flat with plain surfaces.

Shockingly, for example, the original features of one of the two frontal columns of Poddar Bari have been totally spoilt with a thick plaster coating creating a stark dissimilarity between the original and the restored.

Another building called Gate House of Sonargaon, built towards 1650, also has fallen prey to distortions under the same project.

Proportions and scales of many interior arches have been altered. Distortion has marred the shapes and patterns of the arches.

"The government agency is actually destroying the fundamental heritage features of the site in the name of restoration, engaging mere masons and construction contractors in the job," said Ahmed, who is also a member of the advisory committee on the project.

The DoA is not going by the recommendations of the advisory committee, instead they have bypassed the committee, he said adding, "What they are doing is just a waste of public money."

The advisory expert committee held only three meetings including the latest one on December 30, 2004, Sayeed Ahmed said adding that the archaeology department did not maintain any correspondence with the committee.

Documentation is a comprehensive work -- compiling historical, architectural and archaeological information is a must before launching any intervention on heritage edifices, he said. Conservation work of such a historical site must involve conservation architects, general historians, geographers, archaeologists and historians of art and heritage.

The DoA undertook a Tk 5 crore restoration and conservation project in the first phase of 2005-2006 fiscal. Allocation for the ongoing phase has to be spent within June 2007. The DoA has intervened in 16 out of 51 buildings of Panamnagar.

A group of Hindu merchants chose Panamnagar as their residence in the nineteenth century and set up this urban settlement of cluster buildings bearing the influence of architecture of the colonial era.

Eminent archaeologist and former director of DoA Dr Nazimuddin Ahmed said, at a seminar on Panam city organised by the DoA on April 13, that influence of classical, Greco-Roman and renaissance architecture is noticeable on the monuments of Panam city.

"To my knowledge, the country's lone building with Petra-Dura style decorative work of precious stones is in Panam," he said, "So, the authorities have to restore and conserve the site with utmost care and caution."

Noted historian and former vice-chancellor of National University, Prof Abdul Momin Chowdhury, said a conservation process has to have a 'long-term perspective and vision' for the sake of history.

"It will cause defacement, instead of enhancing the glory, if the conservation is done carelessly," he said.

He also said construction materials like timber, iron casts, tinted glasses and plaster casts might be manufactured in the original form.

Secretary to the Cultural Affairs Ministry ABM Abdul Howk Chowdhury, present at the seminar, said it is difficult today to procure old day building materials. He admitted that distortion occurred in the name of heritage conservation in the case of Satgambuj Mosque in Bagerhat.

While the original ornamental works on the ceilings, walls and cornices of the buildings were fine, detailed, elegant and aesthetic in nature with presentation of artistry and workmanship, it is shockingly absent in what is being touted as a restoration.

Cast iron brackets, ventilators, window grills, and balusters were extensively used in the original decorations of the buildings.

The original coating of plaster was of conch shell powder, which would create a smooth and pleasant look of white marble. But now the masons are putting a thick coating of lime and surki of a different colour.

A group of top architects including Dr Sharif Shams Imon, who is an expert in heritage management and teaches the subject in Macao, visited Panam city on March 19 along with the DoA officials.

Panamnagar is an architectural heritage site, said Dr Imon, and what DoA is doing is renovation and reconstruction 'but not conservation in any way'.

They are reconstructing a simple brick-built flat roof with reinforced concrete and iron rods, he said adding that maintaining the original technique is important there.

"The conservation will have no authenticity, as the materials and techniques are different in the restoration."

"An irreparable damage has been done to the heritage of the site," he said.

The masons are removing the entire old plaster destroying the exquisite and stylish workmanship, Imon said adding that they are instead putting new plaster of different material compromising the artistry of the original workmanship.

President of the Institute of Architects Bangladesh (IAB) Mubasshar Hussain said, "The architecture of the buildings manifests an aesthetic pride of the affluent Hindu merchants but no effort is in sight to conserve the aesthetic manifestation of the edifices."

"What the DoA is doing is destruction of a heritage site by government officials with public money," he said.

Director of DoA Dr Md Shafiqul Alam claimed they have documentation of the site in forms of drawings and photographs.

"In fact, whatever we have done so far is a temporary work," he said adding, "Following the death of a mason, we had to do temporary work. We will, if needed, remove the temporary repairs to bring the original features back."

He said it was not possible to restore the detailed, fine and intricate ornamental works of the edifices, as they could not avail a suitable mason.

Responding to whether reconstruction of cornices, walls and other aesthetic features of these historic buildings with dissimilar and deformed motifs and roofs with reinforced concrete (RCC) are acceptable, he said, "Not at all."

"I have to go to the spot and see for myself actually what has happened and how," said Alam.

World Monuments Watch rated Sonargaon-Panam City as one of the most endangered heritage sites in 2006.

UNESCO refused to declare Lalbagh Fort as a world heritage site because of wrong restoration, said Sayeed M Ahmed adding that Panamnagar too is running the risk of facing a similar fate.

## Appendix E

Source: <http://www.thedailystar.net/2006/11/18/d6111801119.htm>

Sat. November 18, 2006

### 150-yr-old building goes down for high-rise

Tawfique Ali



This 19th century building of Jagannath University in the capital is being demolished to make way for a multi-storey building ignoring the historical and architectural value of this monumental structure. PHOTO: STAR

Jagannath University authorities have arbitrarily started demolishing a monumental building along with an ancient garden to make room for a high-rise building.

The two-storied stately building is nearly 150-year-old and once housed an Indian bank during British era. In July 1884, the building started being used as the library of the erstwhile Jagannath College.

Leading architects and environmentalists of the country expressed grave concern over what they called 'thoughtless act' of the authorities.

"The building must not be demolished in this manner because it is old, historic and of immense architectural value," said architect Mahbub Rahman, general secretary of Institute of Architects Bangladesh.

"Besides, it has an economic implication because the building was in use. It is neither in a dilapidated condition nor a threat to the public safety," Rahman said.

The ornate building bears testimony of British colonial architectural styles, he said.

Architect Homaira Zaman, an activist of Urban Study Group, said it is a constitutional right and obligation to protect the building, which is over 100 years old.

The building represents its own time, said architect Mustaque Quadry.

Quadry, who is also an expert on trees, said, "At least 25 to 30 rare species of ancient trees and plants have been felled down in the garden adjoining the building."

The majestic structure to the east of university's commerce faculty and close to the main entry is apparently separated from the designated campus of the university by a boundary wall.

Protesting the action, environmentalists forum Paribesh Bachao Andolon yesterday arranged an impromptu demonstration at the site where a good number of architects and environmentalists as well as students of the university took part.

"The historic building is a national heritage. Along with the garden, it must be protected at any cost," said Andolon's convener Abu Naser Khan.

The message is that any individual or authority must take utmost precaution before demolishing a historic monument, he said.

As of yesterday, roofs and railings of the two-storied grand building were demolished while labourers were found busy felling scores of old trees in the garden in front of the building.

"We have got the contract to demolish the building in two months," said Md Abul, who was given the contract for demolition of the building. "I will take the whole lot of debris, bricks and iron frames and beams as my pay for the work."

"I came to know from my forefathers that the building originally housed an Indian bank during the British era," said a local.

"Most of us did not know anything about shifting of our library and demolition of the historic building. Coming to the campus after four days of blockade programme by the opposition, we suddenly saw the library has been shifted to the science faculty and the old building is being pulled down," said Lipi Pal, a second-year student of Physics.

"The old building is being replaced with a twenty-story high-rise with construction of seven stories in the first phase," said an on-duty security guard at the university's main gate.

On behalf Paribesh Bachao Andolon, Abu Naser Khan yesterday filed a general diary with the Kotowali Police Station.

Despite repeated attempts, vice-chancellor of the university Prof Sirajul Islam could not be contacted for his version.