

Gentrification Dynamics and the Transformation of Katra Buildings in Old Dhaka



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This research examines the gentrification dynamics influencing the transformation of Katra buildings—historic Mughal-era residential-commercial structures—in Old Dhaka, Bangladesh. As Bangladesh's capital, Dhaka is undergoing rapid urbanization, which is transforming its infrastructure, neighbourhoods, and socio-economic dynamics. Consequently, Mughal-era architectural heritage, including Katra buildings, is increasingly threatened by urban expansion, industrialization, and modernization. Drawing on a case study approach, this research investigates the gentrification processes reshaping the structures, social, and economic fabric surrounding these heritage sites. Adopting a qualitative case study approach, the research incorporates observation, interviews with the residents, property owners, and government officials they study examines the architectural changes, changes in the occupancy pattern, and socio-economic displacement. The outcome of the research illustrates both positive and negative impacts due to the gentrification approach, while it brings the instrumental improvement of the surroundings, the contrary threatens the architectural integrity, socio-economic status, and community life, and the study will contribute to critical discourse on heritage gentrification.

Keywords: Katra buildings, gentrification, heritage transformation, Old Dhaka, urban change, socio-economic impact.

Biography:

Roaksana Firdaus Nigar is a third-year PhD student in the Architecture and Urbanism Research Group under the supervision of Prof. Gehan Selim. She obtained her undergrad and post-grad from the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. Before starting her PhD, she worked as an Assistant Professor (on Study Leave) at the University of Dhaka since 2017. Therefore, she worked as a Research Assistant at the Center for Climate Change and Environmental Research, BRAC University, Bangladesh in 2016. Additionally, she has teaching and research experience working in Islamic architecture, heritage, urban history, conservation, south Asian history, history of art, and archaeology, especially in South Asia and Bangladesh since 2016 which shaped her research journey in pursuing her PhD in architectural heritage conservation.