INCLUSION OF HISTORIC URBAN QUARTERS - A CASE OF 'PANAM NAGAR' AT SONARGAON IN BANGLADESH

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ABSTRACT

This Study paper is based on- how planning events in historic urban quarters can be carried out in communicative process. It emphasizes that historic preservation is not only preserving a few historic buildings, but also reasonably the urban fabric, own cultural heritage and the environment of that historic quarter as a whole. In this regard the leading factor is protecting the environment of historic area, which is to be protected within the main legacy of that area.

In addition the spatial characters of these areas are agreeable, where it possesses the rich human feeling. And this paper pursues the answer of exploring questions, of - Which evaluative planning tool could be used for this kind of project? What is the lacking in the traditional planning process? How the project could be revitalized? How we can redevelop this project as a feasible way? The importance of the protecting historical cities through preservation, restoration and revitalization, is a universally accepted matter.

But in reality it is mistreated question. Cultural identity and environmental concerns are given less recognition than economic benefits. Accordingly the importance of collaborative planning process through empirical and inclusion tactic for the conserving historical urban quarters, and its planning approaches from social, cultural and economic point of views are becoming a contentious facets.

KEYWORDS: Consensus, Heritage and Planning

INTRODUCTION

Panam Nagar is a unique township in Sonargaon stretched in a single road 5m wide on the average and 600m in length. The road extends from west to east, slightly turns towards northeast after it is half-way through. The road moves with delicate curves that offer changing panoramas of the street facade.

The road was linked with the Dulalpur road by a humped bridge at the west and Thana road on the east. The area is isolated by Pankhiraj River running almost parallel to the road on the north and a moat, the Pankhiraj Khal, which separates the land from west and south.

There were about 52 houses marked in 1997. But now till 2006 about Forty-nine houses exist in broken-down and disused condition in the settlement. At present 28 houses are surviving on the north side of the road and 21 houses on the south. The area is densely built with single to three storied attached and detached houses of varying types and sizes.

Only eight single story houses have been identified. Majority of the houses are two storied. Large houses are partially three storied. There is the most prominent early example of Street Front Houses in a non-urban setting, located about 550 meters north from the Folk Art Museum.

Figure 1: Map of Narayanganj District and Access Road to Panam Nagar, Sonargaon

Presently Panam as a historical property is under the ownership of the Government of Bangladesh. The Directorate of Archaeology is its custodian. Ownership of some houses is claimed through hoisting sign boards with the name of owner in front of the buildings, but the nature of ownership is unknown. Most of the inhabitants in Panam are said as unauthorized occupants. The exodus of original owners, the Hindu merchants, began with the partition of India. They felt insecure due to their minority position and were scared out of that place by subsequent riots. Present unauthorized occupants, who are claiming that they have been living here by generation, are too poor to maintain those properties; also they have no any incentive to maintain these historic artifacts, but beside their living status became a more questionable for redeveloping this 'historic urban quarters'. Existing population of Panam is around 250, which is a mixed population of Hindus and Muslims. Some of the staffs of Folk Art Museum and the G. R. School reside in Panam. The G. R. School, established by two brothers Gangabashi and Ramcharan in 1894 (1301 B.S.), is located at the Eastern end of the Panam Road. There is an art gallery in Panam housed in building no. 36. Building no. 26 is now being used as a boarding house and building no. 5 was previously used by the Archeology Department as a Museum. A new tin shed structure has been built recently in 1979 in the plot next to building no. 3 occupied by Sonargaon juba Sangha - the youth club. A new Durga temple having simple rectangular Puja Ghar has been" built opposite to building no. 42 across the road. The pattern of physical organization as indicated by the C.S. Map of Mouza Panam Dulalpur and Thana Baidder Bazar show extremely elongated plot division with narrow street frontage. The building facades follow the curve of the road.

EMPIRICAL WAY OF THINKING

-*Which Evaluative Planning Tool Could be Used for this Kind of Project?*

Indulgent of the above significant characters-this study is aimed to understand the process of communicative planning with the relationship of conservation and revitalization aspects. The paper presents the support for collaboration process for identifying basic strategies and activity for a successful conservation. In the planning process 'communicative theory' is more effective to reach practical consensus. Theory helps us to derive the new idea or way of thinking when we face tricky situation. Communicative way is "...the fine grain of economic and social relation, about the diversity of ways of using and valuing places, and were uncomfortable in the face of rising concern about the destruction of the natural environment and biospheric conditions for the survival of the planet's species mix" (Healey p.239).Planning condition is not similar through the world it always varies by different context and situation. Those contexts and situations of particular zone derive by lot of new agendas. Handling all issues by meeting all their social needs and demands is becoming a major issue now-a-days. Building consensus is more necessary to solve those issues and work together.

Figure 2: Survivals are in 'Panam Nagar'

In the traditional planning process where 'voice of people' and their 'social values' are missing then communicative planning theory arrive to build their voice of reflection in the planning process as a democratic precise. Planning for the society and its people is not an easy thing that you will done it on your counter and then implement in the real life; if it is then it will be a witty planning project like a autocracy way of thinking. Because people who live in a certain territory they have a certain knowledge, emotion, culture, social and historical background about that specific vicinity. Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger state that "Communicative planning is not so much a theory; rather it could be described as a 'life view' based on a participatory perspective of democracy..." (p.1978). That's why it could be the real and practical resource for planning or doing something for them. So building a sustainable social environment and social economic structure in that territory is necessary to reflect their reflection in the planning process by collaborative way. Thinking something without them (local voice) in the planning process- it is not a democratic or sciatic way. And that type of planning process cannot be seen in success. The case of 'Panam Nagar' is one of the true examples. For this reason when somebody goes to implement the plan on the real scale then lot of conflict come around. Therefore communicate with people and their participation in planning process is necessary for understanding the present socio economic condition and sustainable development. We know every development in the society for human being and they are the users. So their needs should be given priority in the planning process. Communicative planning process is the only way of tool that can derives their social rights from the discourse of public realm. And indirectly it is also present their right of democracy. However in the development countries where social economic structures are not strong, communicative planning can work as a sustainable way by using the natural resource like 'public participation'. For this reason communicate with people and different professions are necessary to build a successful social environment. We know unity is strength; when different opinions are come from different agenda and they reach unique aims then it get a turn into a practical consensus, which help the planner to drive their project as an empirical way. So, building consensus by participation of public and all related professions is the main elementary task for planning a project. In the case of 'Tallberg', Sweden we see different stakeholders are stricken in their position at the beginning. But when they had been started speak each other then lot of issues were come out (Cars G.). Latter they understood and realized each other needs under discussion. "Communicative action theory argues that planning decision should be reached through collaborative process involving all stakeholders, and conforming to particular rules which ensure that participation is fair, equal and empowering"(Watson p.389). Therefore communicative process can take an initiative step to start building consensus by listening what happening in the real situation. But off course planner is the main driver of this mission who will steer all the issues and try to find out the hidden issues as well. So that no conflict come in the further step. Everything should be in a pragmatic way and also everybody can participate in a fruitful way. So "it is a process of trying to understand the opportunities, and trying to understand the red lines of each discipline, what's a taboo, what cannot be done, what they will not accept" (Forester p.73). Therefore communicative process is a powerful tool to build up a relationship between local people and other professions with power by making practical consensus. For accomplishing the communicative process "... collaboration

among players with differing interests and a history of conflict, the dialogue must be authentic, rather than rhetorical or ritualistic" (Hajer & Wagenaar p.37). On the other hand Mark Haugaard also support that 'language' can help to make a 'social order' deliberately with the relation of organization and political system (p.92). So, the communicative planning process is more important to do something with people and different interest in the society and culture.

PANAM NAGAR

-*What is the Lacking in the Traditional Planning Process?*

First I try to understand the project and its present conditions by browsing online newspapers then I try to find out the answer from the above question. Panam Nagar is a unique example of early urban settlement of Bengal. The architectural style of the buildings is English Renaissance or the British Raj style, and most of them were built in the early 20th century except for a few late 19th century examples. It is a coherent neighborhood of richly detailed buildings, which tell us about the life and culture of our past. This once proud area, now almost has failed to attract people. Most of its structures are abandoned and some of them are virtually buried under heavy clusters of shady trees. However this historical urban quarter helps us to understand the root of history of particular area and it is a one of the distinctive heritage of the whole nation. The project 'Panam Nagar' was taken over by the department of Archaeology of the ministry of cultural affairs, under the Antiquities Act 1968 and for this project the government had submitted about 5 cores BDT to the ministry(New Age 2006), which was not enough for this type of conservation project. On the other hand a global heritage conservation group listed Panam Nagar of Sonargaon, which is of significant archaeological and artistic interest, as one the most endangered historic sites in the world The New York-based World Monument Fund included Panam Nagar, in its 2006 World Monuments Watch List of 100 Most Endangered Sites(News From BD 2005). However in this project we see some important professional body like planning department, architectural department, department of social and environment are totally not work with them. And also there is no participation of local people and the dwellers in those historical quarters.

What happen without other professionals and local people's participation in that historical area, when they go to implement their project? Let see first some public voices what they are trying to say. "We are living here for the last 40 years. Now it is our home, our hope and everything.
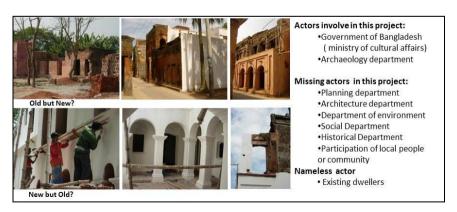

Figure 3: Communication Gap and Lack of Skill in Restoration Process

We cannot leave it for the sake of heritage, Maya Begum, president of Panam Women Association, told 'The Daily Star'(2004). The government should permanently allocate these houses to us rather taking them away from us. The graffiti on most facades of historic buildings echo are the same sentiment. We will sacrifice our lives, not Panam," reads one. "It is our right to live here," proclaims another (The Daily Star 2004). "Rajibul Islam, who has made an art gallery and runs a school in one of the buildings, said his father Amimul Islam, took the houses on a lease in 1978 from the deputy

commissioner. He also said that they had paid Tk.12000 a year as lease money, but for the government did not take any money from them in the past year. The Bangladesh folk and crafts foundation director, Mahmud Shafique said tourists visiting the Sonargaon folk museum near the Panam Nagar also visit the ancient city and it has a good potential of becoming a tourist spot" (New Age 2005). Those above voices from local people and professionals bodies are not witty things; these are the preliminary resource for planning. Off course this is the reality in the contemporary planning process. Nobody can ignore this reality. However government and archaeologist department did not show any reflection on those voices, and they had been made force to leave that places. And they made an analysis that they are illegal and they have no right to stay there. On the other hand the archaeology department has no planning about the site, how they preserve and revive the historical essence of that area. They think that throw the dwellers to another place and renovate those buildings of this historic urban quarters is the way of conservation process. A lot of other issues like culture, proper documentation of the historic area, social, environment and economic aspects are totally missing in their project. So now what is the end result of their project? Let see the voice from the government "The state minister of cultural affairs, Selima Rahman, said her ministry could not renovate Panama Nagar, once the capital of a kingdom, in Sonargaon as the squatters refused to vacate the buildings" (The New Age 2006). It means that the project has been stopped by the protest. Other professional's bodies, local organization also made a big protest against this type of development where media also working as a helping hand. The main lacking of this recent Panam Nagar project is a language gap between different professional bodies and local people. So, implementing the communicative approach as an empirical way is necessary to build up a practical consensus between expertise and local people actually what change they are want in that particular historic urban quarters. Only then the project will get an outlook of sustainability. So that in the case of historical urban quarters at Panam Nagar, communicative tools can works as an inclusion with conservation process which can reflect and respect the above vital voices. That's why Healey stated "our ideas about ourselves, our interests, and our values are socially constructed through our communication with others and (...) if our consciousness is dialogically constructed, surely we are deeply skilled in communicative practices for listening, learning, and understanding each other" (p.239).

How the Project Could be Revitalized?

The present terrible situation of this project was come out only for lacking of planning concept. "The diversity within planning of purposes, objects, procedures, and identities is rooted in planning's simultaneous occupation of multiple worlds. Planning's roots are not just in the sciences, with their belief in analysis and causality, but also in the understanding of social relations that the humanities provide and the aesthetic concerns of the design professions" said by Beauregard (p.438). Individually working in a project is like a traditional way of thinking. But today multidisciplinary perspectives are integrated with the planning process which gets more rationality rather than traditionally one way thinking. Off course archaeologists' have some knowledge but it does not mean that they are also gratifying by other disciplinary. So they have to share their knowledge with other disciplinary. For an example architects have some knowledge of building technique and as well as they have some specialities on preservation, conservation or revitalization method. What are the meaning of those method and relation to the historical project? Preservation is the process where individual building is examined within the context of overall urban settings to ensure that preservation efforts yield products that are in harmony with their surroundings. When viewed as part of a given urban context, conservation is more easily understood than it is, when pure aesthetics or history is used as justification (Cohen 1999 p.33). So, conservation along with additions to existing buildings or new buildings constitutes urban renewal (Cohen, 2001 p.87). And efforts to address obsolescence in order to extend the useful lives of buildings are called renewal. To address or ameliorate the various dimensions of obsolescence demands both building and/or area based renewal. Here renewal is part of the broader process, which has been termed revitalization

(Tiesdell et al. p.30). On the other hand the revitalization of historic urban quarters involves both the renewal of physical fabric and the active economic use of those buildings and spaces. In addition, the social public realm of the quarter must also be revitalized and animated (Tiesdell et al. p.18). Therefore from the above investigation we can say revitalization is more effective for the conserving 'historical urban quarters'. But the Archaeology department took this project as a 'renovate of Panam Nagar'; which is not relevant like this historical project, where some people are still living in those quarters and doing their social activities. And they also are having some social and cultural image of the fame of ancient times. So it is also important to realize the historical essence of that environment by using architectural skill of both conservation and revitalization process. And the department of archaeologist can help or share their knowledge of preserving skill by collaborating with other professions. However we see here conservation and revitalization scheme is more efficient to make a vibrant life by keeping historical values and environment of social life. But another most vital thing is when you execute this notion then you require constructing a planning perspective to establish this map and to realize the social ethic of this particular quarter. It is also necessary to communicate with local people, existing dwellers and different concern professions. This communicative planning process derives a bold relationship between stakeholders, professionals and the peoples by making a practical consensus. And it is the "... approach to decision making: the norms of common goals, absence of coercion, and inclusion of all relevant stakeholders, whether they be members of the public, civil society groups or business state sector organizations. Consensus building process ... thus include widely divergent constellations of actors of different types" (Connelly & Richardson p.5). Off course a 'best compromise' is need for building this type of consensus (Hakansson, M). Let's see how communicative planning can help to revitalize the historical urban quarters for making practical consensus as an inclusionary way. Healey (1996) formulated the basic theory into the communicative planning practice by generating few ideas which are explicitly based on communicative theory, are analyzed as follow. 'Arenas for argumentation' is related to the inclusionary ethic where moral duty is focused "To perform (...) effectively (...) by access to a rich experimental political and social knowledge about community members, as well as perhaps analytical knowledge about potential ways in which different people get involved in the public realm"(Healey p.245). She also suggested the discussion may shift at 'different arena at different time' and also the arena can change by the 'nature of discussion' which can help and encourage the argumentation so that the local people, stakeholder and experts can go very near to the real fact through understanding the deliberate view, which indirectly help them to employed their strategic planning process to the one step forward. As a first step debate should be open with a respectful manner so that everybody can participate on it without fear of win or lose. By in this process stakeholder can share their knowledge at preliminary stage through the argumentation. In the traditional planning process 'the scope and style of discourse' was used as a 'survey' method. Healey mentions it is a second step of rethinking spatial strategy and relationship within inclusionary scope of findings which help to shaping discussion, sorting out arguments, and developing a strategic discourse (p.246). Here she focused on different spatial structural link like local economy, social value, political commitment, environmental issue and so on from the departure of argument. Planning is an ongoing process through trial and error; it should be flexible with an optimistic way. Otherwise rudderless ship couldn't reach the seashore. 'Sorting through the arguments' in this fraction Healey showed how sorting argument can translate by the technical way of language analysis, which reduce the inclusionary speech and bring the strategic policy in one compartment. She said that it is the process of "... developing an analysis of urban and regional change.... working out what people value in moral and aesthetic terms as well as in a material sense, and how values are affected"(p.248). In support of above criteria it is involve with rights and legitimacy as well as scientific analysis. For this grounds Beauregard (2001) state "planning ... is a scientific and craft. It is also an ideology and ... prescriptive judgments and normative visions" (p.438). Sharpening up the selected strategy is the main focused of 'creating a new discourse' in the politician and experts which evolve the idea with

new possibilities of communicative planning policy. But "the formation of policy discourses carries dangers... because a policy discourse is a selective simplification of the issues in discussion and because it gains momentum by exaggeration" (Healey p.250). Monitoring process and also rich the public discourse is the main idea of the 'agreement and critique' where Healey mentions that 'the right to challenge' can become a 'duty to challenge' since the selected strategy begins to have effects in the communicative planning practice (p.250). Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger stated that "discourse concerning planning can never be divorced..." (p.1985). which mean communicative practice is the consequence of public realm. So Communicative planning process can use as an inclusion of historical urban quarters for conserving and revitalizing the particular heritage. Also it is the way of mapping the position of different stakeholder and people's rights by the rational linguistic relationship, which can bring a practical consensus and sustainable planning solution over the ongoing hidden and implicit planning process.

How We Can Redevelop This Project as a Feasible Way?

Giving access to the local people or community in the planning process, could build the project to get more permanency and efficient strategy in the developing route. On the other hand all participators in the discourse would be benefited by local knowledge. Those knowledge could be used as an opening (idea) resource of that particular historic site and it also help to understand the real problem. All discussion should be in the public realm by transparent way in under a new institutional arrangement, where the need and demand of the project should be addressed as a flexible way. This flexible and variations of the planning approach indirectly help the institution to intergrades better relationship with each other (stakeholders and people) in the discourse arena. After that identifying and prioritizing problems and building on opportunities like existing organizational structure, employment potentials or available skills.

Figure 4: Scio-Cultural-Economic Aspects and Historical Bridge

Then target of the project are set on the basis of what is achievable, which will be discovered during the process by building coalitions and fostering co-operation all actors coming both from outside and inside the community. During this stage there should be clarity on avoiding preconceptions about solutions which will come to mind as problems are discussed, paying special attention on issues that already have a consensus and bring out potentially conflicting demands (Calderon, C). *Sometime* general people are not familiar to the deferent type of planning analysis but they easily read preliminary sketches of the site what is going to happening. It is one kind of brain storming process, not a perfect picture of the site which can help to make good consensus at the preliminary level. For this reason John Forester addresses 'intention of sketches' is more important in the planning process (1999). By making general consensus then project team will designed a plan of action, time tables, costs, commitments, responsibilities and so on. Some power of monitoring can also be given to the people so that they feel that they are involved with the project. This historical site is already catches tourist attraction from the very early instance. The most of the dwellers' income are directly or indirectly engaged with this tourism and their handicrafts, cultural activities also catch the tourist eye. They compose different type of exhibition in those old buildings and their living styles in some old buildings also grow interest of tourist. By this way their social

economic structures are also related to the tourism. Lot of tourist from different part of the country and the world come every day to see the 'lost historic city'. Their cultural activities also make that historical place more vibrant. If we incorporate those historical and cultural relevant function and their handicrafts products for selling, then obviously they will come to make a practical consensus in the communicative planning process. However this intervention could reach the tourism activities which can change their social economic structure and subsequently benefit the whole planning project. In this way communicative planning process can bring a glimpse of light in the historic urban quarters as an inclusion of conservation or revitalization process for making a successful social and cultural environmental movement.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

'Panam Nagar' has unique eminence rather than other historical site in that context of ground. That's why the character of this historical urban quarters with different function make this area more interesting to tourist, where surrounding natural settings, historical bridges, life of people everything could make a unique dialogue of our past heritage. Accordingly thinking only preserving the building without life (activities), means make it again an odd place, which could be a wrong justice to our heritage. This project is not similar to other historical preservation project, it has different merit where government can also earn revenue by revitalizing this historical urban quarters. And it is the time for the government (ministry of cultural affairs) to make an organization and give a responsibility to a concern people where all relevant professional
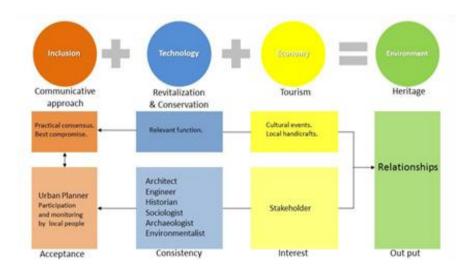

Figure 5: Proposed 'Strategic Structure for Consensus' (SSC)

bodies, local individuals and the representative of the government can participate in a public discourse as a communicative way. Therefore the SSC (fig.04) could be work as an inclusionary way for the conservation and revitalization planning process in the redevelopment of 'historical urban quarters'.

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