1. Introduction:

Since British colonial era heritage preservation, modification, restoration, demolition etc. have taken place in the Indian subcontinent. Demolishing heritage or radically changing their purpose and use had been a common practice among the colonial rulers which remained a similar case during the post-colonial period. On a number of cases the shift from colonialism to nationalism has been held responsible for the massive destruction of colonial buildings during post-colonial period. Currently several cities from the former Indian subcontinent is enlisted as the top megacities of the world. The political shift and afterwards population increase have changed the urban fabric to a great extent. The major cities of the region however have several exceptions as examples where British colonial buildings can be seen in its old monumental state even today. The shift from colonialism to nationalism or the fast growing city development process do not put an impression on those buildings which is in itself an astonishment but not a steady example for colonial buildings. The Indian subcontinent belongs to the densest part of the world where India is in 3rd position for Delhi, 13th position for Mumbai, Pakistan in 7th for Karachi, 34th position for Lahore and Bangladesh in 16th position for Dhaka (Anon., 2015). An increasing number of rural-urban migration is taking place on a regular basis which is reshaping these cities up to a great extent. The daily need of the city dwellers and economic development have reduced the significance of heritage management on a larger scale. Under such circumstances the public often thinks some historical buildings need to be preserved, while the rest is unimportant. This condition can be experienced mostly in case of the colonial time period buildings due to the residential and administrative types of the usability of buildings. These are also some of the reasons for which the colonial buildings are deteriorating faster than many others, whereas the colonial buildings are often more flexible to use for various purposes.

The paper overviews on several case studies to show how differently the heritage buildings are treated in the city and what are the current practices for heritage protection. Along with that the paper describes the current influences on heritage buildings and what can be done in order to improve the situation as concluding remarks.

2. About the city

Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, is an old city of Bengal that has been founded during the Mughal period and has experienced colonialism and nationalism afterwards. In these times, the city has experienced different developments which also replicates in architectural examples. The Mughal emperors and the British rulers established Dhaka as their capital in different times. Dhaka became the central administration district and therefore the city grew far earlier and more rapidly than other regions of Bangladesh. Dhaka is a megacity now with a population density of 44,000 inhabitants per km² (Hackenbroch, et al., 2009). The housing sector faces a crisis with accommodating the city population and the rise of the property prices. The development of the housing crises have influenced many developers and land owners to demolish older low rise buildings to be replaced with high-rises. The older part of the city next to the river bank of
Buriganga River is known to be the most affected part of the city in case of the old neighborhood demolition. Often the owners demolish the buildings and build a new one to accommodate more inhabitants or to take the benefit of high property prices. The lack of occupancy and the lack of maintenance are some of the reasons which often cause demolition of older buildings. In several cases the occupancy is also a reason for destruction which often cannot be assumed at the very beginning, and eventually the buildings disappear. The encroachment becomes so overpowering that the differences between legal and illegal occupancy have a narrow threshold. In many countries, the colonial era is indicated as the “bad passive history” and often recommended to be abolished in order to erase the memories (Poria, 2001). In Bangladesh both colonial ruling period and post-colonial genocide have strong impacts on the people which can be observed in Dhaka. Yet the 1971’s genocide has a greater impact on the population which also has reduced the native impact for the colonial heritage in general. However, the colonial buildings do not often get attention. In contrary to that, when colonialism has contributed to economy and cultural development, people are often interested to learn and preserve the colonial history even though the neighboring localities may have a dark history and experiences from the same era (Hyeon-Jeong, 2014). When a heritage building brings economic benefits, it may also create interest in heritage and create opportunities for the entire neighborhood and community in a city (Hyeon-Jeong, 2014). In a number of cases, the function of the building created the public interests to preserve the building apart from its type and historical background. Often recent histories also leave stronger impressions and become more significant for the public. When the recent history is connected to genocide or similar harsh memories, the locations and relevant heritage is more likely to get attention of the government and the people (Giblin, et al., 2011).

3. Case studies:

Heritage is a term connected with inheritance of an earlier time; a wealth, an identity or a culture which we inherit from our ancestors. The history behind it can be good or ugly yet as a part of the identity. Whether the public cares for it or not is the concern in case of densely populated cities like Dhaka. The architectural heritage often shows the time frame and style which portrays also the history and ideology from the respective period. The expression often represents the value and the changes from the era. Whether the economic value of heritage from the past carries an equal value or differs today, often can be determined through its conditions and acceptance among the public (Dümcke & Gnedovsky, 2013). The perception of the public can be also manipulative and confusing due a set of other issues which can be overpowering (Thornley & Waa, 2009). In the following case studies below diverse scenarios can be overviewed.

3.1 Vice chancellor’s house, Dhaka university:

Located in the Dhaka university campus which is one of the most important and densely part of the city. The building is currently in use as the residence of the vice chancellor of the institution. Due to the authorities interested and it’s monumental looks the building still is in a good well-maintained state.
3.2 Curzon hall, Dhaka university:

The building was named after the Lord Curzon and also situated in the Dhaka university campus which is currently used as part of science faculty. It is a building from the beginning of 1900 where Indo-saracen architectural style can be documented.
3.3 Jogonnath hall
Contrary to the above example a and b, Jogonnath hall is also very close to Dhaka university campus and currently in use as university students’ dormitory and the current state is not as monumental as the other examples.
3.4 Ruplal house
This is another example of colonial building which is currently occupied by the land grabbers and is almost in a ruined condition.

3.5 Reboti Mohan bhaban
This particular building is currently used as residential building for the employees of the fire brigade service which has a nice intact external façade but heavily damaged interior.
3.6 CM-Court building:
A court house which was valuable as colonial building example and recently has been demolished. The façade was kept intact while the internal demolition took place. It drew media attention when the façade demolition started taking place (Shomokalerkhobor, 2016).

4. Current heritage management scenarios:
The current states on the formerly united Indian subcontinent follow different policies concerning cultural heritage from British Raj India. “The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage” for example follows a rather European museum-like restoration policy, for which it is criticized by some scholars (Chopra, 2011). Restoration concept may not be a new idea for the Indian sub-continent, the heritage management with public participation is a complete new idea for the heritage practitioners. The current heritage protection related movements often have shown the possible to heritage protection through public participation. A number of current activities in relation to heritage are listed below

4.1 Advocacy:
Groups and active citizens occasionally protest and prevent heritage demolition via organized movements, initiate stay orders and file cases against heritage demolition.
4.2 Temporary art installation projects and exhibition

![Light installations by French artist Christophe Bruyas and German artist Philipp Geist in October, 2015 at Dev Nibash](source: [ntv, 2015])

![Exhibition on Old Dhaka by Urban study group under supervision of Ar. Taimur Islam in October, 2015 at Dev Nibash](source: [ntv, 2015])

4.3 Restoration and reconstruction
In a few cases, heritage buildings undergo restoration processes and on rare occasions even reconstruction based on old documentation.

4.4 Media and citizen awareness campaign
In Media coverage and citizen awareness campaigns are another major factor which often save heritage buildings from ultimate demolition (Bangla, 2015).

4.5 Heritage tourism
Tours are initiated in heritage sites for enhancing the public awareness.

5. Factors influencing colonial heritage in Dhaka

5.1 Economic influence
Considering the current city scenario, a building which does not bring enough economic benefit often faces its ultimate demolition which is not unlikely for Dhaka as well. In contrary to that a few popular buildings are surviving as there is presence of regular ongoing economic factors.

5.2 The historical impacts of colonial heritage
The shift from colonialism to nationalism has a tremendous impact on colonial heritage which often cannot be overlooked and easily become the reason of heritage destruction. Although the scenario can be an exception as the given architectural examples have depicted.

5.3 The lack of heritage management
Often the heritage buildings are not carefully and properly treated with the need of the city. As a result often buildings can be considered as off track monument which is not integrated in the society.

5.4 Lack of public participation
Many heritage buildings and their social integration is completely missing in case of restoration projects which ultimately reduces the public interest upon particular heritage buildings.

6. Conclusion:
The examples and analysis have been done from the overview on a number of case studies from Dhaka city which is comparable to Delhi, Bombay and Lahore as well. The major findings is the lack of community participation in the heritage management scenarios of the Indian subcontinent. Often the lack of ownership, understanding the value of historical buildings are necessary if the heritage integration is desired in such megacities. On a number of occasions the original usage may not be suitable for current metropolitan conditions which can be observed in the project “Rebati Bhaban” where the residential building is still in use for residential purpose. Due to large scale rural-urban migration, the lack of identity and the sense of ownership can also be observed. At current scenario, the regular monitoring system along with participatory community programs are essential for safe guarding the heritage. The current practicing solutions are not necessarily consistent enough for rescuing the target groups. On the other hand the question also arises whether it is justified to protect every single building or not. In relation to urban morphology often one single left over ruin site may not be an evaluated as valuable enough project to be safeguarded. The argumentation still stands on a participatory community discussion which can make the heritage management scenario better in case of the megacities of the former Indian subcontinent.

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