

Changing Housing Scenario of Dhaka and its Impact on Social Interaction

ZAREEN HABIBA ISLAM

Assistant Professor, Department of Architecture
University of Asia Pacific
Bangladesh
zareen@uap-bd.edu

Abstract

The objective of this paper is to search for the changing housing scenario of Dhaka and investigate its effect on social interaction among the inhabitants. Changes in housing context, social structure and advancing technology, over the time, have brought a dramatic change in the social context of Dhaka. The small homogeneous society has passed through colonial regime and now stands as a city of high density apartment complexes. This paper through analyzing social autobiography and interviewing tries to coin the changes taking place. The focus was to identify the social spaces of the residents focusing on the role and use of these spaces in social interaction.

Keywords: Housing Scenario of Dhaka, Social Interaction, Advancement in Technology, Recreational Spaces.

Introduction

The changing political and economic forces of society renders the evolving process of nature and extent of urban house forms, and the changes in urban house forms due to culture, technology and power initiate changes in the social characteristics and social interaction patterns. Moreover, population size, density and social heterogeneity of a housing area and its designed spaces combine to influence social interaction (Gazze, 1999). Social Structure is basically the social reality, which influences our daily life and the way society organizes into predictable relationships, patterns of social interaction. Every city changes its pattern of living, social life of its inhabitants along with the changes in housing scenario. The interaction pattern and social life varies between homogeneous and heterogeneous groups, between multi-ownership and single family residences

Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh holds the ninth position in urban agglomerations in the world. With the changing socio-economic and political context, Dhaka has faced various changes in its lifespan and has arguably undergone many changes in its urban life and house forms. A multidimensional change in its occupants from the homogeneous small group of business traders to the emerging middle class to

the present heterogeneous group is observed with the course of time. The close-knit conservative society of the pre-colonial period changed its character to a more formal one during the colonial period, where social status ruled. Again, the social life of Dhaka faced major changes during the 1990's, when technology started to reign and the face-to-face contacts shifted to mobile phones and social networking websites. With the need and demand of high-rise high-density living gave birth to an observed heterogeneous community where the conception of social space and spaces for social interaction within the building or neighbourhood has also changed and are no longer confined within the neighbourhood.

The objective of this paper is to search for the effect of the changing housing scenario in Dhaka on social interaction among the inhabitants in the residential context. The socio-political transformations are studied to understand the overall context and the transforming recreational spaces and technological advancements are studied to understand how the scenario has changed. And the residential pattern is analyzed to identify the space and interaction relations.

The paper is divided mainly into three sections. Firstly, a theoretical background based on relevant literatures is done. Then, the changing context in Dhaka is discussed incorporating the socio-political context, varying recreational spaces and technology and transformation in the residential patterns. Finally, the effect of these changes on the social interaction is discussed.

Methodology

Qualitative method was chosen where naturalistic approach seeks to understand phenomena in their context-specific settings (Patton, 2002). Review of relevant literatures was done to determine the key concepts and develop an understanding to prepare a theoretical framework. Historical background was studied to understand the context of study. Life history or social autobiographies were analyzed, where the salient experiences in a person's life and that person's definitions of those experiences was captured. Observations of the present scenario along with interviews were done to get some thorough information which can be compared to get a clear picture.

Theoretical Background

People in a society share a common way of life as a result of interacting on a regular, continuous basis because they have acquired a pattern of behaviour on which all, more or less, agree. Social interaction thus becomes a fundamental concept of society formation (Ian 1980). Noted Sociologist Anthony Giddens suggests three reasons for studying social interaction in day-to-day life (Giddens, 2006). Firstly, to get a structure and form of activities of daily routines, with almost constant interactions with others which reflects the kind of social being one is and what kind of social life one is in. Secondly, it reveals how humans act creatively to shape reality. Though how individual's social behaviour is guided to some extent by forces such as roles, norms, and shared expectation, individuals perceive reality differently according to their

backgrounds, interests and motivations. Third and most importantly, studying social interaction in everyday life sheds light on larger social system and institutions.

Social interactions are seen as an important aspect of housing and can be positively influenced by the physical design. This influence is enhanced by the presence of three variables. First variable is the opportunity for contact between residents, secondly the proximity of living and thirdly the availability of appropriate space to interact (Fischer, 1977). The closer people are brought to each other, the greater the chance of meeting one another and the greater the chance of social interaction (Abu-Gazze 1999). A first way of making contact in a community is through passive interactions with neighbors: the unintentional encounter of persons (Abu-Gazze 1999). These interactions are a form of passive community building and may lead to feelings like 'convenient' social control, common feelings of security and/or wellbeing (Felbinger and Jonuschat 2006). If passive contacts between residents are frequent there is a probability of the formation of friendship and active social interactions (Abu-Gazze 1999). Active interactions are intentional and may lead to active community building like sharing interests between dwellers through common activities (Felbinger and Jonuschat 2006).

Every society has its mode of action to produce its own space. The social, physical and psychological needs vary from place to place, character of spaces and image of an urban area differs from region to region (Mowla, 2003). The form of cities and buildings can lead to major change in behavior, increase happiness, increase social interaction and so on. Built environment can be seen as a setting for human activities. All human activities take place in spatial framework. Although space is a byproduct of social, cultural, and economic processes, it acts as a context for social and cultural activities. Special and social forms are closely interrelated and spatial configuration can identify many social patterns for the people.

Eminent architect Charles Correa has proposed that any kind of living (housing) is part of a hierarchical system and every system has a number of elements. According to him, the major elements for the tropical region according to him which is very similar to our culture are; a) Space needed by the family for exclusive private use such as cooking and sleeping, b) Areas of intimate contact. i.e, the front door step where children play, people meet your neighbour etc. c) Neighbourhood places- the city water tap- where people become part of their community. d) The principal urban area- the open space used by the whole city. These elements are mutually interdependent and the scarcity in one can be fulfilled by the presence of the other. The number of elements and their interrelations may vary, but all settlements throughout the world have some analogue of such a system; an analogue which modulates with climate, income levels, cultural patterns, etc. of the society concerned. The simplistic way of piling up dwelling units is a site without any concern for the other spaces involved in the hierarchy will not solve the problem. As housing is not only dwelling units but a system as a whole. For example, in using open-to-sky spaces, the territorial privacy of families is of decisive importance, for as the surrounding buildings get taller, these spaces become more and more restricted in function. A ground-floor courtyard can be used by a family for many

purposes, including sleeping at night, two storeys, and one can still cook in it, five storeys and it's only for children to play in; ten storeys, it's a parking lot (Correa 1989).

The innovations in transport and communication have a major influence on norms and values and aspects of social peer control of people (van Lente 1988). According Verbeek (2006) technology has a mediating role between humans and reality: "Technologies enable us to perform actions and have experiences that were scarcely possible before, thereby helping to shape how we act and experience things". Technology, therefore, is active: it helps to create a situation that was not possible without technology. According Latour (1992) activities of humans are shaped by the things they use. A magnetron has the function to warm food in an easy way with preserving the quality of the food. This inhibits individual members of families to eat at a moment that suits them. In many families this had led to complete changed eating patterns. Through the social network site Facebook people get to know aspects of friends which they wouldn't know in face to face situations. What kind of music someone likes, which friends he/she has, etc. These aspects amplify the image of such a friend. But the use of Facebook also reduces aspects of reality. There is no face to face contact and communication is limited to chatting (Verbeek 2006).

The Changing Context in Dhaka

The life of Dhaka has always been determined by the political considerations (Ahsan, 1991). Dhaka during its lifespan faced six major phases of political and socio economic changes during its evolution. To simplify, the time span in the research has been divided into three major phases, the pre-colonial period, colonial period and post-colonial period. The pre-colonial period of Dhaka mainly consists of Pre-Mughal and Mughal era (1764-1945). Dhaka under British rule in the Colonial Period and Post-Colonial period of Dhaka is divided into two major timeframes; Dhaka after 1947, as the capital of Pakistan and as the capital of Bangladesh.

This section elaborates the housing scenario of each period. Firstly, the Political context is discussed along with the Social structure, where the family construct, social picture, changes in lifestyle and pattern focusing on technological advancements and recreational spaces is depicted. Then the Housing scenario of each period will be portrayed focusing on the patterns of residential areas and house patterns.

Pre-Colonial Dhaka

Dhaka, which was a small trading centre in the Pre-Mughal period, attained great commercial importance in the Mughal period and became the trading centre of the whole of South-east Asia (Islam, 1996). Revenue collection was the main reason behind Mughal Empire's subjugation of different regions. The Mughal administration aimed at collecting revenue as much as possible but by maintaining the general well-being of the peasants (Ghafur 2010).

During this period, Dhaka came under the influence of three major groups: Mughal civil and military officials, European merchants and missionaries, and traders

from the northern and western part of India. The first group of foreigners was primarily concerned with politico-administrative affairs, while the latter two groups mainly remained busy with commercial activities. These groups of foreigners the urban community of Dhaka was composed of two religious groups- indigenous Hindus and Muslims (Sen, 2011). The wealthy commercial class commanded great social status and economic prominence, while the Mughal nobility enjoyed authority in the socio-political life.

Social Structure

The social structure of Dhaka during the Mughal period was characterized by some socio-economically and culturally identifiable status groups. Between the Mughal nobility at the top of the social hierarchy and the poor weavers at the lowest level were the indigenous trading groups. Mostly joint families were seen with very strong family bonding. The norms and values of life were developed within the family. *“I as a child rarely got any chance to get down from the laps of my uncles and aunts as they were so many in number”* (Sani, 2009). The adolescent life of every child had three phases belonging to the school, neighbourhood and lastly to the family. *“We belonged to a joint family full of almost fifteen to sixteen cousins and remained busy with ourselves whereas, the elders with their work”* (Dutta, 2009). Different aide-memoirs depict the social structure as very close knitted and dependent on each other. The whole Dhaka was divided into *mahallas* and *“Panchayat”* was the administration, which was not only very popular but also respected and accepted by peoples from all walks of life. The role of *“Panchayat”* expanded from social issues to even family and personal issues (Mamun 2003). The society was very conservative society and the female members were mostly confined to the interior. The windows of the horse cart were closed or a piece of cloth was tied around the rickshaw when female passengers travelled (Talukder, 2009). Not only the female, sometimes the conservative society acted weird to even male members who did something unconventional. *“Our family was detached from the society as my younger brother used to dance”* (Talukder, 2009).

Recreational Spaces and Technological advancement

The recreation of Pre-Mughal time was more family and community centred and related to religious festivals (Mamun, 2003). Processions and Fairs during the religious occasions gave the unhealthy and untidy Dhaka a very different look. Though mostly the male members attended the processions, Fairs were attracting among children and female members (Choudhury, 2009; Mamun, 2003). *“Jatra”* or stage shows were also a mean of recreation.

Daily recreation was not so much structured. Activities like kite flying and pigeon race from the roof and cockfight in the court along with different indoor games were popular. Playing in the nearest field, bathing in the river, fishing etc. were common among the young boys (Choudhury, 2009). The corner tea stalls were popular spaces among the male members whereas, the women gathered by the water well. Visiting different places, riding horse cart, roaming by boat, etc were common. The Buckland embankment, The wrecked steps of Lalbagh fort and the NawabBari along with the lush green parks with huge variety of trees were very popular places (Morshed, 2009; Rahman, 2009).

The life of Pre Colonial Dhaka was not that much dependent on Technology. Basic amenities like electricity and water supply was missing. “*When we shifted to Purana Paltan, I was seventeen years old. The neighbourhood was just growing. No electricity was there. A middle aged man with a ladder and a kerosene can and cloth came every evening to lit the lamp stands in the street.*”- Budhhdhadeb Bosu (Bose, 2009). Oil lamps were used for household chores. Fairy tales by the grandparents in the moonlit night with a hand fan was defined by a lot of people as a beautiful memory (Khan, 2009). Water supply in individual houses was a dream in the early 1900. Each house had wells in their premises and that water was used for household chores (Sharif, 2008). Female members gathered beside the well and chit-chat took place among them.

Residential Pattern

The Morphology of Old Dhaka is based on *Chawks*, the market squares and *Mahallas*, cluster of houses around a *chawk* or along a linear street (Khan, 1983). The Chawk, located near Buriganga River, served the communication purpose along with the upper and lower class residential areas. The social order allowed little physical mobility and a loosely built, low-density neighbourhood and a dense one grew side by side. Shop houses specialized in different crafts, housed the major part of the city’s low class population and were segregated from the high-class residential areas and the upper crust of the preferred to live near Bakshibazar and the riverfront area.

Two distinct patterns of *mahallas* were seen in this period based on plot divisions, which also expresses differences in the socio economic structure of the localities. Firstly, the Hindu dominated *mahallas*, a longer strip of land up to 40m long with a road front of approximately 2.5 to 3.5 and height up to four stories. These plots, dependent on manmade natural water body and road on two sides, were narrow and had no openings on the outer surfaces and was lit and ventilated through the several courts in between (Khan, 1983). The second category is the loosely built and designed for residential purpose. After the canal based drainage system decayed, with organized services, houses reverted to the original form, the option of building individual courtyard houses emerged (Rahman, 1996). The well off people and nobles related to the administration, agriculture and trades or the foreigners inhabited the second type.

Most of the parts of the city had a spontaneous growth along the winding street that guided the entries to the plot. The entry usually led to the drawing room, the counterpart of the rural “Outhouse”, often with a veranda and a yard facing the public rooms. This was the formal domain where mainly the social interactions between the male members took part. Often the outer veranda acted as a space where neighbours stood and talk before entering to their residences. The front leads towards the inner courtyard and sometimes more than one connected with linear corridors. The ground floor, usually had rooms arranged around the inner court, sometimes fronted by veranda. This part is the female domain with restricted access, which held the multifunctional household activities and services. The courtyard is the threshold between the semi public and private area and the centre of many domestic activities; a place of social interactions including celebrations and rituals (Khan, 1983).

The recollections of the people from 60's give an image of young boys playing and flying kites on the connected roofs of the shared wall buildings. *"Often we were scolded for jumping from one roof to another in the noon and disturbing people while they are asleep"* (Sengupta, 2009). The courtyards holds a memory in almost everybody's mind. *"The court was our favourite space althrough the day especially when grandmother narrated fairy tales. Love that time"*. The most popular space amongst the older male members was the "Mere"- a covered podium like space in front of every residence. "Mere", with benches was the gathering place for not only the neighbours, but also for any unknown passer-by to stop for rest. Often jug/pot full of water was kept for the thirsty (Malik, 2008).

Colonial Dhaka

Dhaka under British rule can be conveniently divided into three phases: Early British phase (1763-1905); the phase of provincial capital (1905-1912); and the final British phase (1912- 1947). The rise and fall of population in Dhaka was connected with its economic prosperity and decline. Both the demographic and economic degeneration of Dhaka in the early 19th century was mainly due to the import of British yarn to the district of Dhaka from 1824, which badly affected the flourishing Muslin industry, and after 1828 it started to decline rapidly. Consequently, there was a change in society and the social structure of Dhaka. In these socio-economic situations, Dhaka felt the impact of new changes from 1830 to 1880s. However, this was the period that saw the growth of civic institutions like the Dhaka Municipality, the Dhaka District Board, and also the foundation of Government School and Colleges in Dhaka. The establishment of these civic institutions suggests that the kind of "civil society" consisting of certain middle class elements was beginning to emerge (Sen, 2011).

Social Structure

Besides the administrative jobs, scopes for livelihoods among the middle class group in the form of self-employment and salaried job were seen. Professionals such as lawyers, physicians and often as estate officers were prominent in this group and for their livelihood started to acquire formal education with the hope of getting government employments led to the formation of an educated middle class (Mamun, 1986). The society and social structure in capital Dhaka during Mughal and British periods had been shaped under Indian feudalistic and colonial capitalistic modes of production. In the Mughal period, the urban society of Dhaka came to be stratified broadly into two categories- indigenous people and foreign (Muslim and European) elements. The former were largely the people belonging to the urban working and artisan classes, while the latter were composed of a few landholding, trading and administrative groups. The society and social structure in Dhaka in the British period changed radically during the 1940's, when it was mainly composed of a small group of industrial workers and a sizeable section of English educated, professional and salaried middle class elements. The social structure remained to be the same in the older part of the city though a new character started to develop in the newer part. Though the growing educated class were living in the colonies or the planned residential areas, the lifestyle was more or less the same. The closeness among the neighbours were still seen and the lifestyle didn't vary too much. The conservative outlooks towards the female were seen to be changing and

female were seen to be coming into the mainstream institutes and offices. The cultural institutions were seen flourishing and many of the orthodox things started changing.

Recreational Spaces and Technological advancement

The lifestyle and places of recreation was almost similar in the pre colonial and colonial period specially in the older part of the city (Islam 2012). Development of riverfront, race course and clubs were seen as an influence of colonial regime. Horse race, though first organized by the Europeans, gradually became popular among the nawab families and rich families and then gradually spread among the general people (Das, 2009). The corner tea stalls still hold its popularity and along with added the small restaurants. Many of the family gathering started taking place in the nearest restaurants. Recreational activities were limited to neighbours gathering and in the occasions of different programs. With the radio coming into the picture, became the centre of attraction. As availability of radio was not much at that time, male members gathered in the mere or in the frontcourt to listen to the daily news and the female members finished their household chores early every afternoon to listen to the drama (Sharif, 2008).

Residential Pattern

By the end of the 19th century, Dhaka city was confined between the Buriganga River and the railway line and the extension to the east. The centre of principle administration of the capital city was located in Ramna. Residential area was seen being divided according to class. According to Nazrul Islam, the low class residences continued to be low class and expanded to swallow some parts of the surrounding areas. Some high-class areas deteriorated to low class and separate areas for the middle class was seen. The charm of the river front attracted the important high-class residential areas (Islam, 1996).

The establishment as a capital in Dhaka brought the development of the Civil Lines in Ramna, along with the administrative centre held the official residences. The Europeans gradually moved from the riverside to the new residential area in Ramna. Three upper class residential areas at Gandaria, Wari and Purana Paltan were developed by the local population, which housed the government employees, professionals, businessmen and landlords (Bose, 2009). Purana Paltan, by the end of 1925 became a beautiful residential area housing the leaders of the society and the government officials (Bose, 1995).

As most significant residential form of the British era, Bungalows influenced the local house form to become more consolidated by bringing the detached rooms under one roof. With further urbanization and introduction of rudimentary town planning, new type of houses on regular plots started emerging (Roy, 1998; Desai, 1996). Early colonial bungalows were single storey symmetric structures with a large hall in the centre with climatic protection provided by the veranda running around the hall. Many have porticoes for carts and later cars. The whole structure was located on an open land with a front garden with the service located in the back (Rahman, 1996).

Post Colonial Dhaka

Post-Colonial period of Dhaka is divided into two major timeframes. One is Dhaka after 1947, as the capital of Pakistan and the other is as the capital of Bangladesh, since 1971 till date. Pakistan emerged as an independent nation after the decolonization of the British India and was split into Eastern and Western provinces with an asserted unity by religion but separated by different cultures and languages. During the initial years, Dhaka been optimistic and assumed a prominent role in contributing to the nation state building schemes, where modernization of Dhaka became an immediate necessity. But the centuries-long colonial reign had effectively limited Dhaka's capacity to develop and function as a provincial capital of a new nation state. Major problems faced by Dhaka as a provincial capital are: inheritance of an inadequate urban infrastructure and services of the colonial regime; shortage of public and private housing to accommodate an increasing urban population. By the late 1960 it became apparent that the objectives of modernization theory in pursuit of development through industrialization in developing countries had failed. Bangladesh's involvement in the new development paradigm delayed for two main reasons; first, the war-reconstruction efforts under severe financial constraints; second, the adoption of a socialist economy in the First Five Year Plan (1973-1978) leading to the nationalization of the private industries. A change of political regime in 1975 led the national economy's gradual shifting from the earlier nationalization to privatization of the industries. A global economic slump during the early 1980s had significantly reduced the growth rates in developing countries and Dhaka grew in significance for national development as a location of economic growth producing sectors since the late 1980s; notable among the private sector include: the rapidly growing RMG in the industrial and housing in the construction sectors (Ghafur, 2010).

Social Structure

The society and social structure in Dhaka during the Pakistan period changed significantly. The influential Hindu men were replaced by non-Bengali businessmen, industrialists, and high-ranking civil-military officials. In the sixties, most new industries were in the hands of refugee Muslims, and small business in the hands of local Muslims. However, through receiving higher education, quite a large number of young Bengali Muslims came to the forefront, gradually joining different occupations; forming a significant educated middle class. In the new urban society, a major role was played by a swiftly expanding Muslim middle class that vied successfully with the small upper class for dominance in the economic and political life of the province (Sen, 2011). The economic gap that existed between a small section of rich and a vast poorer section of the population in the first phase of Bangladesh period widened further after August 1975, when the post-Mujib government introduced a kind of capitalist economy reversing the socialist path of economic development pursued by the first government. In this situation, a "Comprador Capitalist Class" which had appeared in the social structure of post-liberation Bangladesh begins to control the socio-political life of the country (Sen, 2011).

The overall scenario got a major shift from the 1990s. With the spread of real estate apartments, people from varied socio-economic background started to reside

together and a complex mix instigated. The urban family structure gradually went for the nuclear one with a few children. These dwellers mostly maintain their relationships with relatives, friends and fellow dwellers and the diverse background leads to many clusters on the basis of age, education, occupation, home district, religious practices, etc. (Hossain, 2010). The distinctive features of the social life in these apartments are substitution of primary contacts, like declining social significance of the family, and the undermining the traditional basis of social solidarity. The social structure has changed its form from a close knit one to a segregated one and changes are accepted inspite of the presence of conservative attitudes. Urban life has become fast but lacks the inter-connections. In the government housing, or private residential areas, the relations between the neighbours still reflected the early pictures, possible because of the community being homogeneous (Islam, 2012).

Recreational Spaces and Technological advancement

Government during the post colonial phase, undertook a number of projects for building townships. By employing the neighbourhood concept, modern housing was conceived, planned and implemented in its most generic terms in sites and service schemes; leaving aside the design merits, one can locate in them the presence of residential plots, roads with setbacks for footpath and trees, community open spaces, non-residential uses like shops etc.

With the change of time, the recreational spaces changed its character. Cycling in the secondary roads of colonies and housing areas were popular until the 90's among both young boys and girls. The parks of lost their popularity and the visits got limited only for morning and evening walks due to safety reasons. The open field and the south plaza of the National Parliament Building which was very popular and were closed for political reasons, and a huge number of populations lost their recreational place. Dhaka University premises, Public Library, Art College, are popular among the students (Islam 2012).

Jatra, the oldest form of theatre was replaced by Crown Theatre, and cinema became a popular entertainment (Morshed, 2009). Though initial viewer of cinema was upper and middle class, gradually people from status started to gather. Before the 70's female rarely went to cinema and separate seating for women in the balcony divided with screen is seen. After TV and Cable came into business, cinema started losing its popularity. In the late 90's, many of the cinema halls had to be shut down because of less public demand (Sarkar, 2009). In the last decade, the regular cinema halls remain popular among the lower and lower middle-income group and the multiplex, became a popular choice to the young generation.

The hangouts have shifted from open space to interiors. The open spaces and parks have shifted to the lounges and cafes. Different Shopping complex has become roaming places for people. The most popular place for the young people are the restaurants. From fast food shops to the music café and lounges, all remain equipped in the evening and in holidays. Restaurants with children corner are popular among the families with small kids. Various virtual parks are popular among the children.

Until the 60's no television was seen. Having a TV set was a matter of status and was something placed in the living room. People who didn't have a TV gathered at the places who had. *"We had to place our TV in the courtyard and almost 100-150 people gathered in our house to watch "Robin hood" or "Danger man" (Malik.A, 2008).* Together with the advent of VCD, movies even beside the television programs, occupied more time and option to keep people busy. Advancement and availability of digital technology had encouraged more number of movies in fewer prices. Until the 70's, telephone remained limited to government offices, business communities, and a few privileged urban citizens but from 80's, telecommunication services was rendered throughout the country. Use of telephones, while eased the communication between people, reduced the amount of face-to-face contact. Social networking sites gave an option to socialize even more and in the busy life, one can keep contact with those who one seldom could meet. Easy availability of internet and smart phones have made the global connectivity wide spread (Islam, 2012).

Residential Pattern

Housing had predominantly been a private sector activity, confined within Old Dhaka. After 1947, only a few areas of the old city remained as middle class residential neighbourhoods. On the other hand, some high-class residential area became middle class neighbourhoods (Islam 1996). The Dhaka Master Plan in 1959 was the first significant attempt to tap on western modernity, and initiate a process of transition from traditional to modern housing. By employing the neighbourhood concept, modern housing was conceived, planned and implemented in its most generic terms in sites and service schemes. Different types of multi-story and multi-family flats were seen containing generic domestic spaces of modern house. Modernization of social life had influenced the design of housing. In the case of public housing, the relative allocation and organization of different domestic spaces taking into account the difference in household head's income had resulted into different types of residences, often in multi-storey and multi-family flats. Flat types usually varied in size although containing generic domestic spaces of modern house like living room, bed room, dining room, kitchen and toilets. In the Public sector housing, employment hierarchy determined an employee's access to the government provided dwelling unit. Dhaka's first generation urbanites were given a modern residential setup to dwell and make adaptation from their traditional modes of dwelling (Ghafur, 2010).

The private sector initiative in housing sector can be tracked back in the 1960's responding to the huge backlog of housing need. In the post-liberation period, the focus of the developer built housing shifted completely from the middle-income group to high-income group. Even though apartment culture was not so popular among the dwellers till 90's, the beginning of the new millennium, an increased interest in living in apartment was seen either by owning or by renting. Dhaka experienced a boom in apartment development in all residential areas and soon after, small-scale developers, individual homeowners choose apartments to construct on their own properties demolishing the earlier house form. And apartments became well accepted and spread out all over the city (Kamruzzaman, 2007).

Changing Social Interaction: Patterns and Causes

Dhaka has witnessed major changes in technological advancement, transportation, communication, building construction sectors in its lifespan. The city which didn't have electricity till the early 1900 is aiming to have MRT.

“Our joint family of couldn't survive ultimately not because of any other reason but just space constrains” (Dutta, 2009). Not only space constrains, but also due to reasons of having an individual life gave birth to single families and the dependency on each other reduced. The social structure has changed its form from a close knit one to a segregated one. Urban life has become fast but lacks the inter-connections. The interrelation between the communities still had a feelings of the indigenous social structure. But with rapid urbanization and population increase, the change in the social community with the invention of apartment living made a big change in the whole scene. The relation between the neighbours changed from the homogenous one to the heterogeneous one. The bond between the neighbours have limited to hello hi at the doorstep and the lift lobby. In the government housing, or private residential areas, the relations between the neighbours still reflected the early pictures. Possible reasons might be the presence of the female members in home and above all the community being homogeneous.

Cycling in the secondary roads of colonies and housing areas were popular until the 90's among both young boys and girls that started to diminish because of the erecting apartments and increasing number of cars. Lack of open space has almost diminished the trend of outdoor games. With the advancement of technology, video games became popular and then gradually music café and lounges along with pool (billiard) clubs came into scene and is now a days a common gathering space. Moreover, with the bulk use of cell phones changed the whole picture. The huge demand has given mobile phone a wide-ranging change in its character and numerous private companies providing network services, dazzles its users with various advertisement and usage offers. The smart phone keeps the user busy with multi-functional purpose.

If we look at the transformation in the house forms, we can see that, the low rise housings of the indigenous neighbourhood, were more appropriate in generating social interaction. The homogeneous community connected through the street and roof allowed more mobility among themselves and gave a human scale to the whole picture. Even the early one or two storied buildings also was very much in a human scale. With the development of apartment culture, when the buildings were built on the whole land leaving only the setbacks, the space for interaction disappeared.

Conclusions

The requirements and the physical expression of the housing scenario of Dhaka has a varied character in the three discussed phases. This change represents the three socio-economic layers of context. The housing scenario has changed as a reaction to the political and cultural need and accordingly the social life has. And the social interaction

is nothing but a reflection of the society itself. This paper tries to gather the patters and find out the causes behind the changes.

References

- Abu- Ghazzeah & M Tawfiq, (1999), "Housing Layout, Social Interaction, and the place of contact in Abu Naseir, Jordan", *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 19, pp. 41-73
- Ahsan, R. Majid, (1991), "Changing Pattern of the Commercial Area of the Dhaka City", in S. Ahmed (ed), "Dhaka Past Pesent Future", Dhaka Asiatic Society of Bangladesh. pp. 396-414
- Bose, Budhdhadev (2009), "*Purana Paltan*" in Ghosh Kajol (ed), "*Smritir Dhaka*" (In Bengali), Nalonda, Dhaka, pp. 181-187
- Bose, Buddhadev, (1950), "*Purana Paltan*" in "*Hatath Alor Jhalkani*", Calcatta
- Correa, C, *Urbanisation. In The New Landscape*. London: Butterworth Architecture (1989),
- Choudhury, Assad (2009), "*Dhakay jai re*" in Ghosh Kajol (ed), "*Smritir Dhaka*" (In Bengali), Nalonda, Dhaka, pp. 29-35
- Choudhury, Fakhruzzaman (2009), "*Purono Deenguli ekhon shudhui dirghoshash*" in Ghosh Kajol (ed), "*Smritir Dhaka*" (In Bengali), Nalonda, Dhaka, pp. 171-174
- Das, Shwapan Kumar (2009), "*Hariye jawa ghordour*" in Ghosh Kajol (ed), "*Smritir Dhaka*" (In Bengali), Nalonda, Dhaka, pp. 332-334 APJ, Vol. 2 no 1, pp. 78-88
- Desai, M. (1996), "Colonial Domestic Architecture", *Architecture + Design*
- Dutta Bhubotosh (2009), "Collegiate School" in Ghosh Kajol (ed), "*Smritir Dhaka*" (In Bengali), Nalonda, Dhaka, pp. 191-207
- Felbinger, D. and H. Jonuschat (2006). Promoting neighbourly interactions by the common use of green spaces, ENHR.
- Fischer, C., Baldassare, M., Gerson, K., Jackson, R. M., Jones, L. M. & Stueve, C. A (1977), *Networks and Places: social relations in the urban setting*. New York: Free Press, pp-87
- Ghafur, Shayer, (2010), "Imprints of the Changing Doctrines on Housing in Dhaka", *International Seminar on The History Heritage and Urban Issues of Capital Dhaka*, Dhaka, 16-19 February 2010.
- Hossain, Akbar, (2010), "Living in the High-rise Apartments of Dhaka City", *Journal of Anthropology*, Jahangirnagar University, Dhaka, 31, pp.131-148
- Islam, Nazrul, (1996), "Dhaka: From City to Megacity", Centre for Urban Studies, Dhaka
- Islam, Sayed Monzurul, (2009), "Purono Dhakar Khal: Nordoma" in Ghosh Kajol (ed), "*Smritir Dhaka*" (In Bengali), Nalonda, Dhaka, pp. 371-376
- Islam, ZH, (2012), "Spaces for Social Interaction: A post-occupancy evaluation of real-estate apartments of Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka", Unpublished March Thesis, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology.
- Islam, Z.H., "Making Space Liveable: A Post Occupancy Evaluation of the Spaces for Social Interaction in Apartments of Dhaka", *Proceedings of the International Seminar on Livable Space (IsLivas) – 2012: Creating Space for Better Life*, 16-17 February, 2012
- Kamruzzaman, (2007), "Potential of High Density Walkup Apartments in Dhaka City", Research Report to the Architectural Institute of Japan (AIJ), Okinawa Chapter for the Young Researcher Award, 2007, Department of Civil Engineering & Khan, Abed (2009), "*Tokhono Chilem Mogon*" in Ghosh Kajol (ed), "*Smritir Dhaka*" (In Bengali), Nalonda, Dhaka, pp. 58-60
- Khan, I. M, (1983), "Alternative Approach to the Redevelopment of Old Dhaka", Doctoral dissertation, ,1, Katholieke University Leuven
- Latour, B. (1992). "Where are the missing masses? The sociology of a few mundane artifacts." *Shaping technology/building society: Studies in sociotechnical change*: 225-258.
- Lente, D. van, (1988). *Techniek & ideologie: opvattingen over de maatschappelijke betekenis van technische vernieuwingen in Nederland, 1850-1920*, Wolters-Noordhoff.
- Malik Tuhin (2008), "*Amar Shoishob*" in Assad, Md (ed), "*Dhaka Troimashik: Dhaka Smriti Shongkha*" (In Bengali), Dhaka Heritage, Dhaka, pp-126-128

- Mamun, M. (1986), *“Unish Shatoke Purba Banger Samaj”* (in Bengali), Dhaka, Samaj Nirikhyon Kendra
- Mamun, Muntasir, (2003), “Dhaka Shamagra-01”, Anannya, Banglabazar Dhaka
- Morshed, Abul Kamal Monzur (2009), “Purano Dhakar Cholochitro” in Ghosh Kajol (ed), *“Smritir Dhaka”* (In Bengali), Nalonda, Dhaka, pp. 46-57
- Patton, Michael Quinn, (2002), “Qualitative evaluation and research methods”, (3rd ed.), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc
- Rahman, M. M. (1996), “Old Dhaka’s Multi-Court Houses-the evolving ideals”; APJ, Vol. 2, no. 1, pp.78-88
- Rahman, Mizanur, (2009), *“Shekaler Dhaka”* in Ghosh Kajol (ed), *“Smritir Dhaka”* (In Bengali), Nalonda, Dhaka, pp. 213-223
- Roy, G. S. (1998), “Wari Residential Area-a lost glory”, EARTH, vol. 09, pp. 243-245
- Sani, Aslam, (2009), *“Rasta me mat jao ekela gola kata saiyyad pakerga”* in Ghosh Kajol (ed), *“Smritir Dhaka”* (In Bengali), Nalonda, Dhaka, pp. 25-28
- Sen Rangalal, (2011), “Society and Social Structure in Capital Dhaka since Mughal Period” in Chowdhury, M. A et al (eds), “400 years of Capital Dhaka and Beyond, Vol III: Urbanization and Urban Development”, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka, pp. 87-102
- Sengupta, Kiranshangkar, (2009), *“Golipothe haak: “Mushkil Ahsan”* in Ghosh Kajol (ed), *“Smritir Dhaka”* (In Bengali), Nalonda, Dhaka, pp. 110-117
- Sharif Abdus, (2008), *“Chu Ching Cho aar Sweet Heaven restaurant”* in Assad, Md (ed), *“Dhaka Troimashik: Dhaka Smriti Shongkha”* (In Bengali), Dhaka Heritage, Dhaka, pp-50-52
- Talukder, Mahabub (2009), *“Bhalobashar Shohor”* in Ghosh Kajol (ed), *“Smritir Dhaka”* (In Bengali), Nalonda, Dhaka, pp. 249-255
- Verbeek, P. P. (2006). "Materializing Morality: design ethics and technological mediation." *Science, Technology & Human Values* 31(3): 361.