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Tareef Hayat Khan

Living with Transformation

Self-Built Housing in the City of Dhaka

Tareef Hayat Khan
Department of Architecture
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia
Skudai
Malaysia

ISSN 2211-4165 ISSN 2211-4173 (electronic)
ISBN 978-3-319-00719-9 ISBN 978-3-319-00720-5 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-00720-5
Springer Cham Heidelberg New York Dordrecht London

Library of Congress Control Number: 2013941493

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To my parents

Preface

Self-built houses are inseparable parts of urban built environment. Mostly prevalent in the developing part of the world, they are often ignored by researchers. However, due to its bulk, they have been attracting recent researchers around the world. Often accused of creating unhealthy urban development, they catch the observers' eyes for the wrong reasons. However, a closer look and sensitive investigation can bring up a different picture. This book is such an attempt. Beginning with some contextual description of the neighborhoods with respect to the city of Dhaka, Bangladesh, it focused on a particular phenomenon of spontaneous transformation, which due to its particular nature can be regarded as a dominant identity of these houses. First, it tried to categorize the otherwise random looking incidents of transformation. Later, it explored the behavioral patterns of such categories. By doing so, it tried to represent these houses not only just as a static element, but also as a dynamic element in time, which passes through different stages of aging just as human beings. With the experience of living in these houses for a major part of my life, and using my professional knowledge as an architect as well as my lifelong experience in academics and research, I tried to unfold them as characters in human life; sensual and alive.

Skudai, Malaysia, 2013

Tareef Hayat Khan

Acknowledgments

The University of Hong Kong is acknowledged for the funding of the research; Research Management Center (RMC), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), and Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), Malaysia, are acknowledged for the logistic support through Research Grant no. Q.J130000.2621.06J34.

I sincerely thank Springer for their cooperation to publish this book.

Architect Tapan Kumar Dhar, Architect Md. Sk. Maruf Hossain, and Hamiza Binti Ahmad Tajuddin are acknowledged for their technical support.

I sincerely acknowledge all those who helped in different ways during the data collection phase; Dr. Jia Beisi, for his patient supervision during the study period; and Prof. Howard Davis, for his invaluable suggestions.

Finally, my passionate appreciation goes to my wife Dr. Naznin Sultana for her continuous support and inspiration during the whole time.

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Abstract

This book describes and analyzes the phenomenon of spontaneous transformation in self-built houses in the context of developing countries. After describing briefly the history of self-built houses in the context of Dhaka City, it focused on the phenomenon of spontaneous transformation. Later, it explored the different categories of the transformation incidents inside these self-built houses. Finally it unfolded various explicit behavioral patterns associated with these transformations. The phenomenon of spontaneous transformation has been recognized in this book more as a behavior by not only looking at it from its physical aspects but also from the context-specific social, economic, and cultural aspects.

Keywords Spontaneous transformation • Self-built houses • Dhaka City