

# SLUM AS 'PLACE': TRANSFORMATION, ADAPTATION AND PLACE-MAKING OF DOMESTIC AND COMMUNITY LIVING OF ERSHADNAGAR RESETTLEMENT CAMP

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## Abstract

*This paper investigates the transformation process of a peri-urban slum – 'Ershadnagar Resettlement Camp' where forty two years ago; the inner city's evicted homeless population was relocated without any proper proposition. It discusses how the slum has gained the attributes of a 'place' through the transformation and adaptation process of 'place making' where both the informal struggles of people and formal organizational initiatives are equally valid. This approach tends to highlight facts regarding the socio-cultural complexity of slums rather than statistical data. Dhaka- the capital of Bangladesh and most densely populated city of the world is facing an extreme pressure to accommodate its ever increasing number of slum dwellers. The study area is located at Tongi, a peri-urban location at the north of Dhaka. This almost 100 acre camp was a government initiative to house the evicted illegal slum dwellers as a part of 'Dhaka Clean' project in 1974. Since then, with discrete help from government and non government organizations, the camp dwellers have gradually developed themselves into a community. From field survey, interviews of inhabitants and development workers and discretely available secondary data the place making process have been analyzed at both community and household level. While catalyzing factors in the process of 'place making' is observed, the lack of tenure has been identified as a negative catalyst.*

**Keywords:** Slum, Place Making, Ershadnagar Resettlement Camp, Informal Settlement

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## 1. Introduction

With rapid urban growth, informal settlements in the form of slums and squatters with dehumanized living condition have become global phenomena. Bangladesh, a South-Asian developing country is facing overwhelming challenges with its ever increasing number of slum dwellers which has multiplied four times in the last 17 years. Therefore, in architecture discipline, improvement of the living condition of slums and housing for low-income people has been a major topic of academic interest. But from previous examples of development projects, it is seen that if slums are considered only as a 'physical entity' that needs to be improved ignoring their complex social and spatial construct; the outcome fails to serve the target population. Low-income housing went into the hands of middle class people or the slum dwellers sold the development projects' land and houses and turned them into capital resources. These instances lead us to look at the issue of informal settlements from different perspectives to understand the situation. They should be viewed as an integral part of city, not as a separate physical entity unique to its boundary. Therefore, this paper analyzes a 42 year old slum- Ershadnagar Resettlement Camp under the analytic lens of 'slum as place' and its transformation process as 'place making'. This camp was a government initiative to house the evicted illegal slum dwellers as a part of 'Dhaka Clean' project in 1974 but no proper proposition except land had been provided. Since 1974 to 2015 the camp dwellers have gradually constructed and extended their houses with discrete help from government and NGOs.

At first, the paper discusses the ideas of 'place' to establish the notion of 'place' or 'placelessness' in the context of slum. The ubiquity of space becomes place with three attributes: *location*, *locale* and *sense of place*. *Location* refers to the 'where' of place. *Locale* refers to the material setting (houses, roads etc) for social relations and *sense of place* means the personal and emotional attachment people have to a place<sup>29</sup>. From humanistic geography and other philosophical views, the paper will discuss different approaches of perceiving 'place'. In phenomenological approach, *place* is seen in its relation to human, how people construct their own place. In this approach 'home' or dwelling plays vital role in construction of places as this is the most profound form of attachment of people to a place. In the 'social constructivist' approach, place is seen in a conflicting power relation; while another strand of this theory views place as a dynamic process. Drawing relevant ideas from these approaches, the paper brings the Ershadnagar slum under critical observation. The location, locale and sense of place that the dwellers have with this slum give Ershadnagar the attributes of place. Being situated on government land, Ershadnagar has somewhat tenure security than other slums, but absence of legal rights on land creates mobility and uncertainty which leads into a sense of 'placelessness'. The transformation of Ershadnagar into a slum community by the efforts of people and discrete help from government and NGO's is viewed here under the notion of 'place making' as place making takes into account both formal (government and organizational initiative) and informal (activities of people) actions in the construction of place. The transformation of their houses is enumerated as house is considered fundamental form of place in the phenomenological approach.

The objective of this paper is to view Ershadnagar slum from the perspective of 'place' and its construction process as 'place making'. Rather than seeing slums with derogatory notions this paper brings out the 'place' inherent in this slum from which we can derive what makes it a place. As an outcome of the study, this paper sheds light into the catalysts that gave place attributes to this informal settlement.

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<sup>29</sup> (Agnew J, 1987)

## 2. Methodology

This study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data has been collected through field surveys and interviews taken in 2014 and 2015. The Field survey was conducted on 30 families who live in the camp since its foundation. The primary data has been used to give a holistic account of the transformation process of the slum, cross checked by discreet secondary resources available. The field survey data has been interpreted into plans & 3d visualization of the houses to give proper idea of the transformation along with photographs. Secondary data sources (books, research papers, essays and articles, dissertations, newspaper articles and government census reports) have been used to establish the contextual background of the study and theoretical outline of the paper. GIS data has been used to analyze the location and morphology of study area. This research is done based on overall visual survey of the area including major neighborhood locations and detail inspection of approximately 30 households. Detail overview of total area was not within the scope.

## 3. Literature Review

### 3.1. Proliferation of slums and low-income housing situation in the context of Dhaka

In the 'Census of slum area and floating population 2014' conducted by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), 13,938 slums have been counted with a population of 22,27,754 people in all urban areas in Bangladesh. A total of 5,92,998 households consisting of 3.75 person per household in average has been recorded in these slums. It shows a 77% increase in the number of slum household since 1997 census. Dhaka turns out to be the most attractive city to urban poor for its income generating capacity as a capital. Mills and industries concentrated around Dhaka also attract peri-urban densification. People living in shanty houses have reduced 75% since 1997 but the number of slum dwellers has increased. The census reveals that the overall condition of the slum houses has improved with economic growth of the country<sup>30</sup>.

**Table 1: Census of Slum and Floating people 2014**

Parameter	1997	2014
Total number of Slums countrywide	2,991	13,945
Slum Population	13,91,458	22,32,114
<i>Reasons for coming to Slums</i>		
Seeking Jobs	39.53%	50.96%
Poverty	19.97%	28.76%
River Erosion	17.02%	7.04%

Source: Daily Star, 30 June, 2015

Due to this proliferation of slums, there exists an acute social inequality in the housing situation of the city. In this city of disparity – Dhaka, 2% high income people covers 15% residential land, 28% middle income people covered 65% of residential land and the 70% low income people covered only 20% residential land. The higher income residential areas have a density of 40-1220 person/acre while low income areas contain 1500-4000 person/acre.<sup>31</sup>

Under such crisis, slums undoubtedly demands prompt attention and Huchzermeyer points out that, architecture has the capacity to directly improve these conditions. But when the focus is

<sup>30</sup> Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2015

<sup>31</sup> COHRE & ACHR, 2000, p. 10, Hoek-Smit 1998, p.15

strictly on physical condition, poses multiple problems. Slum upgrading projects are often desired by middle class and eventually become unavailable to the targeted poor.<sup>32</sup> If we look at some attempts in Bangladesh to improve slums based on physical condition, we can observe that due to lack of consideration about the complex social construct of slums, these physical condition improvements did not achieve desired goals. In 1998, government took Bhashantek Rehabilitation Project (BRP) in 47.90 acre government land to build affordable multi-storied homes for the low income people. The Ministry of Land came into agreement with a private developer (North South Property Limited) to construct the houses and evicted a number of slums to conduct the construction. With delay and mismanagement, only 20% of the project was completed but no slum dwellers have been seen to live in those newly built apartments. The apartments were neither affordable to the evictee slum dwellers nor spatially adequate considering their family size and the pattern of space usage like using of house as production space. The evictee slum dwellers also did not have enough access to information & resources for accessing into these apartments and it eventually went to mostly lower middle class income group.<sup>33</sup>

The Zinzira Salvation Army Scheme supplied comparatively larger plot size (80 sqm) instead of usual scheme of 30 square meters. The beneficiaries sub divided the spaces and sublet it as they were not accustomed to such standard of space and instant income generation seemed more attractive to them than more livable space. A project sponsored by CARE in rural area supplied very high standard of material. Cinva Ram Block walls and corrugated metal sheet roof were given to a thatched-roof house owner. He took the house piece by piece, sold it to the open market and brought himself thatched roof house, a pair of oxen and a plough.<sup>34</sup> These instances point towards our lack of understanding slums as a social construct where a complex relationship between place and power exists. This leads us to look at slums from different perspectives that recognize slum as an integrated part of city.

### 3.2. Slum as a 'Place'

The word 'slum' usually refers to different kinds of low income housing and deprived living conditions. Definition varies from country to country and it carries a derogative stigma with it. According to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, a Slum is a cluster of compact settlements of 5 or more households which generally grow haphazardly in an unhealthy condition and atmosphere on government and private vacant land. Slums also exist on the owner based household premises. Generally a slum has the following six characteristics: temporary structure type, high population density, government/private ownership or vacant/ abandoned land, poor water supply and sanitation, inadequate lighting and road facilities, very low socio economic status of dwellers.

The word place has got multidimensional meaning. From Agnew's theory, 'place' is a meaningful site that combines *location*, *locale*, and *sense of place*.<sup>35</sup> *Location* refers to an absolute point in space with a specific set of coordinates and measurable distances from other locations. *Locale* refers to the material setting for social relations – the way a place looks. *Locale* includes the buildings, streets, parks, and other visible and tangible aspects of a place. *Sense of place* refers to the more nebulous meanings associated with a place: the feelings and emotions a place evokes. (T. Cresswell, 2009)

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<sup>32</sup> Huchzermeyer M.

<sup>33</sup> Kabir. T, 2011

<sup>34</sup> Khan A.,1984

<sup>35</sup> Agnew J, 1987

When the word place is related with informal settlements, it poses a peculiar prompt as both the words Place and slum are inherently problematic terms.<sup>36</sup> Seeing informal settlement primarily as places of their own right and part of the city means accepting that they are complex place in which spatial, social, cultural, political and also economic activities take place just like other ordinary places of the city. Instead of marginalising, informality should be considered as dynamic tension or social process and it is suggested that a place-based approach may be best suited to understand the processes that construct urban informal settlements.<sup>37</sup> In order to do so, this paper discusses two approaches of defining place. The first one is *phenomenological approach* that perceives place as 'rich and complicated interplay of people and the environment' rather than facts and figures (Cresswell 2004: 11). In phenomenological approach, home plays an important role in the construction of place. According to Relph, home is the most complex expression of place incorporating all other aspects as significant and inseparable including location, appearance, time, people and place attachment often manifested through a sense of care and concern for here.

'Home in its most profound form is an attachment to a particular setting, a particular environment, in comparison with which all other associations with places have only limited significance'

(Relph 1976)

The second approach is the *social constructivist* approach which views places within complex networks of power relations. Another stem of this approach perceive place as a dynamic process that is never complete. In the global south, percentage of new urban housing constructed by residents themselves is as high as 90 percent. Therefore, here the idea of place as a process where the material setting of place is a product of the activities of its users is very much relevant. (Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1989)

These strands of geographic approaches to place are brought together in 'place making'.

The idea of 'place-making' has its origin in urban design and more recently being used to emphasize the social and physical construction of places by people. While defining the idea of place making, Cresswell identifies day to day user activities as place making such as redecoration by home owners, addition of buildings, neighborhood organization making people tidy their lawns, government legislation for new public building etc. Therefore place making recognizes both kind of activities categorized as either formal (such as planning by the state) and informal (such as land invasion by settlers) and validates them equally. The individual place making activities of one resident is as important as those of city council. (Lombard, 2014)

David T. Fortin questioned the delineation of slum as 'place' saying that slum can be metaphorically compared to a 'ship' or 'vessel' for social mobility. Referring to the responses of residents of Kibera slum in Nigeria, he points to the fact that the dwellers will be keen to move to any distant location if better housing and job opportunity is provided. This situation of mobility is more arguably linked with the notions of 'non-place' or 'placelessness' rather than place. Norberg-Shultz asserts that dwelling demands a concrete place which for slum dwellers means a right to be in that place without the fear of eviction and uprooting. This draws the much debated topic of whether the slums dwellers should be given ownership of their property

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<sup>36</sup> David T. Fortin, 2010

<sup>37</sup> Lombard, 2009

as they are tempted to turn newly gained property assets into short term capital. But until such initiatives are taken, slums are not 'places' for vast majority of people. (Fortin, D)

Drawing from the theories of perceiving place, this paper looks at the dynamics of Ershadnagar as 'place as process' and the transformation is seen as 'place making' where both organizational and discreet individual attempts are equally validated. The present situation of the slum is analyzed under place attributes: *location, locale* and *sense of place*. As the most fundamental means of place attachment, 'houses' or 'dwellings' of the inhabitants, their adaptive nature and incremental growth has been closely observed. While observed under the lens of 'place' and 'place making' theory, Ershadnagar reveals what makes a slum part of the city, what makes it 'place' to its dwellers and what creates 'placelessness.'

#### **4. Place as a process: Transformation of Ershadnagar Resettlement Camp through place-making**

Taking ideas from the concepts of 'place as a process' and 'place making' approach an account of the transformation of Ershadnagar resettlement camp is presented here which equally emphasizes the incentives of government and non-government organizations as well as the individual day to day struggle of the re-settlers over the past 42 years.

##### **4.1. Project Initiation in 1974**

After liberation war in 1971, a huge rural to urban migration occurred in Bangladesh. Centre for Urban Studies (CUS) conducted a survey that counts 1,73,000 such 'Busteebashi' population in Dhaka in 1974. An eviction project intended to 'Clean Dhaka' relocated these illegal slum dwellers and floating people in three resettlement camps. The three resettlement schemes area are (a) Dattapara in Tongi, (b) Chanpara in Demra, and (c) Bhashantek in Mirpur. They were constructed by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The resettlement capacity was nearly 70,000 people and the rest 1,00,000 stayed back in the city (CUS 1977). After establishment, the camp was called 'Mujib Nagar' or 'Dattapara resettlement camp'.

##### **4.2. Initial Condition of Dattapara Resettlement Camp**

The Dattapara resettlement project with a land area of 101 acres intended to resettle 5000 squatter families. At first, the area was just fallow agricultural land. The settlers did not have any housing provision. They started to build their own shelter with plastic sheets, thatch and bamboo structure. Some of them carried the portable parts of their evicted house (CI sheet, bamboo mat etc) from Dhaka and used those to rebuild shelter. At that time, people became jobless as industries and mills were inadequate in that region. Density of house and population around the camp was low. Some of them went back to Dhaka leaving their families here and came back occasionally with money from the city. The inhabitants struggled in inhuman condition. Epidemic broke out. A number of people left the camp which enabled others to grab a little more land for their houses. The NGO, TDH- Netherlands (Terres Des Hommes) has been working to help the people of the camp from the very beginning (Source: Interview of the inhabitants and NGO workers). The camp was named 'Zia Colony' informally by the then government stakeholders during the reign of President Ziaur Rahman.

##### **4.3. Provision of Housing**

The houses were initially built in self help policy. Government could provide nothing but land. With the death of project initiator Bangabandhu, the connection with government became weak. Later TDH and the Salvation Army House Building Programs provided housing materials to build 9 foot by 18 foot bamboo frame and matting huts. Each hut could accommodate 10 people. In 1979, 100 houses were destroyed in storm. The agencies helped to reconstruct them. But the daily maintenance was the job of the inhabitants.

In 1985 first government housing initiative came. Former President Hussain Mohammad Ershad involved National Housing Authority to construct 3444 semi pucca (brick wall, tin shaded) houses on 600 sft plot (20'x30'). The project involved minimum water supply facility, sanitation, roads and communication. So far the project completed 1016 houses in 30 acres of land. The name of the camp was gazette to be Ershadnagar since then. The rest remains unplanned with self built houses. The project is not yet complete and a few issues such as absence of titles of right of land, understanding gap between service providers and dwellers are held responsible for the non-completion of the project (Haque, 2007)

#### 4.4. Present Situation

With gradual northwards expansion of Dhaka, Ershadnagar became a part of peri-urban location of industrial concentration with increased job opportunity in the ready-made garment factories and other industries. With employment opportunity, economic stability and surplus capital for betterment of their living condition attained. Mostly investments are seen in improving individual houses and partially for education and training. According to population census 2011, around 33,346 people lives in Ershadnagar with an average household density of 4.10.

**Table 2: Population in Ershadnagar Resettlement Camp**

Parameter	2001	2011
Total Population	25,788	33,346
Population (Male)	12,997	16,324
Population (Female)	12,791	17,022
Total Household	6,302	8,145
Average Household	-----	4.10

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2011  
 (Population census, Dattapara, Ershadnagar)

The occupation is mostly garment worker, industrial labor, transport labor and day labors. No legal document of their tenure has been provided. Though they are trying to improve their living conditions gradually but due to lack of tenure, they live in an uncertainty with fear of eviction. (Haque, 2007) The table below shows the tenure of the inhabitants. Around 65.80% people lives in the house or the land given by government.

**Table 3: Tenancy in Ershadnagar Resettlement Camp.**

Tenancy	Percentage
House Owned (Tenant)	65.80
House Rented	33.60
Rent Free	0.70

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2011 (Social Statistics)

Therefore government initiative to provide land and later discrete attempts to provide house and infrastructural amenities during different political reign has been one side of formal organizational help, though not very 'organized' in manner. The other side is the NGO's who have provided significant help in not only improving the physical condition of the settlement but also promoted healthcare, education and training for employment opportunity. Among the government and non government initiatives, there remain uncountable stories of struggle and resilience of the inhabitants themselves who are constantly trying to improve their individual lives bit by bit. The incremental transformation at individual dwelling level is described later in the paper.

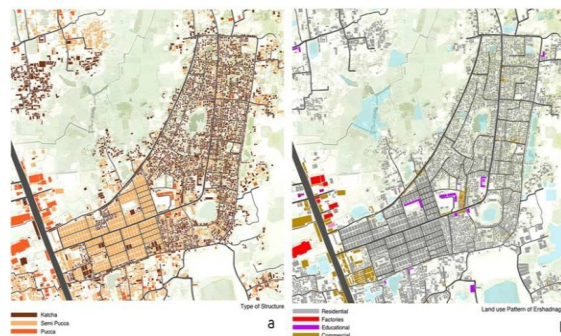
## 5. Ershadnagar as Place: Location, Locale and Sense of Place

To look at the Ershadnagar slum settlement as place, Agnew's place attributes: *location, locale* and *sense of place* mentioned beforehand has been brought to categorize the overall situation. With the geographical location and the locale or material setting of roads, houses, school, market, mosque etc; a sense of place has generated within the physical boundary of Ershadnagar. But the sense of attachment comes in its fullest form when we view the relationship of the inhabitants with their dwelling. Lombard links the idea of 'being' with 'building' and 'dwelling' in the urban informal settlements where high levels of involvement by people in their immediate living environment exist. Therefore, case studies involving their 'home' or incremental growth at dwelling level have been presented here to shed light on the gradual process of rooting or creating place attachment.

### 5.1. Location of the Resettlement Camp

Ershadnagar is situated in Dattapara, Tongi, and Gazipur district. It is within the ward no 49 of Gazipur City Corporation. In the northern outskirts of Dhaka, it falls just beside the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway and thus has well connected bus routes to the city.

### 5.2. Locale of the Resettlement Camp



**Fig 01:** (a) Structure Type and (b) Land use Pattern  
Source: RAJUK GIS Data 2008

The resettlement camp is bounded by embankment road. This area features two distinct road morphologies. The sectors near the main highway came under the government development scheme and have grid roads. The area is divided in 8 blocks; only 3 blocks went through government schemes. The roads are more organic when one moves away from the highway towards the back. This zone did not come under road infrastructure planning and a visible contrast between road systems from front to back is observed in GIS data.



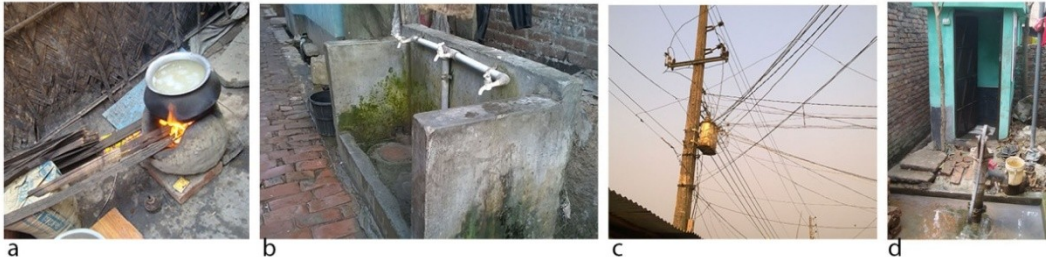
GIS data shows that almost half of the houses are semi-pucca specially the part that was built by government and the rest is mostly katcha. But from field survey, a number of emerging pucca (2-4 storied concrete and brick buildings) houses has been seen.

**Table 4: Housing Structures in Ershadnagar Resettlement Camp.**

Housing Structure	In percentage
Jhupri	0.20
Katcha	39.30
Semi-Pucca	59.90
Pucca	0.70

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2011 (Social Statistics )

Main roads are 20' wide and sub roads are 10'. Field survey shows much narrower winding roads ranging from 5' -10'. Open drains along roads are the main drainage system. Sanitary toilets were built with the help of some NGOs. But, there is lack of sanitary toilets in unplanned portion of the settlement.



**Fig 02 :** (a) Mud stove used, no gas connection (b) Community tap, water from submersible pump (c) Electricity line available (d) Tube well and toilet provided by NGO and govt. Source: Author

Very little green space is seen within houses due to lack of space. The school grounds are the only open spaces except for one Children Park in dilapidated condition. Mosques, bazaars (two market area named 'Baro (big) bazaar' and 'Chhoto (small) bazaar', a graveyard, schools are present and serving the community needs.



**Fig 03:** Neighborhood Meeting Spaces- (a) Bazaar, (b) School Field, and (c) Mosque  
 Source: Authors

No proper provision of public open space is available there. Children mostly play in streets and school playgrounds. For roaming, people go to a nearby open space called 'Nilachol Dighir Par' which is an open field beside water body within walking distance. But this land is owned by private developers and access of mass people can be denied anytime.



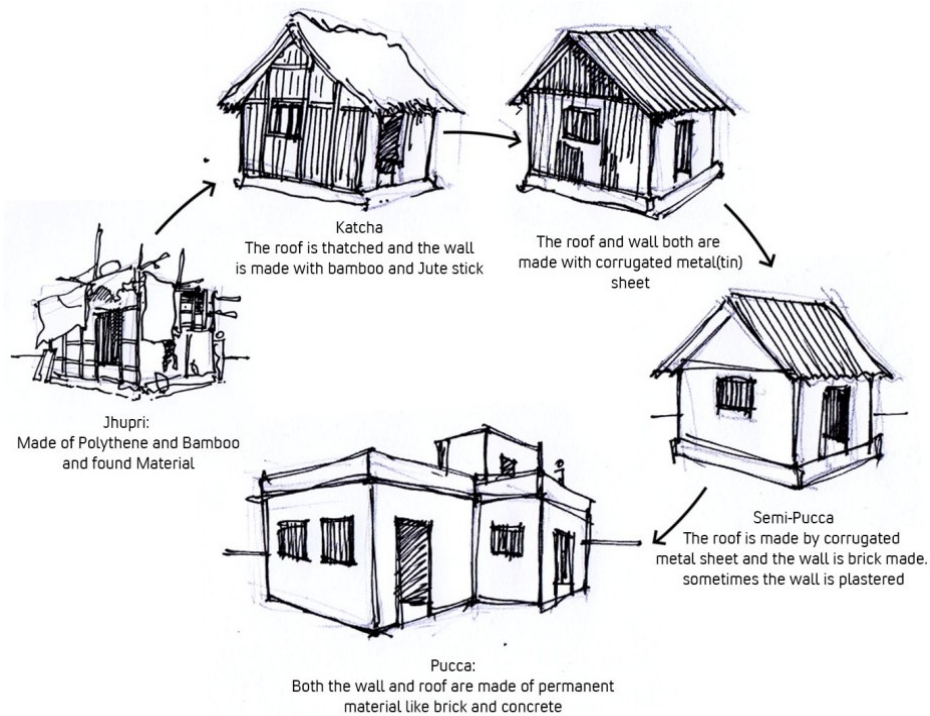
**Fig 04:** Public Urban Spaces- (a) Children Parks, and (b) Nilachol Lake side  
Source: Authors

### 5.3. Sense of Place

*Sense of place* refers to the idea of attachment between people and place. Unlike privately owned slums that the inhabitants rent temporarily or illegal urban informal settlements; Ershadnagar is situated on government provided land. This gives the inhabitants a somewhat feeling of ownership on their house and neighborhood which lessened the placelessness up to a certain level compared to other slums. The schools, bazaars, mosque, graveyard, healthcare centers have created an incrementally grown self sustained neighborhood community. But the most important attachment that people have is with their own houses. The adaptation and customization of their dwelling is the most powerful root that attaches them to this place. As they never had legal ownership of their land, the threat of eviction has always been there which eventually decreased with time. The original settlers were the floating population of the city therefore missing any link to their rural home that can be re established after 42 years which makes Ershadnagar the only home they have known.

### 6. Dwellings in Ershadnagar: incremental growth, adaptation and aspirations

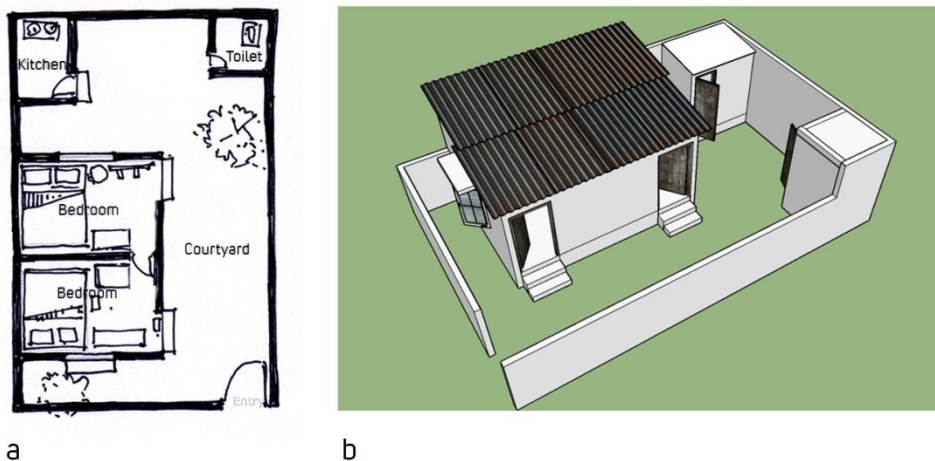
From homeless condition, the people have gradually developed their houses. From the polythene & bamboo frame 'Jhupri', they built katcha houses of mud, bamboo mat, thatched roof with relief material and self support. Now brick and corrugated sheet roofing semi pucca houses are seen widely as well as some Pucca brick and concrete house. Addition of an extra storey, extensions, shops etc have created many variations of houses. This customization of dwelling is the most primary level of attachment that they create. The incremental growth of their houses and adaptations resulted in many different architectural outputs to suit their spatial need. The eventual aspirations lead toward place-making where a pucca house- a symbol of permanence and durability which eliminates the derogatory notion attached with a temporary slum house and elevates their social standard.



**Fig 05:** Transformation of houses with economic betterment  
 Source: Author

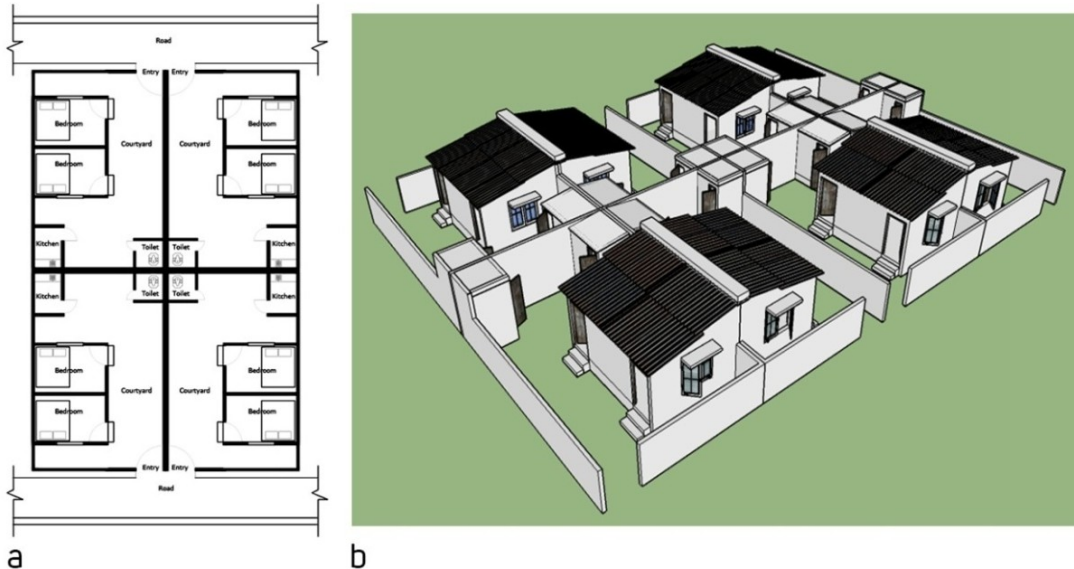
**6.1. Houses Built Under Government Scheme, 1985 (Case Study 1)**

This initiative was taken during the reign of former president HM Ershad but could be completed in only 30 acre land. These plots are 20'x30' in size (600 square feet) consisting two bedrooms in a row. A kitchen and a toilet are placed within an L shaped courtyard. Some of these houses are still unchanged such as this case study house 01. The house was inherited by the dwellers from their parents. Currently a brother and a sister are living in the two bedrooms with their own families.



**Fig 06:** (a) Plan of a government scheme house consisting 2 bedroom, a kitchen, a toilet and courtyard. (b) 3d Model of the scheme of a single unit

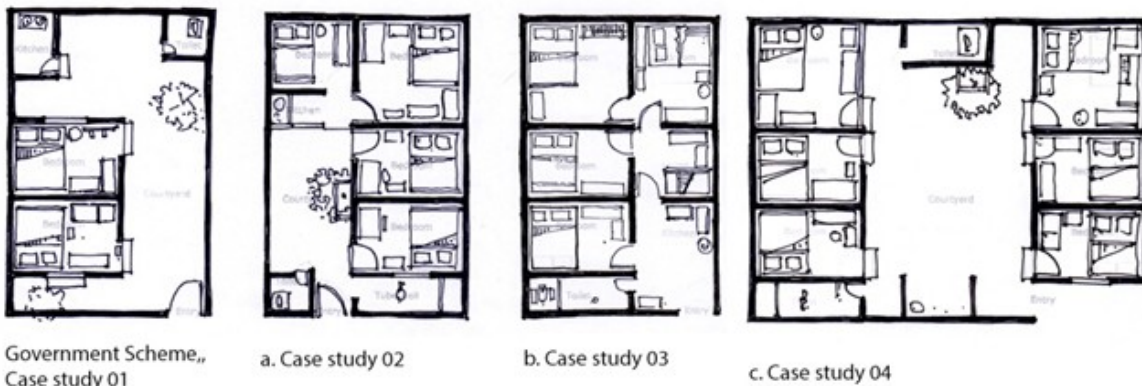
The houses are adjacent to each other and four of them together form a cluster adjoined by toilets and kitchens keeping the service zone of houses together. With these houses, a place attachment and belongingness was created which led them to improvise each house.



**Fig 07:** (a) Plan of a cluster of 4 houses sharing partition wall, connected by service core  
 (b) 3d model of cluster of 4 houses

### 6.2. Incremental Growth of Government Built Houses (Case Study 2, 3, 4 & 5)

The customization and adaptations done by the inhabitants to best suit their need has been analyzed in the following case studies.



**Fig 08:** The basic Plan of the government scheme with courtyard and (a) Plan of Case Study 02, where rooms are added keeping smaller court (b) Plan of Case Study 03, where the whole open area has been constructed (c) Plan of case Study 04, where two plans are merged and a large court has been created  
 Source: Authors

#### 6.2.1. Case Study 02

This house belongs to Mr. Abdul Kader who moved to this area with his parents in 1975 and now lives there with his wife and children. The house plan here has been adapted to make room for more indoor space. The kitchen and toilet has been relocated to add two more bedrooms. Now the toilet is adjacent to the entry and the kitchen is located in a semi outdoor veranda adjacent

to the newly added bedrooms. A piece of open to sky space still remains with cement finished flooring. A planter box is placed there for vegetation purpose. The house is painted green and the owner has tried his best to add aesthetic value through paint and plaster.

### 6.2.2. Case Study 03

This House has taken up almost all the open space for extension. Replacing the toilet and kitchen, two more bedrooms and a semi outdoor living space has been added. Cooking is done in the little open space that is left.

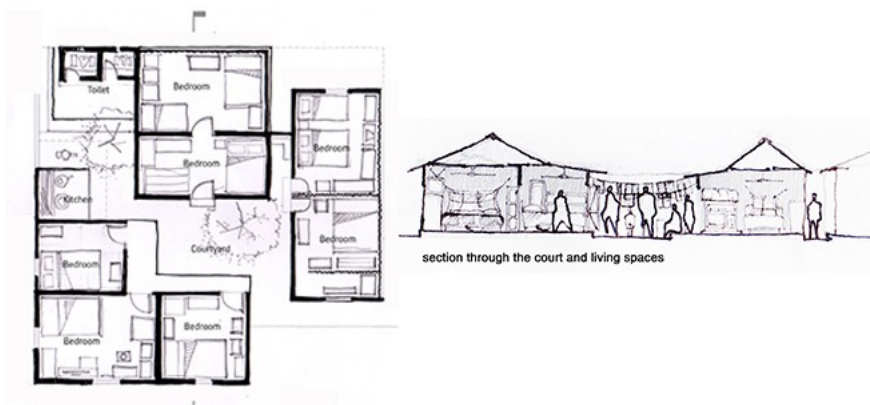
### 6.2.3. Case Study 04

This house poses a unique situation where two owners have integrated their plots omitting the wall in between. One family consists of an extended family comprising of a mother and her two sons with their families. The other family is a nuclear family with two unmarried children. This plot merging allowed them to enjoy a larger open courtyard. Both families have added an extra bedroom replacing the original kitchen. The new kitchen is a semi outdoor space in the courtyard. The original toilets of the two plots were adjacent to each other and now integrated into one toilet. The tube well zone works as bath. This is a good example of plot merging and its benefits.

## 6.3. Spontaneously Developed Semi Pucca House

### 6.3.1. Case Study 05

This house is a unique one with rooms arranged around a courtyard. This house falls in the unplanned zone of Ershadnagar and no government scheme house is seen here. Six families live around the courtyard in six rooms. Some of the families are part of the owner's extended family and some have rented a room. The owner's bedroom has semi outdoor extensions which act as veranda by day and turns into sleeping space at night. Two toilets and a shared kitchen serve all the families. This service part is zoned in a backward corner of the court and separated from main living zone.



**Fig 08:** Plan and section of a spontaneously developed Semi -pucca House  
Source: Authors

### 6.3.2. Case Study 06

This house is a semi pucca shop house. It has two bedrooms where two related families are living. The owner of the roadside room has created room for a shop towards the road from their bedroom space. To mitigate the inadequacy of space they have added a room on their bedroom to accommodate their children. The walls are brick built on the ground floor. Over that a wooden floor is added on which walls of corrugated tin have been added to construct the first floor. The upper floor is accessed by ladder which is also a little extended towards the road than the ground floor.



Fig 09: Plan and section of a spontaneously developed Semi-pucca House  
Source: Authors

#### 6.4. Spontaneously Developed Pucca Houses Indicating the Aspiration of the Dweller (Case Study 07)

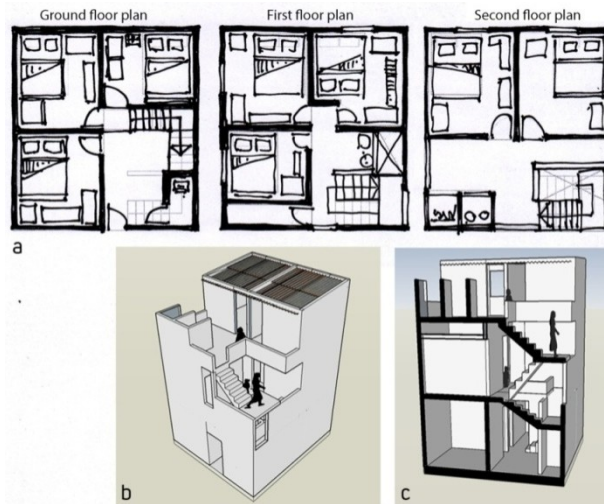


Fig 10: (a) Plan of a spontaneously developed 3 storied building within a small plot, (b) 3d view of the model and (c) Section of the innovative stairs to utilize spaces (Source: Authors)

##### 6.4.1. Case Study 07

Case study 08 is a 3 storied Pucca building. The house is rented to people who gave loans to the owner to build the house. They will not pay any rent until the loans are covered. The ground floor contains 3 bedrooms and a toilet. The first floor contains three rooms, a toilet and an open slot beside the stair used as kitchen. The second floor has two rooms and a small roof top space with two slots serving as kitchen. The plan of the house is not proper; sometimes the stair steps are too high to reduce space for stair. Yet it shows their aspiration to live in permanent buildings and innovative way of finance management.

## 7. Conclusion

In this paper, Ershadnagar, the 42 year old peri urban slum of Dhaka has been viewed under the theoretical ideas of 'place' and the transformation has been stated as 'place making' in order to recognize the day to day activities of people in construction of a place along with formal organizational initiatives. This analytic approach enables us to look at the dynamics of slum as inherent part of the city without marginalizing it with a disparaging stigma. From the analysis, what made Ershadnagar into a place to its inhabitants is observed. Although the settlers used to be floating people before coming here, the initial provision of land could not do much as long as job opportunity and economic stability was absent. With increasing job opportunity in nearby area and transport facility connecting them to the city, the number of people leaving Ershadnagar decreased. While NGO's tried to improve the livability of the area by providing construction material for houses, health facility, water and sanitation, education etc supports; the government discretely tried to plan certain areas with road network and housing provision. Thus with the government provided location, a material setting of locale is ongoing. In the neighborhood level schools, mosque, bazaars, inadequate open spaces around serves in creating a sense of place. House plays the pivotal role in place making process as the fundamental root creating place attachment. The adaptation and incremental growth of their houses are relative to their economic condition. To maintain status quo or to get rid of the derogative notion attached with impermanent houses, they aspire to live in pucca buildings. Adaptive design solution as well as innovative finance management is also seen in this regard. Antithetical to this need for stability and permanence, there remains the question of tenure. Lack of legal land ownership impedes development and investments by the inhabitants. Though the outcome of handing over legal ownership is much dissented, but lack of tenure is definitely hindering the 'people and place' as well as the 'city and place' interactions. Lack of tenure creates transient place ontology which is more related to notions of non-place or placelessness. Within the limitation of this paper, the right approach regarding tenure issue cannot be determined yet this could lead to further research including the voice of inhabitants, policy makers and other stake holders.

Therefore, improved livability parameters, employment and economic opportunity and rightful dwelling add to the integration of slums as place within the city while threat of eviction, lack of tenure, hindrance to economic growth and poor living condition adds to the transient mobility. If physical planning and policy making can go above statistical data and adopt place making approach where people and planning can go hand in hand; development initiatives could be more humane and closer to facts.

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