THE PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF ESTABLISHING INFORMAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES IN HERITAGE CITIES:
A STUDY ON THREE HISTORIC SITES IN SRI – LANKA.

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When view and experience the historic properties, every one realizes that they dates back to thousands years back. On the other hand by studying the layers as the historical monuments, one can observe the cultural changes occurred in each time period. Due to rapid urbanization these historical sites have been occupied by various categories of people. (Low income, middle income.) Then the population of the historic quarter was increased and deterioration of the historical monument also increased.

Meanwhile history lovers introduced the preservation methods to conserve valuable historical quarters. According to this preservation method, passive conservation caused creating dead cities and active conservation gave the permission to including the living functions. Most of the people prefer the active conservation than passive conservation. These historical quarters do not cater to modern needs and demands. With the increasing demands and needs in day to day life, money become the major factor governing the human life style.

Hence the city became commercialized and people started formal and informal economic activities to earn money. Thus, it introduced commercialized facade to the built environment and this was considered as positive developing phenomena in the world. The occupants have done various changes, modifications, and adaptations to the built environment in these cities to conduct their commercial activities and as a result social and spatial conflicts arose. As a result people lost the historical architectural character in the heritage cities and it was understood the importance of taking immediate action, as situation would become more critical in the future. To solve these critical problems the influence made by the informal economic activities is greater with small-scale self-employment, temporary spaces and minimizing the damages to the natural and built environment.

It is found if the original design was flexible it is possible to prevent the problems occurred by the informal economic activities to heritage cities. Thus, it is a great responsibility of the designer to think deeply about the present trends as well as the economic activities to adopt new design criteria for heritage cities in the future which would help both activities to function without a conflict.
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INTRODUCTION

1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

When we view and experience the historic properties, everyone realize that they take to the thousands years backs. Also that the cultural changes occurred in each time periods could observe as the layer in the historical monuments.

With the modern development of the world city population started to grow gradually. Population density of the city center was increased rapidly due to the rural urban migration. As a result people even tend to use the historic quarter. Due to this, the simple life style and personal requirements of people became more complex and their needs increased. People lost their liking for agriculture and focused their attention on earning quick money. This made city more congested, more competitive in obtain basic amenities. Then created a great demand for land in urban areas, where land is limited. So, that ordinary people, who did not have sufficient money, occupied state land by force. This situation caused developed the unauthorized structures in historic center.

Above situation greatly effected and historic monuments speedily start to destruction and deteriorated in historical monumental cities. Therefore to avoid this situation various preservation methods have introduced in order to conserve the historical cities.

To preserve some European cities as a historic quarter, they turn them in to the uninhabitable places. This seems to place that these objects are a "look at monuments". This conservation method is called as Passive Conservation. As a result of this conservation, the maintenance of the historic quarters has declined rapidly and tends to deteriorate speedily and convert into dead cities.

Other method is the Active Conservation and it gives permission for alterations, repair, and restoration erection, according to the modern living functions. These conservation policies and ordinance create live historic cities.
Hence the population in the active conservation cities had grown day by day and their requirements were increased in physical need and psychologically needs with ever increasing their economical aspects. Economy is the mains determine factor of the personal life pattern. Therefore new dimensions are frequently being added to the historic quarters as a result of the changing economic needs of people.

Informal economic activities are one such dimension which can be cater to local and foreign visitors who are visiting this great monumental sites. It has no hard and fast rule for managing the organization. It can be operated form small scale and not needed skill labour or large capital. The activities are irregular and mostly carried out on an informal manner. Low and middle-income people can handle these activities easily. These street operated informal economic activities have done a great service when the historic cities turn to commercialize. When regenerate the urban life conseriving with the other world countries this informal sector city does a great deal for economic development.

2. NEED OF THE STUDY

All the historic quarters had designed according to the Socio-cultural background of the each center. These are not designed according to the future needs of the society. Therefore changes take place in socio and economic fabric in each generation to adjust to the present needs of the people. In this environment the demands of development are felt with increasing force. The buildings have to be adapted to provide the comforts of modern living. Infrastructure has to be upgraded to suit modern requirements. As the Socio-Cultural and economic fabric changes the physical environment faced a big threat to its historical architectural character and which of course, leads to the problems and prospects with in the periphery.

The other reason is the too much emphasis on conservation in wrong direction may sometimes eventually lead to dead or museum cities. This has not been proven successful especially in historic urban nodes, with increased population growth and scarcity of resources.
On the contrary uncontrolled development to historic sites result in disintegration and chaos both in physical fabric and social structure. For best result, the cultural changes could be used to its optimum potential in urban conservation. This study therefore focuses its attention to the conservation procedure and economic activities on historic Dead City effected on both the built environment and the city life.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

As mentioned in the introduction there is an increasing trend for operation informal economic activities in the historic city. It is a tangible phenomenon and it will be a design determinant factor in cities in the future. Therefore that aspect should be investigated further and a study is essential.

In the historical cities this situation is critical due to scarcity of buildable land and pressing economical needs. Therefore the professional intervention is essential and this aspect should be given serious thought and handled properly. The study analyze the problems and prospects of the economic activities establish in heritage sites according to the architectural, aesthetic, historic and social and spiritual or symbolic values of historic quarters. It is hopes that this study will emphasize the critical changers that are destroying the historical significance and architectural character of the historic sites.

The different type of informal economic activities, the scale of activity, the spatial problems will examine thoroughly, to cater for the increasing future demand. Then in future designing the aspect can be incorporate.
4. METHOD OF STUDY

At the beginning of the literature review based on the subject area was carried out, from that the information of the function and role of the historic site. Modern trends in preservation and how to involve the commercial activities in modern city and Heritage sites to promote the living historic quarter were collected. These were used to organize the first chapter. Second chapter is the case study based on selected three historic site in Sri Lanka in this chapter will be discussed above selected 3 historical city with assessment of the impact of informal economic activities on those Heritage cities.

Third chapter is the analytical chapter, which is identification of problems, and prospects of establishing informal economic activities in above selected three historical sites. In doing so the study followed the following procedure,

1. Visiting the selected sites and examine the kind of informal activities.
2. Look and note the existing functions, its hierarchy, formal and informal activities happening in and around it, the problems and prospects of them and their effect to the heritage site etc.
3. Carry out informal discussions with randomly selected people and get their views and idea upon the integration of such activities.
4. A photographic survey of the selected cities according to the Analysis of the results.

5. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.

The study was limited to three type of living historic sites in Sri Lanka owing to personal experience. The Informal activities inside the premises were mainly studied. Three different heritage cities have been selected to this case study among the existing others. Because of there different nature of historical events. The demarcations of the selected cities are Galle fort, Kandy inner city area and Kataragama religious center.