

## **Impact of Urban Regeneration on Historical Buildings: The Case of Addis Ababa, Arada Sub-city**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this research is to provide a recommendation on how historical buildings in Addis Ababa should be preserved for the future generations. Urban regeneration is not being practiced due to governmental policy clash, lack of attention, biased focus on modernization rather than maintaining the traditional form of the architectural design. These are some of the causes for the historical buildings to be ruined; whereas they have economic, social and historical benefits. To this end, this research used both qualitative and quantitative research methods by using questionnaires and interview. It was conducted in Addis Ababa, Arada Sub City where most of the historical buildings are found. It also used Random Sampling Technique and selected thirty educated citizens to share their experience about how they perceive the historical buildings. In addition, two organizations were interviewed to find out how historical buildings are being protected as heritage sites.

**Keywords:** urban regeneration, historical buildings, Addis Ababa, Arada Sub-city

### **1. Introduction**

#### **1.1. Background of the Study**

There are many historical buildings in Addis Ababa among which some sites are dilapidated and ruined due to many reasons. Therefore, the city is losing the economic benefit, and the society tends to forget about these sites. Among the researches that were done locally with the focus on the development of historical buildings, some put the role of historical buildings in the tourism development as a major objective, and concluded that the importance of historical building development has a role in tourism industry. This focuses on the importance of historical buildings on the benefit it gives to the society and the negative impact of urban regeneration on historical buildings (Getahun Almaw, 2018). This research topic has been chosen in order to examine how the sites are maintained and the level of attention given to these historical heritages. Urban regeneration has a strong connection with tourism because both effectively contribute to socio-economic growth, urban change, long term sustainability and also tourism is a key to the resolution of social problems caused by economic decay. There are two benefits that can be mentioned to explain the necessity of urban regeneration, namely, financial and social benefits. The financial benefit to a city and the local government is that it enables it to collect tax and preserve the historical heritages from physical harm. On the other hand, it has social benefits in that it connects people and teaches the history of Ethiopia; it shows the historical footprints of the country and its historical relations with other countries. This research paper ventures on answering the

questions and gives recommendations on how historical buildings should be protected and preserved for the future generations.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

There are historical buildings in Addis Ababa that are being destroyed and used for other purposes. For example, the Sheik Hojelle palace, which is located in Gullele sub city, has been registered as heritage but it has not got much attention of protecting the building. The building is under the Kebele administration and people are now living in it. According to Tesfaye Getnet (2019), the palace is currently in a dangerous situation and some of the walls of the buildings have been cracking because there has not been repair or maintenance done on it. Another example is Abyssinia Bank, which was founded in 1905 as an Anglo- Egyptian company. Designed by Sebastiano Catagna. This first bank in Addis Ababa has recently been used as a store room. New buildings are surrounding the historical building affecting the area of the bank. It seems that there is high aspiration for modernization than for maintaining traditional urban forms and architectural design, and so it is losing the historical benefit of the building. This could be due to lack of awareness from the society, lack of government attention, and lack of fund to preserve these historical buildings. Historical buildings matter because they are irreplaceable and if not protected, they will be lost and not passed to future generations. Historical buildings often represent something famous or important to the manifestation of the civilization of people during the construction. Historical buildings create connections with the present and the future. Therefore, relevant government bodies should collaborate or work together to protect the historical buildings from any kind of damage, and give awareness to the society and their importance to conserve them. These buildings can be a tourist attraction if they are well maintained.

The purpose of this research is to show some way forward concerning the importance of preserving these historical buildings as a means to show the civilization to the people at present and the future. As these historical buildings instill in the public and the professionals concerned in this area of study, it will be used as a map of the political, economic, cultural, environmental and social status of the past and what it implies to the present and future generations.

## **1.3. Objective of the Study**

### **1.3.1 General Objective**

To explore the urban regeneration practice on historical buildings and how they are protected as heritage.

### **1.3.2. Specific Objectives**

- Assessing how historical buildings are preserved and protected;
- Examining how urban regeneration is affecting the historical buildings; and
- Identifying how citizens perceive the historical buildings and the impact of modernization in an urban sense.

#### 1.4. Research Questions

- How many of the historical buildings are well maintained or are destroyed?
- How does urban regeneration affect the historical buildings?
- What are the causes for the historical buildings to be dilapidated?
- What is the solution to these historical buildings to be protected from physical harm?

#### 1.5. Significance of the Study

Historical buildings are part of immovable heritage, and heritages have aesthetic, socio cultural, scientific and economic value by creating job opportunities. Thus, the significance of this study is to build good imagery for Addis Ababa, protect the environment from pollution and decreasing unemployment.

#### 1.6. Delimitation of the Study

The scope of this study focuses in Addis Ababa, Arada sub city where most of the historical buildings are located.

#### 1.7 Limitation of the study

This study had certain limitations; one of which was the pandemic (corona virus). The other limitation was getting certain information from different organizations when the researcher wanted data for his research purpose.

### I. Definition of terms

#### 1.7.1. Heritage

The etymological word of heritage is “Patrimonium” which is a union of “Pater” and “Munus”. It is derived from a Latin word which means “the duty of father”. So, it is a set of goods that is inherited from ancestors and can be passed on to future generations. Two groups of scholars tried to define heritage, based on their point of view; the first said that heritage is something inherited from the past and has a great deal of value for the present society; and the second said that it is culturally constructed and they are constantly made, remade and fashioned.

Heritage can be classified as cultural, natural and mixed heritage.

#### A. Cultural heritage

According to Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage (ARCCH), “Cultural heritage is an integration of tradition and activities as well as human like habits, customs, stories, skills, dance, food etc.” Cultural heritages can also be classified as:

- **Tangible cultural heritages** are heritages that can be seen and felt and include movable and immovable heritages.
- **Intangible cultural heritages** are heritages that cannot be felt or seen, like values, norms, beliefs, and customs.

## B. Natural heritage

It includes fauna, flora and many biological and geological features. There are four components of natural heritages to be considered for conserving, safeguarding and restoring ecological balance. These are ethical, affective, ecological, and aesthetic components.

## C. Mixed heritage

It consists of both values of natural and cultural properties. These are rarely seen all over the world, and most of them are cultural landscapes.

There are means of conserving heritage tourism resources. These are:

- **Preservation:** It refers to a situation in which the choice is made to maintain the site in its existing stage.
- **Restoration:** There are two kinds of restoration. The first one is putting a displaced piece back to the way it was; and the second is removing the pieces that have been added.
- **Renovation:** It is making changes to a site while still maintaining a portion of its historical character.
- **Urban Regeneration (renewal):** It is a complete and integrated vision and action which ends up in resolving a city's troubles and seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area. It attempts to deal with obsolescent in an effort to extend the useful lives of buildings and historic urban centers.

### 1.7.1.1. Challenges of Urban Regeneration

- **Clash of policies on new development and conservation:** Lack of coordinated efforts between and among government agencies that are charged with different responsibilities.
- **Modernization VS maintaining traditional forms:** In developing countries, there are high aspirations for modernization than maintaining the traditional urban forms and architectural designs.
- **Difficulty in maintaining high quality environments as the arrival of tourists increases:** It leads to pollution of soil, noise, visual and air when the sites are overcrowded.
- **Difficulty in balancing the needs of tourists and local community:** It is difficult to balance the need of tourist's culture and local culture in a way that doesn't offend the residents.

## 2. Research Design and Methodology

### 2.1 Research Design

This research has chosen to use the descriptive research design because it is a method which is created by gathering, analyzing and presenting collected data. There are two methodologies that are used for the research. The first one is primary data through interview and

questionnaire. The second one is secondary data by going through published books and documents.

## 2.2. Population and Sampling Technique

According to the heritage data base, there are 315 historical buildings. In Arada Sub City there are buildings that are dilapidated, well maintained and unused. Taking the whole census is impossible to do, and so the research selected to use the simple random sampling and applied to take a sample from 30 people; among them there are authorities, employees and citizens living in Addis Ababa to share their experience and how they perceive the dilapidation of historical buildings.

## 2.3. Source of Data

In this study, the researcher used both primary and secondary data. This kind of source helps the researcher to assess and analyze the relevant data and give recommendations based on the objectives that were mentioned.

## 2.4. Methods of Data Collection

There are different types of data collection methods. For this research, three methods were used: questionnaires, interview, and documents and records.

## 2.5. Data Analysis Method

The method of data analysis that the research attempted to use is descriptive data analysis which asks the question, “What is happening to the historical buildings?” As it answers the question through questionnaire and interview, so it can be easy to collect and analyze data.

## 3. Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

### 3.1 Data Presentation

After what has been gained in Chapter One and Chapter Two, this research has gathered data through two questionnaires; one is from the educated citizens and the other from two organizations which are Addis Ababa Culture and Tourism Bureau and Arada Sub City Administration.

This research has asked thirty educated/literate citizens to fill fifteen questions that were presented in the specified questionnaire. Here are the results of their answers that enabled the researcher to assess the impact of urban regeneration on historical buildings.

#### The respondents from both genders

| Parameter    | Number of respondents | Percentage  |
|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Male         | 16                    | 53.3%       |
| Female       | 14                    | 46.7%       |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>30</b>             | <b>100%</b> |

#### Educational level of the respondents

| Parameter    | Number of respondents | Percentage  |
|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Diploma      | 1                     | 3.3%        |
| Degree       | 28                    | 93.3%       |
| Masters      | 1                     | 3.3%        |
| Above        | 0                     | 0%          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>30</b>             | <b>100%</b> |

They were asked if they think historical buildings are being protected.

#### Historical buildings are being protected

| Parameter    | Number of respondents | Percentage  |
|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Yes          | 5                     | 16.7%       |
| No           | 25                    | 83.3%       |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>30</b>             | <b>100%</b> |

The respondents were asked if the historical buildings have been given attention as a heritage although Addis Ababa is growing demographically and economically from time to time.

#### Historical buildings have been given attention

| Parameter    | Number of respondents | Percentage  |
|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Yes          | 8                     | 26.7%       |
| No           | 22                    | 73.3%       |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>30</b>             | <b>100%</b> |

The respondents were asked if the government gives a thorough consideration and information about the historical buildings in Addis Ababa.

#### Government Attention

| Parameter    | Number of respondents | Percentage  |
|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Yes          | 9                     | 30%         |
| No           | 20                    | 66.7%       |
| Neutral      | 1                     | 3.3%        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>30</b>             | <b>100%</b> |

The above table shows that the government does not give any thorough consideration and information to the community about the historical buildings.

The respondents were also asked if there are better ways that enable the government to focus on more engagement of the citizens to increase awareness of the historical buildings in Addis Ababa. There were options given to them. These are:

- Participation
- Community involvement
- Incorporating such awareness in school curriculum
- Other mechanisms

Here are the results of what the respondents said:

### Community Involvement & Participation

| Parameter   | Number of respondents | Percentage  |
|---|-----------------------|-------------|
| Participation   | 10                    | 33.3%       |
| Community involvement                                     | 7                     | 23.3%       |
| Incorporating such awareness in school curriculum         | 6                     | 20%         |
| Other Mechanism   | 2                     | 6.6%        |
| Both Participation and Incorporating in school curriculum | 1                     | 3.3%        |
| All of the given  | 4                     | 13.3%       |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>30</b>             | <b>100%</b> |

The respondents signified other mechanisms; the research takes the common idea of what the respondents said. This is

- Identifying the historical buildings and preparing a master plan in which it can be recorded and protected.

The respondents were asked if the historical buildings are important to Addis Ababa.

### Importance of Historical Buildings

| Parameter    | Number of respondents | Percentage  |
|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Yes          | 28                    | 93.3%       |
| No           | 0                     | 0%          |
| Neutral      | 2                     | 6.7%        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>30</b>             | <b>100%</b> |

The other question the respondents were asked is if urban regeneration is affecting the historical buildings.

### Effect of Urban Regeneration

| Parameter                 | Number of respondents | Percentage  |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Those who have agreed     | 20                    | 66.7%       |
| Those who have disagreed  | 7                     | 23.3%       |
| Those who strongly agreed | 2                     | 6.7%        |
| Those that are neutral    | 1                     | 3.3%        |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>30</b>             | <b>100%</b> |

The respondents have rated about the present generation giving attention to the historical buildings

### Present Generation Attention

| Given Rate   | Number of respondents | Percentage  |
|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| 10% - 20%    | 2                     | 6.7%        |
| 20% - 30%    | 6                     | 20%         |
| 30% - 40%    | 11                    | 36.7%       |
| 40% - 50%    | 4                     | 13.3%       |
| 50% - 60%    | 3                     | 10%         |
| 60% - 70%    | 0                     | 0%          |
| 70% - 80%    | 3                     | 10%         |
| 80% - 90%    | 0                     | 0%          |
| 90% - 100%   | 0                     | 0%          |
| Neutral      | 1                     | 3.3%        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>30</b>             | <b>100%</b> |

They have been asked if the big projects that are being built are affecting the historical buildings.

### Effects of Big Projects

| Parameter    | Number of respondents | Percentage  |
|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Yes          | 24                    | 80%         |
| No           | 5                     | 16.7%       |
| Neutral      | 1                     | 3.3%        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>30</b>             | <b>100%</b> |

They have been asked if they think dwellers should live in the historical buildings.

### Historical Buildings as Living Place

| Parameter    | Number of respondents | Percentage  |
|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Yes          | 9                     | 30%         |
| No           | 20                    | 66.7%       |
| Neutral      | 1                     | 3.3%        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>30</b>             | <b>100%</b> |

The educated citizens have been asked the level of their understanding about urban regeneration.

### Understanding about Urban Regeneration

| Parameter    | Number of respondents | Percentage  |
|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Minimum      | 3                     | 10%         |
| More or less | 14                    | 46.7%       |
| Very well    | 12                    | 40%         |
| Neutral      | 1                     | 3.3%        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>30</b>             | <b>100%</b> |

The educated citizens have been asked what the role of historical buildings are to them as an individual, as part of the society and as an Ethiopian citizen. There were four choices given to them and here are the results:



### **Role of historical buildings**

| <b>Parameter</b>   | <b>Number of respondents</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|--|------------------------------|-------------------|
| I didn't know historical buildings could play role in the three dimensions.  | 1                            | 3.3%              |
| It is much an individual perspective than it is social and citizens.   | 3                            | 10%               |
| It is a means of defining identity in the social and citizen sense.  | 25                           | 83.3%             |
| I do not fully grasp the relationship between historical buildings and its role to the urban fabric and the society. | 1                            | 3.3%              |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>30</b>                    | <b>100%</b>       |

The next two are short answers about their thoughts.

The respondents were asked why they think historical buildings are being ruined and half of the respondents have agreed that it is due to lack of awareness, lack of maintenance, lack of knowledge and neglect or ignorance.

The last question that the respondents have been asked was about what should be done in order to protect the historical buildings and they responded as follows:

- Creating awareness to the community;
- The government policies should give adequate attention to the historical buildings; and
- Preservation and restoration that have been removed are a must.

The research interviewed two organizations that are related to historical buildings. These are Addis Ababa Culture and Tourism Bureau, and Arada Sub City Administration. Both organizations were asked the same questions and this research attempted to synchronize what they have answered.

The first question was about how urban regeneration is affecting the historical buildings, and here is the answer:

➤ “Addis Ababa is an old city that was established 134 years ago. Most of the historical buildings are in Arada Sub city. The first historical buildings are:

- Emperor Menelik School
- Arada Post
- Seitan Bet
- Abyssinia Bank
- Mazegaja Bet
- Hager Fikir Theatre
- Taitu Hotel
- Addis Ababa Municipality Bureau

Historical buildings have put their influence during the past period and left their legacy as well as significance for the present and the future. During that time with the government's authority, famous architects from different countries built tremendous buildings. These historical buildings tend to be tourist attractions, and for the sake of keeping and maintaining the identity of the city, should be preserved for the next generation.

When it comes to the present time, these heritages unknowingly are being destroyed when urban regeneration is being practiced in Arada 6 buildings, in Gulele 1 building, in Yeka 3 buildings, in Kirkos 2 buildings and so on. These all happened during the establishment Addis Ababa Culture and Tourism Bureau. This is due to urban regeneration i.e., when Addis Ababa is regenerating the heritages are being destroyed due to lack of study, governmental policy clash and when new buildings are being built without the consideration of the past heritages.

The **second question** was how many historical buildings in Addis Ababa are protected or destroyed?

- Addis Ababa Culture and Tourism Bureau was established in 2001 E.C. After it was established, the first thing it did was registering and giving protection for the historical buildings. It started registering in 2003 E.C. and it conducts research every five years. In general, there are about 315 historical buildings after it has been revisited.
- When it comes to Arada Sub city, there are 202 historical buildings that are protected but 6 were ruined.

The Third question that was asked was what urban regeneration contributed to Addis Ababa? It has been answered as:

Urban regeneration is not only important in a capital level but a national level. Addis Ababa's modernization from time to time is owing to the city's being the home of African Union. Urban regeneration has brought social, political and economic significance to the city. Side by side this, heritages should be protected and developed.

The fourth question that was asked was, what the remedies both organizations propose so as to protect the historical buildings from physical harm.

Arada Sub City Culture and Tourism Office responded saying that , it is involving professionals to protect the heritages. For those that are nearly being destroyed, the office communicates with Addis Ababa Culture and Tourism Bureau and the bureau registers the historical buildings, and maintains those that were caused due to natural and man-made disaster.

The fifth question that was asked was regarding the challenges being faced while protecting the historical buildings.

- The rightful owner of property of the heritage sites is unclear and this made it hard to protect the historical buildings.
- Urban regeneration is also another factor because of lack of study and research; the historical buildings are being ruined one way or another.
- Lack of awareness is a factor. Wealthy people buy the area where the historical buildings are and try to build new buildings around it .

The last questions that were asked to both the Addis Ababa Culture and Tourism Bureau, and the Arada Sub City Administration to respond with whom these two organizations collaborate, and the following were the answers:

- Addis Ababa Culture and Tourism Bureau works with Arada Sub City office.
- Arada Sub-city's head office strongly intends to meet up with the Federal Housing Corporation to enable Addis Ababa's Culture and Tourism Bureau for the betterment of the protection of heritage buildings and sites.

In addition, the Arada Sub city Culture and Tourism Office is working closely with:

- Addis Ababa Culture and Tourism Bureau
- Authority of Research and Conservation of Heritage
- Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church

### **3.1.2. Data Analysis**

After all the necessary data collection, tabulated figures have been acquired. According to the general and specific objective listed in Chapter One, 83.3% of the respondents has agreed that historical buildings are not being protected. This implies that the majority concurs to the fact that historical buildings should be given due attention.

Furthermore, although Addis Ababa is a city that is growing demographically and economically from time to time, based on the findings assessed, 73.3% of the respondents fall under the category that the historical buildings have not been given due attention as a heritage - not only in Arada sub city but in Addis Ababa entirely. However, the remaining 26.7% of the respondents think otherwise. This accentuates that the government should give a thorough consideration to the community through different mechanisms of educational approaches, such as media, that emulate a positive influence to the mass,.

Urban regeneration is about improving the social, environmental and economic lifestyle. But during the practice of it, the historical buildings are being ruined one way or the other due to lack of study and lack of communication between concerned government offices. Thus, based on the findings collected 93.3% of the respondents agreed that urban regeneration is affecting the historical buildings. On the other hand, 93.3% of the respondents have said that historical buildings are important for Addis Ababa as these heritages are priceless properties and losing them would cost a major financial loss.

The other thing that should be considered is that when the respondents were asked what the role of historical buildings to them as an individual, as part of the society and as an Ethiopian citizen is, 83.3% of the respondents agreed that it is a means of defining identity in the social and citizen sense; the remaining 10% said that it is much of an individual perspective than it is social and citizens. This implies that these buildings from the past should be maintained because it shows the history of urban civilization.

In Addis Ababa, there are 315 historical buildings. From those 202 buildings are found in Arada sub city. This clearly shows that Arada has more heritages than other sub cities. The problem is seen when the buildings are diminishing as modern buildings are being built. There are historical buildings that were almost going to be demolished. For example, “Seitan Bet”, which is one of the oldest cinemas in Addis Ababa is one of them. If it had not been for the influence of Arada sub city through communication between different organizations, it would have been destroyed.

### **3.1.3. Data Interpretation**

Historical buildings are immovable cultural heritages that play a significant role for tourism development if protected and preserved as they show the history of the past and for their beautiful architectural design.

However, when a city is being developed, historical buildings should be considered. In Addis Ababa historical buildings do not get much attention for preservation. According to the findings, this is because wealthy people tend to construct new buildings where the historical buildings are, and the heritages do not get any concern of protection nor preservation.

### **3.1.2 Summary and Discussion**

Urban regeneration brings improvement in economic, physical, social and environmental conditions of an area. Although it has its significances, it has also its challenges; one of which is the protection of historical buildings. Well known researchers have agreed that when urban regeneration is being practiced in historical areas, there is an attempt of destroying the heritages due to lack of attention and knowledge.

Furthermore, historical buildings are buildings that possess architectural, aesthetic and historical values. Historical buildings in Addis Ababa are heritages that are irreplaceable and priceless properties. Consequently, at present, some of the historical buildings have not been given attention due to high aspiration for modernization than maintaining the traditional architectural design.

The respondents (employees) from the two organizations had underlined that the remedies to protect the historical buildings are:

- Including the historical buildings in the master plan so that they won't get affected
- Creating awareness in the community in order for them to feel the sense of belonging.
- Coordination between and among relevant government offices.

## 4 .Conclusion and Recommendations

### 4.1 Conclusion

Cities, where historical buildings are located, are among the most prominent tourist attractions that play a significant role for tourism development. That shows the history of urban civilization or how a city gets its identity. When a city is being developed, modern touches and technologies are introduced but less often are the historical buildings considered and maintained. In addition, the viability and identity of a city is presented by the imageability of the buildings and physical construct of the urban region. This does not come as a coincidence but as the findings of this research suggest, dwellers of the city consider historical buildings to be an integral part of their national pride and identity.

### 4.2 Recommendations

Therefore, this research strongly recommends the following lists to preserve and maintain the heritages when urban regeneration is being practiced.

- Take lessons from developed countries like Italy who has more experience about preservation of heritages.
- Media should play a major role for the protection of historical buildings i.e., main stream medias and social medias.
- Governmental offices need to coordinate because during urban regeneration, new projects tend to be built and historical buildings may be destroyed.
- There needs to be research about the historical buildings so that they get much attention for conservation.

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