Planning for the regeneration of the historic metro city area of Kolkata

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Urban Regeneration can be defined as a comprehensive vision and action leading to resolution of urban problems by bringing improvements in economic, physical, social and environmental conditions of an area subjected to decay – whether due to aging incorrect land use or the absence of development guidelines. It involves conserving built and cultural heritage, maintaining a city’s cultural identity and managing traffic issues such as congestion, vehicular v pedestrian priorities and parking issues. It also involves bringing back economic vibrancy to an area through sustainable land use and reviving the glory of heritage areas in contemporary cities.

The study area for this presentation is Sutanuti, one of the three villages which were merged to form the city of Kolkata in India. It is the place where the East India company first landed in 1690 and started their business. Later it became known as Black Town and
was populated largely by affluent merchants who traded with the British. Physically, the place is characterized by contrasting big mansions and small houses, irregular dingy lanes and its river front, which is the city’s most valuable asset. Today the decline of heritage assets is a feature of north Kolkata’s urbanization pattern. Many new developments are either ad-hoc adjustments to existing structure or involve demolition and the building of a structure insensitive to its surrounding. The city is losing its identity and character. This study explores the possibility of conserving Kolkata’s identity through an integrated regeneration model.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

The author is a professor in Architecture and Planning at the India Institute of Engineering Science and Technology, Shibpur West Bengal, Howrah. She has been working at the institute since 1982 and is associated with various research and developmental projects. She has completed an urban centre clusters consultancy project for the government of India focusing on a smart village concept in peri-urban areas. Currently, she is engaged in the conservation of the Town Hall of Howrah City.