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## Archaeo-Cultural Tourism with special reference to the Bundelkhand region

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### Abstract

*Archaeocultural tourism consists of three elements: archaeology, culture and tourism. This encompasses visiting of tourism destinations having archaeological and cultural value. Marked by number of increasing visitors significantly to archaeological cultural resources, Bundelkhand could be developed as centre of attraction for these motivated tourists. Bundelkhand, with its distinct geography has been source of continuous expression of cultural remains and prompted us to preserve, protect and make them accessible for interested tourists in sustainable manner. It is argued that this initiative would help in increasing the number of tourists and create an environment of pride and identity in the region. Nevertheless, it can open the door for employment generation among local community.*

**Key words:** Archaeology, culture, tourism, archaeocultural tourism, preservation protection, Paleolithic, sustainable development.

### 1. Introduction

Archaeocultural tourism could be better understood by understanding the term Archaeology and Culture at first place. Therefore, briefly discussing the three elements of which Archaeocultural tourism is composed of i.e. Archaeology, Culture and Tourism.

#### Archaeology

Archaeology is the study of human past. Past can be understood through material remains. Archaeology unearthed the objects that people created, modified or used which includes different types of tools, artifacts and features indicating their habitation, houses, food pattern, lifestyle, recreation and progression towards more creative life. Oxford English dictionary define archaeology; ‘the study of human history and prehistory through the excavation of sites and the analysis of artifacts and other physical remains.’ The other definition from Your dictionary covering broader aspects says ‘Archaeology is the study of human history, particularly the culture of historic and prehistoric people through the discovery and exploration of remains,

structures and writings.’ The study of antiquities belonging to period before history is generally considered in the arena of prehistoric archaeology. The Prehistoric people did not leave behind written records. Thus, the material culture is only the source to understand them. We do not have manuscript or written records to explain the artifacts and features. Study of prehistoric archaeology originally developed as a part of culture history.<sup>1</sup> The another part of archaeology which is also relevant to expose the culture of Bundelkhand is related to historical archaeology, based on material remains of past human societies and written records left by them. Context in the archaeology as well as in archaeological cultural tourism is important. The region, location, place and exact spot of recovery of artifacts explain human activity in the context of region and community. As a discipline it seeks to study the human endeavor.

## Heritage

The word Heritage could be understood as a cultural process of past human activity as an expression of the ways of leaving developed by a community. It includes archaeological remains artifacts customs practices places buildings landscapes paintings and artistic expression and values. Cultural heritage is often expressed as other intangible are tangible cultural heritage<sup>2</sup>. Tangible heritage includes artifacts, monuments, architecture landscapes, forts, religious buildings etc. while intangible heritage represents values, traditions, customs, clothing, religious ceremonies, performing art, traditional skills etc. Discussing cultural heritage John feather says; it is a human creation intended to inform.<sup>3</sup>

The archaeological heritages are important assets of a nation and of the human race, and thus require utmost attention toward its preservation and development.

## Culture

Culture is the sum total of the learned behavior of men which evolves out of the need to adopt within a given environment. Culture is both adaptive and also the means of adaptation.<sup>4</sup>

Williams, R (keywords, Fontana, London, 1983) identifies three broad categories of modern uses of the term culture: (a) as a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development (b) as indicative of a particular way of life and (c) as the works and practices of intellectual and artistic activity.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Bhattacharya D.K., An outline of Indian Prehistory, Palika Prakashan, Delhi, 2015, P15

<sup>2</sup> ICOMOS, 2002

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.cultureindevelopment.nl/cultural\\_heritage/what\\_is\\_cultural\\_heritage](http://www.cultureindevelopment.nl/cultural_heritage/what_is_cultural_heritage)

<sup>4</sup> Bhattacharya D.K., An outline of Indian Prehistory, Palika Prakashan, Delhi, 2015

<sup>5</sup> Richard Greg, ed., Cultural Tourism in Europe, CAB International publication, Wallingford, UK, 1996, P 22, ATLAS

Another definition mentioned in National portal of India GOI (art & culture) says 'culture represents a set of shared attitudes values roles and practices'. Every human society has its own shape, its own purpose and its own meanings. These were reflected in different forms of art, behavior, institution and learning.

The rich and diverse culture and heritage of India is remarkable. It is reflected in religious practices, beliefs, customs, philosophy, dressing, food habit, community living, folks and art & architecture.

The culture has strong appeal to transform the society in many ways. Its roots in civilizations have been shaping the people, their tradition, art, lifestyle and communication within their environment. The Indian culture emerges from Vedic period to subsequent period of history passing through generations to generations.

## **2. Scope of Archaeocultural Tourism in Bundelkhand**

Archaeology records various aspect of human endeavor indicating their development and creativity. Archaeocultural sites are integral part of regional histories, heritages and identities. The collective efforts of man created many objects tools, artifacts, potteries, paintings and essentials for living at their own time to deal with environment and progression. Further they created forts, religious centers, idols, buildings, houses, representing the period of history having writing skills. These creations of humanity may be named as Archaeocultural heritage or cultural heritage. Cultural heritages is an expression of the way of living developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation including customs, practices, places, objects, artist expression and values.

### **Importance of Archaeocultural tourism for society**

Archaeological sites are of great importance, it holds immense value not only for a state, country or community but for the whole mankind. Its preservation and protection are a matter of pride for a nation. Therefore, it becomes of utmost importance to preserve and protect these sites as their destruction is permanent and irreversible. We should always remember that loss or damage of such sites will not only cause the loss of physical remains of the sites but also results in the loss of information that has been obtained from such sites and loss of such information will affect our understanding of the culture that builds them.

Archaeocultural tourism emerges as giving new insight to tourists, managers and government at all level. Apart from putting and attractive destinations it creates an environment to build greater support for cultural resources, preservation and research. The international cultural tourism charter adopted by ICOMS at the 12th General assembly in Mexico has made clear the important role of Heritage 'as an irreplaceable and important foundation for development both for now and for the future'.

The United Nation World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) recognizes the importance of tourism and culture as a vehicle to solve some of the most burning socio economic problems worldwide.

Archaeological tourism will let the visitors to visit the past about which people are often fascinated and tourism around such sites give people a proper medium to know their past well. Archaeological tourism also creates archaeology as a community subject. Archaeology as a subject will get a new boost and popularity as more and more people will get the opportunity to know it is a very innovative, interesting and recreational way.

Revenue is one of the most significant benefits of Archaeological tourism. Archaeological tourism will also uplift the economic condition of the surrounding regions/areas/city of the archaeological sites by providing employment or business opportunities to the people of the said place.

### **Archaeocultural tourism and Bundelkhand**

Now, in the above background the position and potential of Archaeocultural tourism in Bundelkhand is need to be discussed. Bundelkhand is considered to be a rich cultural heritage region where we found continuous expression of human development from Paleolithic period to historical period. This region is lying within the folds of Vindhyan range which slopes down towards the Indo Gangatic plain to the north. Rolling hills and fertile valleys makes this region a distinct geographical unit. The hills are made of sand stone. Many temples and grand architecture of this region are built of the same stone. The geographical boundaries are defined as Yamuna in North, Vindhyan range in south, Chambal in northwest and Panna Ajaygarh range in south east. The district comprises in this region are: chitrkoot, Banda, Mahoba, Jhansi, Jalaun, Hamirpur and Lalitpur of Uttar Pradesh and Tikamgarh, Damoh, Sagar, Datia, Chhatarpur and Panna of Madhya Pradesh.

The uniqueness of its geography remained this region pathless which shaped the people and culture of this area. Although, this is not the only reason but certainly it provided an environment for human activity since early times. This is marked by presence of cultural remains from Paleolithic to historical period. Around 300 archaeological sites have been explored and nearly 150 are being protected by State archaeology department UP and Archaeological Survey of India. The data of the districts from Madhya Pradesh are not included in it. Sandawaveer, a Neolithic site located in Chitrakoot district, near Rajapur is among few sites excavated so far. Numerous rock shelters of prehistoric period have been reported from this region.<sup>6</sup>

Besides prehistoric sites, this region is known for its grand temples, invincible forts, water reservoir, big ponds, beautiful landscapes, paintings, folk songs & dance and local festivals. The

<sup>6</sup> Pandey, J.N., Bharat ki Prarambhik Sanskritiyan tatha Sabhataayein, Prachya Vidya Sansthan, Allahabad publication, 2002, Pp 120-130.

world heritage Khajuraho is pride of this region, located in Chhatarpur district of MP, near Mahoba. Art, architecture and religious consciousness in shape of tempting temples are telling the story of rich cultural heritage which attributed to Chandelas and Bundelas. Peshwas have also created beautiful architecture, locally known as mini Khajuraho, near Karwi in Chitrakoot.

The data regarding tourist flow in UP of the year 2020 of UP tourism states that around 59 lacs tourists including 16,183 foreign travellers visited Jhansi region, a part of Bundelkhand region. The Prayagraj region attracted 3 crore 36 lacs and Ayodhya region was visited by 88 lacs tourists in the same year. The latter two regions share the boundaries of Bundelkhand. Therefore, it can be planned to attract more tourists from these regions by focusing on Archaeocultural tourism in Bundelkhand. In this region, two districts have reported highest tourist arrival namely Chitrakoot and Jhansi. About 16 lakh tourists visited Chitrakoot and 13 lacs Jhansi in 2020. Banda adjoining to Chitrakoot succeeded only to register around 3 lacs 8 thousand tourists in the same year. As indicated, the visitors of Chitrakoot seems to be motivated for religious purposes while Jhansi and Banda have mixed interest to visit religious sites including the art and architecture located in that area. Banda, having the invincible Kalinjer fort, Bhuragarh fort and Shiva & Maheshwari temples in its vicinity, could not afford one fourth of Jhansi and one fifth of Chitrakoot tourists. It is pertinent to mention that no specific data is available for tourist visiting the heritage places of the entire Buldelkhand region except two places located at Jhsnsi namely Jhansi fort and Rani Mahal.

Table 1: Tourist flow in different regions of Uttar Pradesh

Region	2020		
	Indian	Foreigner	Total
Agra	1348722	516098	13998820
Jhansi	5878313	16183	5894496
Bareilly	4166927	1690	4168617
Prayagraj	33546407	72317	33618724
Varasani	8705623	187616	8893239
Lucknow	4977528	27614	5005142
Meerut	32957686	20017	3317703
Ayodhya	8778855	10053	8788908
Gorakhpur	3288232	39344	3327576
<b>Total</b>	<b>86122293</b>	<b>890932</b>	<b>87013225</b>

Source: <http://www.uptourism.gov.in/pages/top/about-up-tourism/year-wise-tourist-statistics>

Table 2: Tourist flow in different district of Bundelkhand Region

Districts	2020		
	Indian	Foreigner	Total
<b>Jhansi</b>	1240536	14211	1254747
<b>Jaluan (Urai)</b>	657674	359	658033
<b>Lalitpur</b>	741669	616	742285
<b>Devghar</b>	287421	86	287507
<b>Chitrakut</b>	1586636	417	1587053
<b>Banda</b>	307452	92	307544
<b>Kalinjer</b>	249345	51	249396
<b>Mahoba</b>	269756	169	269925
<b>Charkhari</b>	203866	60	203926
<b>Rajapur</b>	196561	85	196646
<b>Hameerpur</b>	137397	37	137434
<b>Total</b>	5878313	16183	5894496

<http://www.uptourism.gov.in/site/writereaddata/siteContent/202110051652342671>

However, for the purpose of study and potential of Archaeocultural tourism the case of Banda and Chitrakoot districts will be taken here for discussion. In Chitrakoot where kamadgiri hill covering from forest located on the bank of Mandakini River attracts more and more domestic tourists. The kamadgiri, a holy hill is known for its association with Ramayan period. It is believed that Ram Sita and Lakshman spent 11 and half years of their exile on this holy hill. The visitors of kamadgiri also visit Char dham [a word coined in local tradition for Guptgodavari, Anusuiya ashram, Sfatikshila&Jankikund] situated in surroundings of Kamadgiri. But, most of them do not used to visit the archaeological and cultural places of the area such as prehistoric Rock paintings, fort of Madfa, Rasin, Barha kotra, Laurigarh, Tarauha, big architectural complex of Char temple, temple of Ramnagar and prehistoric sites of the region. The case of Banda has already been discussed above. This picture shows the inaccessibility, lack of awareness and management of those sites.

Tourism and culture have always been closely associated in India. Bundelkhand has always been an important destination for those attracted by its rich archaeological cultural and historical legacy. Over the years tourism consumption patterns have changed significantly.

The participation of large number of people demanded for new horizon within cultural tourism as consumption for all forms of archaeological cultural tourism is expanding. Earlier, the people belonged to higher classes were more intended to tourism. Now, the large middle class and lower middle class have grown as wider audience. And that's why the governments have recognizes in their policy the scope of increasing diverse tourism and employment generation at local level.

Earlier, archaeology culture and tourism was seen as separate subject. The institutions of culture and archaeology were intended in preservation, digging and study thereof. The people visiting the area were treated as outsiders with the notion that they can harm these places. The growing interest of visitors of culture tourism has changed this phenomenon. However, some important sites like Dholavira and some sites of Indus Saraswati civilization have been developed to attract archaeology culture tourists in India. On the other hand, in Europe several sites have been developed to attract tourist in large number. In India like Rajasthan Bundelkhand inherit the great potential for archaeocultural tourism.

The legacy of thousands of years of Bundelkhand has left much for preservation and sustainable development for archaeocultural tourism. Few places, for example, which have potential to attract culture tourist in the region is discussed below.

Forts of Madfa, Rasin, Barha Kotra could be developed to attract tourists. Remains of Madfa extended in large area having beautiful temple complex. Likewise temples of Char having panoramic view and impressive temple architecture located on the right of bank of Balmiki river and beautiful architecture and temple at Ramnagar have huge potential to create tourist interest to visit these places.

Rock paintings of prehistoric period, located near Manikpur, have significant scope for tourists interested in prehistoric tourism. In the same way the Neolithic site of Sandvaveer, records continuous human activity from Neolithic to early mediaeval period, could be preserved and presented to satisfy the tourists need to have live experiences of prehistoric people. All these places are located in Chitrakoot district of UP where large number of tourists comes to visit a holy place Kamadgiri. Some of them could be attracted to visit above mentioned prehistoric and historic heritages.

Charkhari, a small beautiful and scenic town, having ponds and temples may be developed as Heritage City. Forts, ponds and temples of Banda, Mahoba, Jalaun needs to be developed for the tourism purposes. Lalitpur have also great potential for Archaeocultural tourism which preserved beautiful and sacred spots of Jain art and famous Buddhist caves. This is need of the hour to attract those tourists who visits nearby region like PrayagRaj, Ayodhya and Varansi. More and more tourists from all corners may be encouraged. Further, the tourist visiting one or two places in a district may be encouraged to visit another places of Cultural heritage.

To develop Archaeocultural sites as tourist destinations following points could be taken into consideration for effective and sustainable management:

- Assigning the value of cultural heritage.
- Historical development and cultural significance of the site and its description, location and boundaries
- Engaging society.

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- Encourage public private partnership where possible.
  - Create awareness especially among younger generations to understand the importance of Archaeocultural heritage.
  - Standard operating procedures and protocols.
  - Careful and integrated planning.
  - Evaluation of outcomes and impact of cultural heritage.
  - Communicating the performance and preservation of tourist destinations to society and stakeholders.
  - Infrastructure development
  - Natural resource management around the site
  - Regional development
  - Addressing the social economic need of the region
  - Active role of government
  - Administrative planning
  - Landscape design
  - Social and environmental impact analysis
  - Balance between use and conservation.
  - Participation of local community to serve as host interpreters of the Heritage values of the area and training thereof.
  - Creating opportunities for employment generation as well as stimulating investment and support for local services
  - Create an environment of support from local communities for conservation
  - Promotion of local crafts, folk and tradition.
  - Add educational component.
  - Accessibility to resources of archaeology culture.
  - Inculcating a sense of pride and identity in local community to their culture and heritage.
  - Enhancing intercultural sense of understanding.

For this deprived region, Archaeocultural tourism can become more important in economic terms. In spite of lack of precise data on Bundelkhand tourism, it is observed that demand is growing. Many scholars and researchers have identified cultural tourism as a major growth area worldwide. The World tourism organisation has estimated the increasing demand @15% per year. However, due to covid-19 the sharp decrease has been noticed worldwide in tourism sector. The growth of tourists, as recorded above in UP tourism department chart, is not keeping up with the growth and cultural attractions like archaeology culture tourist destinations.





### 3. Conclusion

Archaeocultural values of Bundelkhand have been foundations of creative motives through many centuries. Cultural continuity in the region can be noticed since Paleolithic age. Rulers like Chandela and Bundela lived and ruled in this ancient and beautiful region and enriched it with their grand architecture and art.

Therefore, the three [**three P**] objective i.e. Preservation, Protection and Presentation of archaeological sites become relevant in order to insure development and empowerment of local community. Since, there is no uniform policy in this regard, the present paper emphasizes for strategic planning of archaeological tourism. Further, it is felt for larger economic policy formation towards the development of facilities at these sites along with the generation of employment etc. Moreover, marketing of the existing handicraft, artifact of the region may be boosted.

Awareness created about the Archaeological sites and its importance may inculcate knowledge among local people about their past and it also create a sense of pride, about our shared culture and heritage. This will in turn, uplift the economy and development of that region as tourism positively affects the betterment of various sectors in that region such as the health sector, hospitality, roads, connectivity, cleanliness, etc.

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