



Relationship between Sustainability and Heritage Sites: A Case Study of Heritage Sites in India

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Abstract

Preservation of heritage sites and its sustainability is considered to be a significant component and irreplaceable resources for sustainable tourism development. Peoples need to be aware about the benefits and challenges of protection towards cultural heritage resources. To manage the heritage sites at national level adequate steps should be taken by government of India. In an attempt to address major issues related to sustainability have been discussed here. Maximum heritage sites in India are under threats and they required an immediate rescue operation by which they can become a source of development in India.

Keywords: Heritage sites, Sustainability, Relationship, Challenges, Solution, India

Introduction

India has always been the land of popular tourist attractions and attracted great number of foreign tourists because of its rich built heritage sites. Rural India has a large number of heritage assets and it supported to grow the tourism. Proper management plans increase rural tourism sustainability and support socio economic activities for locals which will certainly increase



employment opportunities for them (Varma, 2015). Many researchers have examined that conservation of heritage and cultural resources enhances the economic and socio-cultural sustainability. Heritage creates many activities for host communities and to provide them employment opportunities. These sites have become a source of promotion in sustainability of heritage sites in India

Preservation of heritage resources can be understood as creation of various economic benefits such as maintenance of craftsmanship skills, increase property values, heritage tourism and job training etc. In order to implement the sustainable development strategies, cultural heritage is considered as a valuable resource and development incentive (Grazuleviciute, I., 2006). Heritage sites are to be maintained in sustainability manner that meets the needs of future generations that protect the environment and cultural resources for different regions.

World Economic Forum, (2019) stated that rank of India in Travel & Tourism Index (2019) is 34th position and India improved its ranking position by 6 places over the year 2017 report. This change in ranking suggested that India has been preserved its diverse culture and heritage sites. The goals of sustainable development 11.4 help to achieve the strong efforts that protect the heritage sites and untapped potential of India in tourism industry (UNESCO, 2020). The objectives of the study is to analyze the relationship between heritage sites and its sustainability. Study also examined some major challenges that come into the way of heritage development in India. Study focuses on to understand that how to identify and remove the poor management and exploitation of heritage sites in India? Study suggests the significance measurements that tackle the situation towards development of heritage sites.

Heritage sites in India

Howard, (2003) stated that heritage refers to anything which a person wants to preserve, collect and pass onto the future generations. It is a place that represents the stories and peoples of the past. It is the concept that needs to be understood and can be something which created in social processes (Holtorf, 2005). Its records are to be transformed into something useful and can



be preserved for upcoming generations (Watson, 2009). It is a matter of pride that it has many cultural and heritage signs of the world such as forts, temples, architecture, classical dances, sculptures, literature etc. A numerous studies have concluded that heritage is very essential part of any country and must be considered as an essential asset of the nation. Studies have examined that some steps must be taken for the preservation of these heritage sites that maintain its pride (Vasavada, D.M., Shah, D. S., & Gajjar, M.N., 2019). India having most of the prestigious world heritage sites such as the Ellora, Konark Sun Temple, Hampi, Khajuraho, Ajanta caves and Taj Mahal, and Brihadeswara Temple etc. Heritage is recognized as a nation's identity that attract the peoples and it has become the economic source for local economies.

Singh, R. (2014) discussed about heritage tourism and examined that many inherited tangible and intangible items taken from past can be a source of development for heritage sites and its preservation based on sustainability. Study has found that Government being a major stakeholder can play significant role in preservation of these heritage sites by giving adequate funding. This paper stated that future researches have abundant space to investigate the correlation between sustainability and heritage tourism.

Sullivan, A. M., (2016) identified that heritage is a landmark or an area which is identifiable as historical and geographical aspects that remaining a special physical or cultural significance e.g. it may be a building, desert, historical ruin, forest, monument, island or mountain These heritage sites signified a prominent accomplishment of humanity and have evidences about intellectual history on the planet. As of July 2021, world heritage site included 1154 heritage properties. Cultural include 897 sites, natural included 218 sites and mixed site include is 1 property around 167 countries. Italy is the country having most of sites on the list. UNESCO has promoted the protection of these natural and cultural heritage sites. It designates natural wonders and architectural marvels across the world to promote heritage conservation. Every site has been selected in such a way that presents their unique value and importance. Presently, India has 40 world heritage sites that claim having the 6th largest number of them across worldwide. These include 32 cultural heritage sites, 7 natural and 1 mixed heritage sites. Being home to 40 heritage



sites, India has increased the responsibility to protect and preserve its heritage. These sites having significance importance in different fields like natural, cultural, architectural and historical. It is the matter of proud India has diversity of its rich heritage and natural abundance that enough to represent the nation's identity at globally

According to UNESCO (2002), culture and heritage are two separate concepts. Culture refers to intangible creations and heritage denotes tangible creations. Culture represents their identity within their cultural environment while heritage used to influence the behavior and attitudes of peoples. Culture connects to the past and present. It can connect to the modern traditions and open the door to new discoveries and thoughts. It renders its identity and India's identity is affected by different cultures around different communities and religions. Its beauty can be seen in form of tangible heritage and intangible heritage. Cultural traditions and expressions need a strong support to protect the stories of the past. Heritage includes cultural attributes from the past and need to transfer them for the next generation (UNESCO, 1972).

Spearritt, P., (2011) incorporated tangible heritage sites such as landscape, old buildings and monuments, and intangible heritage like religions, language etc. Both heritage and culture have attracted of all peoples because these are considered as important parts of society. Many scholars have struggled to know that which attributes of heritage and culture are specific for people's lives. Amar, J. H. N. (2017) has tried to identify a common platform which present the theories of built heritage and provide significant insights for heritage conservation. This study focused on significant values of heritage, its integrity, authenticity which contained within the historic building. Some heritage management authorities have given their opinions that how manage and conserve the values of these cultural heritage sites.

Borges, M. A., Carbone, G., Bushell, R., & Jaeger, T. (2011) examined that sustainable tourism approach and its contribution to increase the development of heritage sites was in trend and suggested that this value based approach is found more appropriate for its better and long-term outcomes. The study was focused on inscribed natural world heritage sites and their



difficulties and tries to identify more positive sustainable development impacts towards heritage development. Some key negative issues also were found in the study related to improper infrastructure development, visitor pressure and revenue for conservation. It has been recommended that these heritage sites needs to a support of strong management plan for its development and visitors' awareness. Management committees should give more focus on these heritage sites so that they can be promoted as efforts and also give contribution to spread the benefits for sustainable tourism development. Study further recommended that some major issues related to development of heritage sites should be addressed by having collaboration among different stakeholders.

Timothy Dc .J. & S.W. Boyed (2003) focused on heritage tourism and its supply and demand. The authors have raised the issues of conservation, management, interpretation of heritage sites. The study has tried to identify the significant factors which are crucial for the development of these heritage sites. Further, study pointed out that heritage places and its development add value to each other and expressed their views about heritage conservation. Study stated that these are internal tools for sustainable tourism development and suggest that heritage perspectives can be key elements in promotion of sustainable development and its growth. Heritage conservation has become an issue about which people awareness is growing rapidly all over the world. At global level, people are talking about heritage preservation and its development, consciously or unconsciously. From different parts of India several writers and scholars have paid attention on heritage conservation and its preservation. UNESCO has tried to encourage, identify and preserve the cultural and natural heritage sites of world.

Status of Sustainability

This study provides an understanding of sustainability and examined the most important aspects of sustainability in an environment. To achieve the sustainability is not a free exercise as it is assumed to be uneconomical is not true. Kotob, F. (2000) suggested that appropriate steps should be taken to achieve the sustainability towards protection of heritage sites. Sustainable



tourism as defined by UNWTO is “leading the management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, ecological processes, and biological diversity and life support systems”. Earth Summit 1992 confirmed that three principles of sustainability; social, economic and environmental have been adopted by tourism in all over the world. Significance of sustainable tourism at globally has increased as the increase human activity impact on climate.

Romana, K. V., (2013) sustainability implies both the tourism negative and positive impacts related activities and examined that major principles and practices establish a suitable balance among several environmental components and cultural dimensions of the industry. It can be achieve when tourism; (1) make the effective use of environment resources and determine a significant development of tourism with the preservation of natural resources (2) focus on socio-cultural activities of local community that preserve their living cultural heritage and help to understand the inter cultural tolerance (3) determine long-term economic issues and provide a lot of economic benefits and several earning opportunities to host communities (UNEP, U., 2012). Ensuring the sustainability in tourism refers to a strong awareness and high level of commitment between all stakeholders with the issues of sustainable practices and quality assurance.

Challenge faced by Indian heritage sites

Kumar, R. B. (2009) focused on heritage challenges refers to the heritage problems, pollution, lack of funds, lack of sensitivity of traditional architecture and appropriate management plan. Various foreign authors give their views about heritage problems and tourism development. India possesses world’s longest continuous civilization. It is a vast country and has a diversity of rich heritage and cultural traditions. Culture refers to religion, festivals, music, language and literature etc. There are a number of countries which are smaller in population size but have several heritage sites. Most of Indian heritage sites found in ruins condition. There can be many reasons of this such as policy in-effectivity, lack of identification and recognition and citizens who are responsible for the poor condition of the heritage sites. To overcome such types of



challenges, there is need to identify major aspects of cultural heritage sites and preservation for the future generation. Finally, study suggested that to overcome these problems some methods are found in general nature but can be applied for all heritage properties.

Udejaja, C., Trillo, C., Awuah, K. G., Patel, D. A., Mansuri, L. E., & Jha, K. N. (2020) examined the major issues of heritage preservation resulted because of growth in the urban areas in Surat, an Indian city. To achieve the sustainable development and communities support, cultural heritage has become the challenge all over the world due to rapid urbanization, undermine infrastructure, diverse pressure and socio-cultural changes. This study tried to make people aware as the urban population increases; heritage disappears at an alarming rate. This paper examined the major challenges in Surat and tried to discuss the possible solutions including heritage conservation policies with urban management plan so that allow to pursue the sustainable development targets. The study revealed the several challenges such as inadequacy of urban management planning, absence of proper skills and training, improper focus on heritage between decision makers and increasing competition among heritage professional. Study found that tangible and intangible heritage sites in Surat city is not fully certified by heritage stakeholders and recommended that integration of heritage urban conservation is must to increasing the plurality of heritage values. The study examined that peoples travelling to cultural heritage sites not only for understanding the history but also for exploring the contemporary lives of peoples.

Solution

Heritage sites needs to be integrated in planning and development projects which can take them in consideration for its long-term growth especially for human being and infrastructural developments. This study suggests that a proper management planning and investment for heritage development would facilitate the local peoples and tourists. India has several heritage sites which are scattered all over the country but these are suffering because of mismanagement funds at the time of restoration.



Aayog, (2020) suggested that India should adopt 3D laser scanning modern technology and photogrammetric for conservation of heritage. The promotion of heritage sites and digital marketing can be a source of development for heritage and also will attract the peoples. Conservation of heritage sites takes precedence to develop the model by focusing on sustainable tourism development. Heritage sites are not personal property of anyone that allows the people to neglect it whereas it's our tradition and our responsibility to preserve it for the next generation. Restoration of heritage sites encourages the development of tourism and presents their cultural identity for the nation.

The Indian constitution and several national laws govern and protect the world heritage sites. The Article 49 protects the tangible heritage of India and states that it is the responsibility of state to preserve these sites safely. Article 51-A shows that it becomes the duty of every citizen of India to maintain identity of every heritage places as well as protect the natural environment including wildlife, forests, rivers etc. The protection of heritage sites comes under the jurisdiction of Archaeological Survey of India and carries all conservation activities of monuments and besides it, various schemes in India such as safety of intangible heritage and diverse cultural tradition should be implemented to protect these heritage sites of India.

In **conclusion**, it can be said that India is known for hometown of rich culture, traditions and heritage. It is a land of several historical temples, forts, unique artistic and romantic qualities and unbelievable rock formations which should be preserved by the peoples and government. Culture heritage describe the memory of a host community and gives a sense of unity while the use of heritage for tourism helps to preserve the past traditions on to future generation. It increases the awareness among peoples to identify them in heritage and it is a great appreciation for the nation's identity.



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