

Community Based Cultural Tourism: An Attitude towards Sustainable Conservation Model for Heritage Site

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Abstract

Cultural heritage is not only an outstanding significant of mankind which only passed down the memories from one generation to another. It has the potentialities to effect directly in socio-cultural and socio- economical context of an area where it belongs. Once it thought that this physical cultural heritage does not have any relation with present time and life, they only carry the emotional value. And with the conflict of reality crisis and emotion, need of present time always get winner. So, these heritages remain in negligence and ignorance. But at present we explore the hidden prospectus of these heritages and try to find the appropriate approach to create more connection with these resources of past and present crisis to make the heritage more sustainable. The aim of this research is to correlate inherent conservation process with literature that induces some design propositions applied in Khalifatabad (within Bagerhat), Bangladesh.

Keywords: *Cultural Tourism, Heritage Conservation, Sustainable Conservation, Khalifatabad.*

1 Introduction

Khalifatabad is identified here as our induced community what is diminished in Bagerhat now. The town and its suburb contain many historic sites and monuments (Bari, M. A. 1993). Traditionally the numbers of monuments are assumed to be 360. The spectacular remains of those are still visible for miles around the ruined city. About three miles from Bagerhat town and half a mile from the main road to Dhaka stand the tomb of Khan Jahan, situated on the bank of a larger water tank called the *Thakur Dighi* with an area of about 60 acres. Towards a sustainable approach of conservation of the dighi, tomb and the mosque on its bank, becomes the key issue of the research. Study monument is still in use now and people come here from abroad for different purposes. It has an aesthetic and archaeological value along with spiritual one to attract people and create a booming demand of tourism. Existence of that heritage site affect only the sector of tourism in a broad sense but communal life does not involve with that visually because these heritages could not become a part of community and lost its inherited value (Whelan, Y. 2016). Society are not involve or responsive about these validate memories, their existence, their maintenance and importance. All strategies and initiatives to save these frozen histories and attempt to link with past from higher level could not implement properly for the segregation from communal life and social exclusion (Jovicic, D. 2016). Social inclusion in these efforts has been encouraged mostly by involving community in the conservation approaches for their neighborhood historical site (Whelan, Y. 2016). This process takes various structures, including subsidizing individual initiatives. Ensuring that local citizens, or business owners, or both benefit directly from the projects forwards social inclusion; as do measures set up to counter process (Jovicic, D. 2016).

As the most vulnerable heritage site of the area, to protect the historic Dighi and the mausoleum of Khan-E-Jahan form destruction; Government takes different resolutions at different levels for this issue. But they fail to protect, recover and maintain its glorifying history for non- cooperation of locally influential party with illegal and arbitrary use of site and decreasing the public interest about this heritage (Tariq, S. H., & Jinia, M. A. 2013). The same process of conservation is applied for all the sites but only in mausoleum site is not worked out. We believe this study will be beneficial to revise the role played by such beliefs in conserving a cultural heritage site and will offer policy-makers a new tool for conservation planning, where community actively participate and take the responsibilities and getting benefited from conservation and improve their own socio-economic and cultural standards for such a critical site.

2 Methodology of Investigation

This study is conducted to find out the way how local people with visitors and tourists would be integrated in conservation act. Based on literature, the study is developed that how to realize a heritage sites inherent potentials to be exceeded to its best. Information is gathered from detail observation (field survey) and open ended interview operated in Khalifatabad in field investigation portion. Especially in tomb area (Figure 01) from where the reflection would be transformed into design propositions. Several reconnaissance surveys were conducted to recognize the cultural, environmental and economic context of the mausoleum surrounded settlement. Mainly the study area was the commercial strip in front of tomb and mosque with the trail connected nine dome mosque, reza khoda mosque and zinda pir mosque. Total process of the research is to find out existing potentials, the way it's developed, users, activities, environment, and the significance of physical & cultural context what derive the study to an S.W.O.T. analysis. Depending on that analysis design proposals would be further prompted in our context

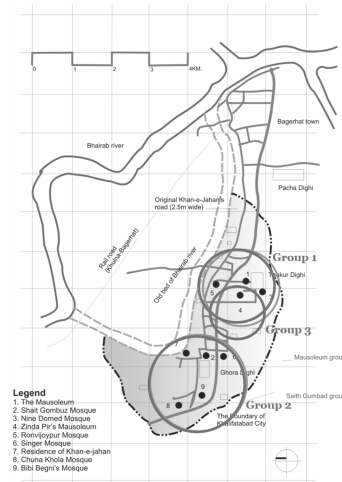


Figure 01. Location map of Khalifatabad
(source-UNESCO).

3. Literature Review

3.1 Cultural Heritage Conservation: Impact of Outsiders on Community

Cultural heritage contain enormous factors to promote social integration and create a platform for cultural exchange by introducing tourism (Whelan, Y. 2016). Exploring tourism in a cultural heritage site must demand cooperation from surrounding society and environment and physical facility. Communities are not interested to co-operate tourist or the site because their life, living way or their living environment are not integrated with existing heritage site (Liu, Y. D. 2014). Maintaining the social fabric and countering gentrification in revitalized historic districts continues to be a challenge for cities in developed and developing countries. Residential neighborhoods that suffer from several basic facilities raise questions about the viability of conservation, or whether it is better to demolish and rebuild structures in original style or in completely new designs (Jovicic, D. 2016). Cultural heritages are not only social resources but also economical assets for the region where it exists. It has the capacity to generate economic activity and create severe impact on socio-economic condition of that area (Whelan, Y. 2016). By ignoring the relation between communities with the heritage sites, utilization of these resources cannot possible properly in one hand and it cannot play a role in socio-economic life at present. Conservation has aimed at revitalizing a given geographical area for both social activity and commercial activity, restoring the space as a vibrant commercial area, renewing the space as more of a museum, or various combinations of the above (Orbasli, A. 2002). Conservation initiatives described are mostly by local authorities, or neighborhoods' helped by local authorities, or national governments collaborating with local authorities, or a combination of all these elements.

3.2 Conservation as Sustainable Development through Small Change

The most common definition of sustainability is provided in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development in the "Our Common Future" report (well-known as Brundtland Report). It defines sustainability as "a process aimed at achieving environmental, economic and social improvement, both locally and globally, or a state that can be maintained at a certain level indefinitely. This process binds in a relationship of interdependence, the protection and enhancement of natural resources to the economic, social, in order to meet the needs of the present generation, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own

needs. So it is incompatible with the degradation of heritage and natural resources, but also with the violation of human dignity and human freedom, with poverty and economic decline, with the lack of recognition of the rights and equal opportunities” (Nocca, F. 2017). According to this definition, the concept of sustainability is connected to the compatibility between the economic development and environmental protection. Furthermore, it emphasizes the role of development to ensure the satisfaction of the present generation’s needs, without compromising, at the same time, the possibility of future generations to achieve them. This perspective recalls the need to combine the three of the fundamental dimensions of development: environmental, economic, and social dimension (Nocca, F. 2017). In September 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been defined by the governments of the 193 UN member countries. This action plan “for people, planet and prosperity” aims to take transformation measures to shift the world towards a sustainable and resilient future. The concept of sustainable development has been discussed also during the Habitat Process: Vancouverin1976 (Habitat I), Istanbulin1996 (Habitat II), and Quito in 2016 (Habitat III). This process was born from the need to face problems resulting from increasing urbanization has negative impact on heritage sites also. The core of the discussion of this global summit, which was held in Quito (Ecuador) on October 2016, has been the achievement of equity and sustainability, both being economic, social, and environmental. Implementing sustainable development means minimizing negative impacts, and producing benefits induced small changes.

3.3 Traditional Participatory Approach: Adaptive change

The traditional approach to conservation aimed at maintaining functionality of the structure through repair and addition without paying any attention to its cultural value. The reasoning for this approach lies in the practice of prolonging the functional life of a building. Enhance durability of historically significant building by giving actual or renewal function. What is a key factor to conserve a site or monument is Community when takes part in conservation, what is very important for successful conservation. In its simplest terms, a participatory approach is one in which everyone who has a stake in the intervention has a voice, either in person or by representation. That's the ideal. The reality may often be quite different. Some people might not want to be involved - they may feel it takes too much time, or they don't have the skills needed. The important thing to remember here is the word participatory. A participatory process takes longer though everyone is the part. It helps to develop integrated approach to an open ended conservation theory. Historic value, cultural significance is enriched by participation of people and the concentration is being conserved.

4. Findings from Field Investigation: Khalifatabad as a Case

4.1 Reconnaissance Survey Findings: Architectural significance attracts tourist

The natural settings of the settlement are challenging to develop because there are ample in-built challenges in this marshy land. But the thing is overcome by following the local fusion of architectural solutions. The style has shown its highest potentialities to be considered as more influential than just a regional character or even a national asset for a given period of time. Brick is used as a building material and mounded by terracotta using lime mortar & mud mortar. In Hindu construction system of corbelled brick is also followed and local roofing system of carving. At last the hostile climatic conditions become fluid followed. The scattered mosques from monumental grand pavilion become spirit of searching for identity. That makes it still today an edifice for tourist. Following the utilitarian character of the contextual structures are not treated as art form but architecture. Contextual needs of organizational simplicity are seen here. So, Architecture here is not seen as a container of decorative art rather than a fully independent discipline collecting its resources from art, aesthetics, techniques & philosophical ideas.

4.2 Morphological Development

Prominence of horizontal development (one storied) with some of new 2 and 3 storied building around the study area is seen. Some of them are with boarding facilities indicate tourist attraction. Along with the main street connecting mausoleum to main road is covered with roadside linear and horizontal commercial development based on all about tourist fascination. Some of the homesteads are also carried historic value of significant spaces are different than others Bengal vernacular homestead. Circulation pattern is nearly organic through Vegetation, Tree, swamps or open fields. Most of historic spots are unidentified and in a state of advance ruin other than the tomb and mosques located on a mud base by the *dighi* (Figure 2). Existing main road runs along the old bed of the adjacent Bhairab river and form it a grid of secondary and tertiary roads subdivides the city almost checker board pattern. This pattern of settlement is known as grid iron pattern, indicates the dependency of the city administration on the local agrarian society in this region (Bari, M. A. 1993). But within this grid locked place where the monument is more densely clustered, the traditional attitude of changing axial direction of urban model for world muslim Architecture is evident in Khalifatabad City (Bari, M. A. 1993). The best example is Khan e Jahan mausoleum complex where the development is more organic than axial potentiality.

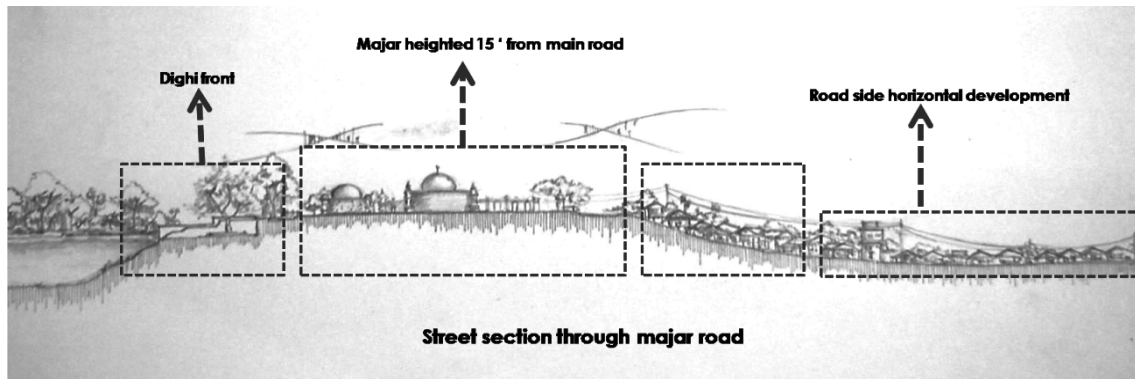


Figure 02. Morphological Cross section of study area.

4.3 Users, Activities & Environment



Figure 03. Commercial activity along the road.



Figure 04. Interruption in conservation process.

These two spots of study area are mostly visited and renowned to tourists rather than Shat-Gumbad mosque. Most of the economic activities are held with these two sites. There is tremendous commercial pressure spins around the complex. This commercial belt developed by the side of the street of tomb complex for the pilgrimage tourist mainly & the local people. Certain time of the year there is major flow of pilgrimage evoke the area regarding, there is several fair take place (i.e.-*rudro mela, orosh, chaitry mela, durga puja*). *Choitro Purnima Mela* is the largest fair of Bagerhat sustaining a week. 25th *Ograhayon: orosh* of Khan-E-Jahan. There is also develops a *hut* sit 2 days in a week. The commercial area (Figure 03) is compiled of Grocery shops, Hotel & food facility, Souvenir shop, Stationary shops etc. Dry fish & shrimp is main asset of the area. The physical character of the locality is nearly like coastal belt. The open area & built area ratio: 67%-33%, 67% of open area is divided into two parts, Land & Water: 58%-42%, 75% green coverage. 38% of trees are coconut tree & battle nut supports local economy. Paddy, Jute, Battle leaf, Battle nut & coconut are main economic features of the area. All these data are important to develop a comprehensive guideline for participatory conservation approach.

4.4 Contextual Significance: Physical & Cultural Context

Study area is easily accessible from Khulna and Bagherhat & other area and located nearby to the national highway. As a rural area it's easy to accommodate & acquire land for ancillary conservation function & create a trail. Tomb and mosques are located within comfortable walking distances in-between two zones separately and easily visible from nearby to enhance walkability. Overall it's a tourist friendly environment. Economy of the area vastly depends on tourist determining land use & developing marketplace. The hack for flourishing tourism is emergent yet with natural pedestrian network for tourist. These fairs and *orosh* are not only act as economic, religious and recreational purpose but also these festivals are act as the meeting places for different religious group. Here we got an extraordinary balance between different religions. Ignorance about the history of the site and structures among visitors and inhabitants too. Absence of community participation in government directed

conservation activity is the key obstacle against flourishing the site as key destination for tourist. Site monitoring in regular interval is absent so the upcoming threat about the monument remains unknown to the authority.

4.5 S.W.O.T. Analysis: Cross match with overall findings

Strength: Study area is located near to an enlisted world heritage site by UNESCO and Khulna-Dhaka-Bagerhat highway. Ample rural setting with usable potential natural resources-trees, dighi and open space, close proximity from main road, further more historic mosques and evidence make it easy to grasp a greater tourist attention. Existing tourist vivacity is hopeful showing vibrancy of Street shopping in front of mausoleum.

Weakness: Poor condition of accessibility, unplanned road networking among the site spots and surroundings, underprivileged tourist's accommodation and facilities ease tourist activities.

Opportunity: Well connectivity with Khulna & Bagerhat shadar. Along with the connection a fair take place every year, the biggest fair of Bagerhat: Choitro purnimar mela along with mazars own orosh program carries a great opportunity for economic viability. It's also located extremely close to another natural world heritage site Sundarban. All these are carried enough potential to inhabit new proposals which will increase the tourist vibrancy along with strong architectural style, with respect to local community and local involvement.

Threat: Lack of awareness of stakeholders about historic value of the study area (Figure 04) but they are much aware about economic return. Lack of attention from higher authorities, adverse climate for old structures, disaster prone area, salinity problem, uncontrolled vegetation & low water table create a condition to ruin the structure very near. The site is surrounded by rich Bio-diversity; it is to be very much conscious about any kind of redevelopment.

5. Design Guidelines For Community Based Cultural Tourism

In its simplest terms, a community based approach is that in which everyone who has a stake in the intervention has a voice, either in person or by representation. That's the ideal. The reality may often be quite different. Some people might not want to be involved - they may feel it takes too much time, or they don't have the skills needed. The important thing to remember here is the word Participation. Its principals could be:

- A community based process is time worthy though everyone is the part.
- It helps to develop integrated approach to an open ended conservation theory.
- Historic value, cultural significance is enriched by participation of people and the concentration is being conserved.

Some of virtual imaging is shown in figure 04 & 05. To adopt this approach first of all we should understand the present condition. If we look at that then we can see,



Figure 05. Festival plaza with tomb.

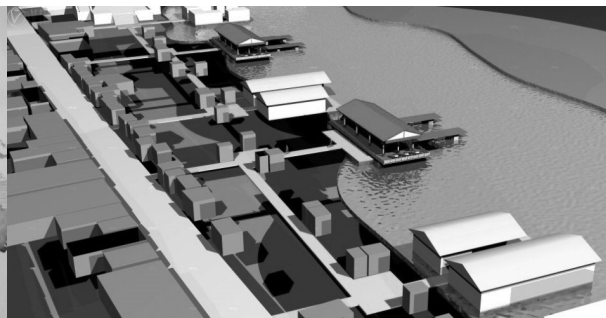


Figure 06. Commercial development in Traditional way.

- Most important site of the adjacent area & the place of tourist & pilgrims attractions. So all new function will provide focus on them with conserving over existing flavor.
- It's surrounded by the khadem community, who are the main stake holder. So, they should be properly facilitated with economic beneficiaries what can accelerate conservation process.
- Develop tomb & tourism related commercial facilities with ensuring economic return to stake holder.
- The most important local raw marketing is taking place here to conserve inherent lifestyle.
- Tomb & mosque could be refurbished respectively in a contemporary manner to accommodate more space.
- Historical Thakur dighi and a graveyard is situated in front of Complex should be included in conservation plan.
- Keeping its historic value as well as religious value is the main goal to achieve.

- A yearly OROSH & CHAITRA PURNIMA MELA is arranged here what should be formally included in long term plan.
- Allocate commercial vibrancy with ensuring heritage value.

So, the design guidelines for this particular case are,

- To conserve the existing distinct commercial set-up what could be the best attraction for tourist & pilgrims with some tea stalls and shops are also suggested at some strategic point. .
- To enhance attraction we develop some local boarding facilities & leisure activities in natural setup as like as floating on water as like as contextual vernacular solution continuing together along with the main commercial axis.
- To ensure mysticism through view, vista & sudden change in scale. Natural setup should not be interrupted for any decision. Vehicular access is strongly prohibited in the pedestrian loop.
- Have to develop a complex near the Mausoleum which includes:
 - A Musafirkhana connecting walking meditation zone like boarding facilities.
 - Extension of the mosque.
 - Library and Museum.
 - Leisure activities.
- Excavate the historical highland so that tourist can feel the mysticism of nature while walking beneath the plaza & by the water as well as the silence of graveyard.
- A fair space is relocated again besides the *MAUSOLEUM*.
- Housing for *KHADEM* is also proposed to make the approach more communal.

Our target is to take the tourist through the narrow & fancy set up to a large scaled silence of water body & graveyard. So we developed paths full of narrow view finding angle on the walkway towards complex surrounded by trees.

6. Conclusion

This study area is an example of a critical conservation site, where conservation process is stimulated between inter dependency relation among locality and tourism. If local community is not involved in conservation process then it is very difficult to protect any heritage site. It has just shown a limited applicability of community based and community involvement in conservation approach throughout the study. The tomb creates mysticism and the mosques creates spiritual environment and amalgam with highly local economy based commercial spine. To experience the entire thing one should walk towards Khan E Jahan's mausoleum from the node, where crowd and festive surrounding guide towards a great silence and sudden change of scale from tiny to monumental create ceremonial mystic storyline. Myth for the spirit what could apparently be absent but the presence of ruins create a great attraction for tourism at the same time tourism based economical vibrancy create a great community involvement and the heritage site generate a sustainable conservation and management.

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