

DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM INDUSTRY IN 'NON-TOURIST CITIES' BY CONSERVATION OF ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE - A CASE STUDY OF CITY RAJKOT IN GUJARAT

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ABSTRACT

The Architectural heritage can be manifested through sites, buildings or structures with cultural and historic relations. The heritage values of such sites, buildings or structures may base on their scale of significance ranging from local city level to national or global level. I think these values can be utilized to create a center of attention. And that is why, this study is to enhance the importance of architectural heritage to attract national as well as international tourist and develop tourism industry in any town or city which is not well known for tourism, here I called it as a 'Non-Tourist City'. This study recommends non tourist cities that how to develop tourism industry by a case study of a city Rajkot located in Gujarat.

KEYWORDS: Architecture, Architectural Landmarks, Conservation, Heritage, History And Culture, Tourism Industry, Tourism Development, Travelers.

INTRODUCTION

Unlike other art forms, architecture cannot be locked away in a museum to be viewed on demand. It impinges on our lives and work. We use buildings and see them all the time, even if we do not look at them. How does one distinguish between "heritage" architecture and other buildings? Architecture is noticed, and regarded as "heritage" when it acquires the patina of age, or when it is distanced from us by other styles becoming dominant.

In India, "conservation" is generally understood to mean the task of keeping listed buildings in a state of good repair. Today, Seventy years after Independence, some of these architectural landmarks are in danger not from neglect but

from too much attention or too much use. Rose Macaulay spoke for many travelers when she wrote her very evocative *Pleasure of Ruins* in 1954. The slow and often uncomfortable journeys to the ruins, their wild "un spoilt" appearance, were essential ingredients in the pleasure to be had from viewing them. But all this changed as tourism became an industry, and the occasional tourist-party gave way to large groups arriving in busloads at these sites demanding quick returns for their money.

Tourist packages and incentives from the government "Bharat Darshan" scheme have increased the numbers of domestic tourists enormously.

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They are not like Rose Macaulay. Ruins do not appeal to them, and they would appreciate something new and sparkling more than a building which is old and crumbling.

Excellence in architectural skills does not hold them in awe; it is taken for granted. For in our country skilled craftsmanship and an innate sense of design are not denied to the poor, and even the wayside vegetable stall or basket of fruit is arranged like a work of art. The various elements in great works of architecture are part of a living tradition.

But there are now an increasing number of deracinated urban dwellers, cut off from their culture-region and from the sense of history imbibed from grandparents. Those who are comfortably literate are vulnerable to "hidden persuaders" and many look at the built heritage with romantic or sectarian preoccupations. Some of it may appeal to some of them more strongly because they see it as part of a tradition with which they identify themselves.

In other cases, some sites may appeal to them more if they became in effect amusement parks, tricked out with cultural "festivals". All this means that historic architecture can be used to project ideologies or as a backdrop for activities not always relevant to the site.

IMPORTANT HERITAGE STRUCTURES IN RAJKOT

RAIYA NAKA GATE AND TOWER

In 1892, the Chief Engineer of the British Agency, Sir Robert bell Booth, Renovated Raiya Naka Gate and built the present three storied clock tower.

OLD FORTIFIED TOWN OF RAJKOT

Masumkhan, Dy Faudar of Junagadh conquered Rajkot in 1720 AD. He got a fort built in 1722AD. It is said that the perimeter of the fort was 4 to 5km and its walls were 8 feet wide. There used to

be a wide and deep moat all around the fort wall. The fort is non-existent today save some ruins and relics. The town within the gates and to the west of Aji River was the old fortified town of Rajkot.

LANG LIBRARY

In 1885 AD, A library by the name of Gungrahak Mandli started off as a one room affair in an English school during the British times. Later on in 186AD.it was shifted to its own independent building in kothi Compound area. From the grand building in Jubilee Garden. It is the oldest library in Saurashtra. The building housing the library is an important architectural monument.

JUBILEE GARDEN

The Jubilee Garden forms the back drop to memorial institutes, buildings built during Colonial period in the memory of various people who served for the cause of Kathiawar during their times.

They are Connaught Hall (erstwhile Senate House and now Arvindbhai Maniar Town Hall). Watson Museum and the 100 years old Lang Library.

HATKESH TEMPLE

In 1853, thakore Mehramanji IV, the ruler of Rajkot gifted Hatkesh temple to the Nagar community. The temple was renovated in 1935 AD.

DARBARGADH

The seat of Jadeja rulers of Rajkot was built in 1791AD. It is built primarily out of locally available lime stone and black trap. The building itself sits on a high plateau overlooking the river Aji to its east. The building is in dilapidated condition today. It housed two important temples of the old city Halkesh temple and Haveli temple.

CONNAUGHT HALL

Connaught Hall was built to commemorate the visit of Arthur, Duke of Connaught, third Prince of Empress Queen Victoria, to Kathiawar in 1887AD. This building later came to be known as Senate Hall and presently it is known as Arvindbhai Maniar Town Hall.

BA DEV KUNWARBA GRAIN MARKET

The market was built on 2nd October 1825AD princely building this would have been the first attempt at forming a guild of grain merchants. The building is made of sandstone with fine wooden trusses. There are two rows of shapes with a central corridor. The height of the building allows for easy storage of sacks of grains.

AJI RIVER

Aji is the most important independent river of Saurashtra. Originating from the hills in the Sardhar and Lodhika region, it travels through Rajkot, Padadhri and Morbi taluka of Rajkot district and meets the Arabian Sea near the village Ranjitpara of Jodiya taluka of Jamnagr district.

WATSON MUSEUM

In 1888 it was decided to build a museum in fond memory of Colonel John Watson, Political agent of Saurashtra from 1881 to 1889AD for the service he rendered to the cause of Saurashtr. The museum is set up in the Memorial Institute Buildings located in the Jubilee Garden. The Watson Museum of Rajkot is the second most important museum in Gujarat and is the oldest museum in Saurashtra. There is some other heritage building also famous in Rajkot city like Traditional Dela Type Houses in Kadiwad, Thosa Gali and Sir Lakhaji Raj Vegetable Market etc.

HERITAGE WALKS

To promote heritage conservation and awareness regarding the importance of the heritage in

Rajkot, various walk and tours have been initiated in the city. Which is a part of the initiative called Rajkot Mari Najare. This initiative consists of the following:

FOUR TOURS

Gandhian Tour, Rajkot Darshan, Senior Citizen Tour and Children Tour.

FOUR WALKS

Heritage Walk, Colonial Walk, Religious Walk and Walk for the Youth.

- Heritage walk covers 21 spots in the city that were built at the time of Masumkhan, the Mughai Fauzdar of Rajkot and vassal of Emperor Aurangzeb.
- Colonial walks covers 17 buildings constructed by the British from 1820 to 1910, Rajkot was the seat of the representative of the crown.
- Religious walk covers major temples and religious structures constructed by the Jadeja Rajuts the princes of Rajkot and other structures.

PROJECTS FOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION

In 2008-09 and 2009-10 the RMC initiated a study to prepare a comprehensive city conservation plan. It was first such effort for comprehensive study of heritage of Rajkot. Under this conservation plan study significant elements of the structure with respect to tangible as well as intangible heritage were observed and listed along with details of their physical condition. According to the study there are three types of buildings in Rajkot city with heritage significance government properties, trust owned properties and privately owned properties.

The city conservation plan has identified structures with heritage significance and needs attention towards their conservation.

- Band stand
- Old city Railway station
- West Hospital (1873)
- Bedi naka Gate and Tower
- Shir Dharmendrasinhji Cloth Market
- Sir Lakhaji Rj Vegetable Market
- Ba Dev Kunwarba Grain Market
- Cabutra near the Grain Market
- Ghee Peeth
- Old Junagadh House
- Raiya Naka Gate and Tower
- Sardar Police Chowki
- Vada no Uttaro

OBSERVATIONS AND ISSUES

POOR MAINTENANCE

The condition of heritage structures and their surroundings suffer due to poor maintenance and upkeep of the heritage sites identified as city monuments.

PROCESS OF CHANGE OF BUILDING USE

Currently the repair works and regular maintenance of heritage sites and structures have to be carried out by the owners at their own cost and no incentives are provided to them for the upkeep these valuable landmarks.

BUILDING, RECONSTRUCTION OR EXTENSION PERMIT

A structure is identified as a heritage structure, it may become difficult for the owners of the building to obtain permit to repair, upgrade the building or reconstruct it. As a result of this, the maintenance of the structure becomes economically unviable and the structure is left to dilapidate.

CONSIDERATIONS

There is a need to preserve, protect and conserve the heritage structures within the Old City. In spite of presence of these buffer zones it is

observed that there is continuous redevelopment happening in the Old City.

Lack of financing support mechanism for heritage structures and precincts owned by private individuals leads to the deterioration of heritage buildings and replacement by the new structures. Also these areas lack infrastructure and amenities to meet the contemporary demands. All these concerns are addressed through special development regulations which are beneficial to the owners.

PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PROPOSAL 1: ENCOURAGE CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION OF THE OLD CITY

The Old City of Rajkot developed over centuries, is comprised of more than 100 residential clusters with traditional courtyard houses, havelis, chabutaras and other structures. The urban fabric of the Old City is crucial to maintain its traditional historic character and its heritage value. The complete Old City Area shall help to preserve the historic fabric by restricting plot amalgamation and reconfigurations. The development regulations for the Old City Area are specifically formulated to preserve and conserve the heritage structures and precincts. Depending upon the integrity and heritage value, these structures are categorized in various grades are getting listed and which shall be verified by the competent Authority with the help of Heritage Committee.

PROPOSAL 2: INTRODUCTION OF TRADABLE DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (TDR) FOR LISTED STRUCTURES

All properties within the Old City Area are permitted a blanket FSI of 2.0. Further, to incentivize preservation and conservation of such structures and sites, new regulations have been introduced. This includes Tradable Development Rights (TDR). These TDR incentives vary based on the grade of the heritage structures as listed in

the Heritage Conservation Plan. The heritage structures will be eligible to receive Tradable Rights Certificate (TRC). Using this TRC, the structure owners shall be able to trade the FSI and generate revenue for conservation of the structure.

PROPOSAL 3: PREPARE DETAILED HERITAGE CONSERVATION PLAN

Heritage in the city comprise of the protected and unprotected monuments, sites, neighborhoods or precincts which recognize the visual, spatial and cultural character of the city. A Heritage Conservation Plan should take in account all the mentioned components to protect, conserve and maintain the heritage structures and precincts. Potential and priorities of reuse of heritage structures as hotels, museums, commercial use etc, and heritage related tourism activities should be determined.

The Competent Authority should identify the ways to raise revenues for conserving the heritage structures and precincts. An implementation plan needs to be supplemented with a financial strategy for identifying various alternative resources for funding. Scope of financing through various agencies such as international, central, state or local governments, or private sector, public private partnership needs to be worked. An innovative financing mechanism of Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) needs to be introduced to reduce the burden on the privately owned heritage structures and precincts.

RECOMMENDATION

PREPARE A VISUAL POLLUTION CONTROL GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS FOR THE CITY

A set of guidelines and standards should be prepared for controlling visual pollution within the existing city. Depending upon the local character, separate set of guidelines need to be

formulated to address contextual requirements and enhance the traditional ambience. Some of the distinct character exists in city such as old city; various commercial commodities, special projects need to be thought as a separate entity.

There are several issues identified in existing situation and analysis (Part-I), which need to be solved through these guidelines. A dedicated committee should be formulated for implementation as per the detailed guidelines. Those who violate these guidelines must be penalized by the 'Visual Pollution Controlling Committee'.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- Prepare Heritage Conservation Plan including listing of heritage structures and precincts, regulations for the heritage structure influence zones and heritage precincts, TDR mechanism to incentivize conservation, design guidelines for controlling visual and physical character etc.
- Prepare a visual pollution control guidelines and standards for the city
- Organize display of hoardings to enhance the aesthetics of the city

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