

## IMPACT OF HERITAGE-LED REGENERATION ON TOURISM ECONOMY: CASE STUDIES FROM GLOBAL HERITAGE CITIES

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### Abstract:

*This research article delves into the transformative impact of heritage-led regeneration on global tourism economies. Focused on the interplay between heritage preservation and economic development, the study explores how strategic initiatives have become pivotal drivers of sustainable tourism growth.*

*The research underscores the importance of adaptive reuse, community involvement, and innovative approaches in successful heritage-led regeneration. The integration of cultural entrepreneurship, digital technologies, and community engagement emerges as catalysts for economic revitalization, job creation, and sustainable tourism practices.*

*As heritage-led regeneration continues to reshape urban landscapes, this research contributes nuanced insights into the intricate dynamics between heritage preservation and economic development. The findings offer valuable insights for policymakers, urban planners, and stakeholders seeking to replicate successful models in their respective locales, fostering a holistic approach to sustainable tourism economies.*

**Keywords:** *Heritage-led regeneration, Tourism economy, Sustainable tourism growth, Adaptive reuse, Cultural entrepreneurship*

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### Introduction:

Heritage-led regeneration refers to a revitalisation of old derelict areas which are achieved by adaptive reuse of historic buildings. Projects that focus on revitalising heritage areas serve to improve the state of historic buildings and thereby increase economic growth. Unlike tangible resources, heritage does not possess a tangible intrinsic value. However, heritage has tremendous cultural, aesthetic, academic value and also has great significance for local communities. Heritage-led regeneration operates on the principle that conserving heritage provides avenues that leads to economic growth. Thus, investing in heritage conservation can be lucrative as it may increase revenue by increasing tourism.

Heritage tourism is one of the oldest forms of tourism. Visiting places of historical and cultural value is an important aim for tourists. Globally, tourism sector has been important sector for revenue generation. In the age of globalisation and technological advancement, tourism is increasing each year. Within tourism, the popularity of heritage tourism has been on rise. Not only has heritage tourism contributed to economic growth it also shows positive impact on conservation attempts (Le Thuy Hang, 2020). Further, tourism has also provided job opportunities. In Indian economy tourism contributes to 5.8% of the total GDP of the country. Heritage is also a



major factor in increasing tourism in India. Thus, it demonstrates the need to invest in heritage for economic growth in India.

This study analyses examples of heritage led regeneration projects from historical cities across the world. The first example is of the city of Bath in United Kingdom where literary, aesthetic and historical value have been leveraged to boost tourism. Second example is of Kyoto that incorporates intangible traditions with modern developments. The last example is one from Jaipur in India where heritage led conservation has led to the city's transformation from a desert oasis to a global tourist destination.

Lastly, the study would evaluate the benefits of heritage conservation to tourism and economy. It would also suggest areas where such projects can be applied in India. Thus, the study aims to suggest heritage led regeneration as an innovative method to achieve economic growth as well as sustainable development.

#### **Objective:**

The research paper aims to examine the transformative impact of heritage-led regeneration on global tourism economies, focusing on the interplay between heritage preservation and economic development through in-depth case studies.

#### **Value and Heritage:**

Heritage has two types tangible and intangible. Tangible heritage are artefacts, monuments and buildings while culture, art forms and history are intangible forms of heritage. Due to its nature, it is very difficult to judge value of heritage through economic parameters. However, the value of heritage can be determined by its significance. According to UNESCO, there are four parameters to determine the significance of heritage which are historic, aesthetic, architectural, scientific, social and cultural significance. Historic significance refers to antiquity of heritage or its association with a notable historical event or person. Aesthetic significance is related to the beauty or appearance. Heritage sites or objects which reflect the highest ideal of beauty prevalent in the time are considered valuable; a notable example are famous masterpiece paintings. Architectural significance is possessed by historic buildings and monuments that demonstrate technological and architectural advancement of the time. Lastly, cultural significance refers to heritage which is significant to a group of people or a community. All heritage is culturally significant as the value inscribed to heritage is dependent on the culture. Heritage lacks intrinsic economic value. It is an ideal and concept that cannot be commodified. However, the inherent value of heritage can be leveraged for economic growth.

#### **Heritage and Tourism:**

Heritage related experiences are major influencers behind tourism. Heritage tourism is one of the oldest forms of tourism. People not just travel to visit historic places but also to immerse themselves in unique culture surrounding heritage. Thus, heritage is a major motive behind undertaking tourist activities.

There has been a prevalent notion that tourism and conservation are separate. Excessive tourism can hinder conservation. However, the recent shift towards sustainable tourism has boosted heritage conservation efforts. Further, tourism industry has led to popularisation of historic places, which has helped to generate awareness regarding their conservation.

Sustainable tourism has emerged in current age as a response to climate crisis. Tourism can have negative impacts on the destination. Overcrowding can cause a strain on resources. Natural environment is damaged too. Negative effects of tourism have been observed in many popular historical. Angkor Vat in Cambodia became a highly sought after tourist destination attracting millions of people every year. However, due to high number of visitors, the ancient temple complex showed accelerated signs of deterioration. Excessive and mindless development of tourism without regards for protecting local landscape can have disastrous impacts. In the wake of such occurrences, the notion of sustainable tourism, which was once an emerging niche within tourism ended up becoming a norm for modern tourism. The cyclical and symbiotic nature of heritage and tourism is one of dependence. In simple words, heritage tourism will only survive if heritage is conserved. Thus, conserving heritage and local environment became an obligatory part of developing tourism. Thus, heritage conservation is not simply a boost to heritage, it is also a prerequisite for developing tourism (Kochar, 2022)..

#### **Heritage LED Regeneration & Economy:**

Heritage conservation is instrumental to revitalize urban areas. Once derelict and neglected spaces have been transformed into thriving hubs through thoughtful preservation efforts. While the presence of old buildings and historic sections of cities might initially pose challenges to modern urbanization, the strategy of conserving and repurposing these structures for adaptive reuse has yielded positive impacts on overall development (Goddard-Bowman, 2014). This approach not only preserves the cultural and historical fabric of the community but also serves as a catalyst for increased tourism, attracting visitors eager to explore the charm and authenticity of well-preserved heritage sites (Alseragy et al., 2018).

The phenomenon of heritage led regeneration leading to economic growth has been visible in many places across the world. The following are some successful examples where heritage led regeneration has led to development in tourism and economic growth.

#### **Case Study 1: Bath, United Kingdom**

##### **History:**

Bath is a UNESCO heritage city in United Kingdom which is one of Britain's historic spa towns. Notable attractions in Bath include Roman Baths, Bath Abbey and The Royal Crescent. It is known for its pristine Georgian architecture and the use of distinctive type of limestone called as Bath stone. The city is best associated with Georgian period. However, it has remains from ancient Roman period and also from Medieval period. Apart from history, Bath has a literary legacy for its association with notable writers like Mary Shelly and Jane Austen.

##### **Current Condition:**

In current times, Bath has preserved its distinctive heritage landscape. The Bath Preservation Trust an organisation has been established to oversee heritage conservation. Guided tours of the city and its various museums are popular amongst tourists. The use of technology assists in translating information about the town's history in various languages.

The Bath and North East Somerset BANES council are responsible for developing the city of Bath while adhering to UNESCO norms and protecting its UNESCO Heritage City status.

Many development projects have been undertaken in the city of Bath. Southgate shopping street is a shopping hub in Bath city centre. Its proximity to notable attractions in Bath such as Bath Abbey and Roman Baths, has made it a popular tourist destination. Tourists are encouraged to explore Bath by walking as most sites are nearby. The utilisation of historic routes as pedestrian pathways has also encouraged tours of the city.

The town has various initiatives and events to increase tourism. Bath's seasonal Christmas Market that takes place every year between November to December is popular in the UK and attracts many visitors. Bath Christmas market provides a platform for local entrepreneurs and small businesses and thus generates revenue for the city while contributing positively to the local community.

Tourism is a huge source of income for Bath. Another potential source of income is revenue generated through film shooting and photography. Due to its well-preserved Georgian architecture, Bath is a favourable backdrop for historical drama. Historical landscape in form of vast gardens such as Prior Park and Sydney Gardens have provided great backdrop. Movie adaptation of Jane Austen's *Persuasion* and Series adaptation of Julia Quinn's *Bridgerton* book series have both been shot extensively in Bath. Thus, this demonstrates that preserving historical landscape can have tremendous utility.

#### **Lessons Learnt:**

- The need for planning authorities to work alongside an advisory non-profit organisation devoted exclusively for heritage conservation such as Bath Preservation Trust. The collaboration between local council and BPT has led to conservation issues being reflected in planning process.
- Seasonal and temporary events such as Christmas market is useful in not only boosting local economy but also encouraging home grown small businesses.
- Conserving heritage can provide with a potential to gain income through video shooting and photography.

#### **Case Study 2 : Kyoto City, Japan**

The city of Tokyo is considered as the political capital of Japan. However, Kyoto since historic times has been cultural and spiritual capital. A group of monuments called The Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto are UNESCO World Heritage group of sites situated in the city. Kyoto has a long and varied history (World Bank Group, 2018). It served as a capital city in Heian Period in 794. While it continued to remain the place of Imperial palace, the increasing power of samurai shifted to Kamakura and later to Muromachi. Various schools of Buddhism such as Zen grew during phase around 1185 to 1573 in Kyoto. The years of civil war in 1467 led to destruction of many medieval buildings. Later, peace was restored and Kyoto thrived as a cultural centre. During Meiji Restoration when Japan underwent modernization, In Kyoto tradition was preserved. During this period, education and academic pursuits were prioritised in Kyoto due to which the gained its reputation for being a centre of learning. Many areas in Japan suffered significant damages. However, Kyoto was relatively well-preserved and contributed to post-war recovery. (World Bank Group, 2018).

Kyoto city in modern day is in a unique position. It possesses a soft power for its deep connection with Japanese culture. The area of Kyoto is also home to various Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples which make it a place of pilgrimage and religious significance. The art of flower arrangement Ikebana and also for tea ceremonies called

Sado. Traditional Noh theatre also was a part of Kyoto. The maiko and geisha tradition also takes root from Kyoto. Further traditional crafts such as dyeing, textile, weaving are preserved in Kyoto. Various festivals such Gion procession is held in Tokyo which is of great reverence and significance to Japanese people.

Another important feature of Kyoto's heritage is the presence of Kyo-machiya buildings. Kyo-machiya are wooden buildings that are distinctive feature of Kyoto's traditional architecture. The pressure of urbanization and new building and safety regulations led to demolition of old Kyo-machiya. The city council and other national agencies have encouraged Kyo-machiya by providing tax breaks and subsidies to preserve these historic structure. These sustained efforts have brought adaptive reuse of Kyo-machiya and helped protect it in Kyoto city's downtown.

#### Lessons Learnt:

- Kyoto conserves its intangible cultural heritage alongside its built historic environment by transitioning towards an experience based tourism experience. It provides a good example for conserving intangible in tandem with tangible heritage.
- Encouragement to sustain its traditional wooden Kyo-machiya despite urbanisation is a great example of preserving vernacular and traditional architecture .
- Lastly, Kyoto's emphasis on knowledge through not just its academic institutes but also through courses and activities designed to give a deeper knowledge of Japan's historic culture is an important initiative for heritage education.

#### Case Study 3: Jaipur, India

Jaipur in India is historic city from medieval ages. In 1727 the city was established as the capital of Amber by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II. An avid astronomer he had an observatory constructed in Jaipur, an astrological and architectural Jantar Mantar. He inculcated his knowledge of astronomy in planning too. Due to its distinctive shade of pink it is also referred as Pink City. During British rule, Jaipur was a princely state and maintained its cultural autonomy. In 1947, Jaipur was assimilated within the Indian state and in the year 1949 it was declared the capital city of the state of Rajasthan. Today, Jaipur is known for its forts which are a part of UNESCO protected sites Hill forts of Rajasthan. (Government of Rajasthan, 2018).

The urban planning initiative of Jaipur was one of the first of its kind in India. Adaptive-reuse of palaces and its transformation into luxury resorts and hotels has helped to increase tourism. Traditional *havelis* are being used as resorts (Government of Rajasthan, 2018). A notable example is collaboration between City Palace and Airbnb wherein guests can live in a palace. These provide immersive tourist experiences which focuses on re-creating grandeur of Jaipur's past. Immersive history centric experiences have been successful in increasing tourism in Jaipur. A new development in these experiences have been destination weddings. Utilising palaces and forts to provide a historical and romantic setting for destination weddings have increased tourism and generated revenue. Adaptive-reuse and its integration has required collaboration between many stakeholders such as local state authorities, national authorities as well as many former royal families. Involvement of private agencies in conservation process has been a recent phenomenon in India. Leveraging mandatory CSR funds and utilise it for

heritage conservation schemes like has been an idea behind Government of India's Adopt a Heritage scheme. This if implemented can assist in gaining funds for conservation.

#### **Lessons Learnt:**

- Jaipur provides a good example for public-private partnership in heritage conservation which increases tourism.
- Creative adaptive re-use solutions in Jaipur strike a perfect balance between conservation and revenue generation.
- Its potential to be a destination wedding site and develop a niche of wedding tourism using its built heritage has great economic potential.

#### **Heritage Conservation in Sustainable Tourism:**

Through the above case studies, it is evident that heritage conservation plays an important role in developing sustainable tourism (Xiong et al., 2023). The biggest contribution of heritage conservation is diversifying tourism. It helps to cater to various niches and goes beyond the niche of mass tourism.

Many heritage sites are located areas around environmentally sensitive areas. Many natural landscapes are considered as heritage landscape and are protected under heritage legislations (Randhir & Singh, 2022). Thus, conservation attempts protect natural environment from human activity and conserves it (Loulanski & Loulanski, 2011).

Lastly, heritage conservation is important because it helps to protect cultural heritage while also benefiting the local community by generating employment opportunities and increasing economic growth by bringing in development.

#### **Potential for Heritage Led Regeneration in India:**

There is tremendous potential for applying heritage led regeneration in India as evident from the previous analysis of Jaipur. Many other historic places have the potential for heritage led regeneration. Some historic places in India which can benefit from heritage-led regeneration in India are described below

##### **Pondicherry, Tamil Nadu.**

The city of Pondicherry has a fascinating history. During ancient time, there was a thriving trading centre in Arikamedu where many Roman merchants had settled. During colonial period, Pondicherry was one of the few French colonies in India. Pondicherry has a heavy influence of French culture combined with local culture which gives it a unique cultural heritage. The establishment of Auroville, a globally renowned spiritual centre has attracted many visitors here. Apart from being a spiritual centre, Auroville is known for encouraging innovative and sustainable practices, encouraging their residents to live in harmony with nature. Thus, heritage led regeneration and sustainable tourism has tremendous potential in a place like Pondicherry.

##### **Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.**

The spiritual centre of India, Varanasi is rich in intangible cultural heritage as well as for its temples. Varanasi attracts thousands of pilgrims to the sacred Kashi Vishwanath Temple. Situated on the banks of river Ganga, the city is important for Hindu community. The scope of heritage led regeneration in Varanasi can focus on



preserving intangible heritage and also on conserving Ganga river.

### **Pune, Maharashtra.**

Pune in Maharashtra is known for its architecture from Medieval Maratha period. Many historical buildings such from Peshwa period are found across the city. During freedom struggle, Pune served as a hub for radical socio-political changes. Modern day Pune is an academic hub boasting of some of India's notable educational institutes. Its continued academic tradition and structures associated with it can benefit from heritage led regeneration.

### **Conclusion:**

The term urbanisation has evolved through ages. The focus of development has shifted to a more holistic and encompassing definition (Eng & Lovejoy, 2022). Well-being of community, conserving natural environment, protecting heritage has become an important priority for people as well as policy makers. his shift towards sustainability has been seen in tourism sector. The cost of economic growth was in form of deterioration of environment and hindering heritage conservation. Thus, a more mindful approach towards tourism has developed where economic growth and tourist activity.

Heritage conservation can contribute tremendously to sustainability. Adaptive reuse of historic buildings are eco-friendly and also brings a previously underutilised place back in use (Said et al., 2013). Conserving historic buildings is expensive. However, it is also a major factor for increasing tourism and in turn generating revenue. In India, there are some sites which display potential for heritage led revitalisation for economic growth. Focusing on a heritage centred plan would ensure sustainable development of these places and transform them into global destinations.

Thus, heritage led regeneration leads to economic growth by providing increased opportunities for revenue generation.

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