Methodological Approach towards Reliving Katra: A Cultural Cluster for Tourism

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ABSTRACT: Traveling as a formative experience provides lessons on various aspects of life allowing us to learn and enhance our social relationships. As significant phenomenon tourism plays a vital role in encouraging regional development and promoting communities for high standard living while adapting all kind of facilities. However, with advancement in technology now it has become easy for people to travel to various sites. Globally, the Religious sites have been great source of attracting tourists, from past as for their diverse beliefs. But lacking of basic essentials like infrastructure, safety and security in and around the tourist circuit have affected the urban growth. There is a great need and potential seen for the development of Religious sites as Religious practices are embedded in the cultural identity of any place. In the first part, this paper deals with the various factors combined with cultural tourists and understanding the potential of chosen area. In the second part, the summary of the study as a result leads to the design considerations towards spatial design for tourist coming to Katra where different areas are explored to facilitate different set of tourists; amid growing challenges arisen because of monotonous commercial developments oriented towards short term economic gains without caring for diverse visitor's interest, safety and identity/image of the place. Such a study will develop an understanding of pilgrimage in the modern and urban Context.

Keywords: Tourist, Social Relationships, Religious, Context, Cultural.

I. INTRODUCTION

Travel is more than seeing of sights; it is a change that goes on, deep and permanent forever in the ideas of living. Urban form contributes the areas that flourish, encouraging shifts from industrial to tourism. However, much like global advancements have gentrified the process in many of its leading towns and urban cities focusing on economic benefits chiefly, religiously driven sites too have become significant spots for economic development where the social, cultural and other regional specified aspects are highly ignored.

India owing to its diverse culture and heritage is one of the popular tourist destinations for Pilgrimage sites. Pilgrimage as a process involves journey to sacred centers having deep Religious message articulated with symbols and manifested with localized meaning- across Culture and Religious traditions. In the Indian context majorly all Pilgrim centers are closely associated to natural location being near to water, mountaintops, forests etc.

However, Pilgrimage has evolved in a distinct form from the traditional one. Contemporary Pilgrimage as a new derivation where visitors visiting these sites have been distinguished depending upon their personal interests- where some are keen devotees while some have additional motives for visiting the site irrespective of its religious importance [34].

Hence, contextualizing (belonging to the place) these sites help tourists to focus on many physical entities that have great potential and impact to the physical environment and the mind of travellers in many ways. In the contemporary context there's an intensive influx of tourists, which helps in gentrifying the economic opportunities in the establishment. Contemporary tourists are no longer interested in inclusive sites (Fayous-Sola, 1996; Weilker and Hall, 1992), there interest has formulated in discovering, experiencing, participating and gathering the knowledge that combines everyday phenomena of the destination, ultimately adding meaning to life.

II. PREVIOUS RESEARCH: LIFE CYCLE CONCEPT OF PILGRIMAGE SITES AS TOURISM

A. The Introductory Stage (1960-1990's)
Though it roots back in time by number of concepts and research's Constructing Pilgrimage sites as an essential part of Tourism -i.e. Pilgrimage Tourism, but the thought for development started primarily around this time. Many like Graburn (1977) stated that these places are about self-transformation, knowing of oneself and acquiring knowledge. So, the place was defined as dynamic since it holds assembly of diversified Pilgrims who come and go within a span of two-three days [32].

B. The Growth Stage (1990's)
This time was marked as transitionary since the growth started with identification of Pilgrims as Religious travellers and tourists as vacationers depending upon their personal motives. Where both set of Pilgrims and Travellers differ as Pilgrims were focused to a defined center and social-cultural activities pertaining to it. Whereas, a traveller moves in opposite direction where the focus is divided over multiple activities [32].

C. The Maturity Stage (2000's)
Throughout the history, religiously motivated routes have greatly developed the places with considerable historic and cultural powers. In particular these routes have helped in stimulation and development in various forms. Religiously motivated travel is perhaps the oldest and most widespread type of travel in human history [32].

III. CULTURE AND HERITAGE AS TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE ELEMENTS

Cultural Heritage does not conclude at restructuring or developing the monuments and collecting objects. It has a broader concept that combines and defines everything from its Tangible and Intangible elements. It includes all the living expression and traditions inherited from past like (UNESCO INTAGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE).
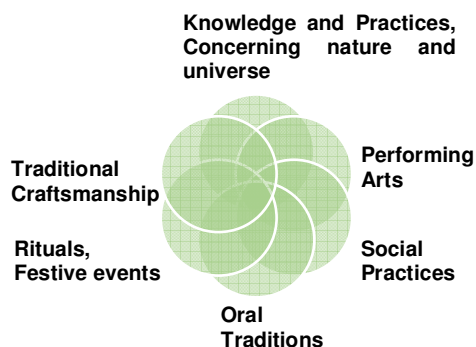

Fig. 1. UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Culture and heritage have an important role; these are those elements that keep us attached to Religion, Traditions and Belief's. Culture and Heritage is not only the inherited traditions from past but also the contemporary Rural and Urban practices which have diverse Cultural groups [3].

A. Relationship between Culture and Heritage in Architecture
Space and Culture have social construction formed in process of shaping people's perception. Space plays an important role in strengthening cultural change through the creation of memories, belief's etc. Architecture was and will always be the true measure of nation's culture (Herman Motsios). The formation of spaces is through the response of community. Culture differs from society to society and hence the foundation of Architecture becomes contextual. The shapes like cubes, cuboids, circles and characterized elements like Volumes, Arches, and Domes are all considered as cultural element of a place. Culture has other aspects too like materials. Materials identification is considered as an integral part as it provides uniqueness and identity to the built architecture [2].

IV. CASE STUDIES

A. Virasat-e-khalsa, Anandpur Sahib, Punjab (Ar. Moshe Safdie)
The Heritage Complex Virasat-e-Khalsa has been conceived as a heritage museum that facilities for state's art and communication, setting up the unfolding drama of Sikh Heritage [33].

The complex from its form and spaces serves as reaffirmation of the roots for Sikhs and showcases an inspiring journey into spirited culture for Non-Sikh community.

Fig. 2. View of Museum Source**:** (Google.com/image).

The complex is located in Anandpur Sahib in the state of Punjab sited overlooking the town in close proximity to Anandpur Sahib (1.2km).The whole site becomes a comprehensive complex for tourists as it explains an experiential space where history is narrated with an interesting juxtaposing of a series of paintings and installations. The museum as a complex is envisioned and derived from oral narratives, traditional crafts integrated with state art technology [29].
Inferences
1. A splendid example of Regional Architecture depicting its natural richness and heritage by the massive volumes and spatial design.
2. Scale is of quite importance. The gigantic volume shows the amount of power in Sikhism.
3. The structure is a Landmark and responds to the context of the site (Contextual Art).
4. Where the forms are derived contemporarily the essence of space is kept intact to the Vernacular style.
5. It's a comprehensive tourist destination attracting tourists for various purposes.
6. The complex has served Sikhs deeply with their roots.

B. ChokhiDhani, Jaipur (Rajasthan tourism development)
Chokhi Dhani is a special village thatis the mockup of Rajasthani Village on the outskirts of the Jaipur City (20Km) that integrates the culture and heritage of Rajasthanis. It has an interactive environment where visitors see and experiences the lifestyle and the traditional entertainment of a typical Rajasthani village. It is a beautiful landscaped area lying in the natural scenic view of Rajasthani deserts away from the hustle of city spreaded over 5acres with rustic look blending with the context. The basic concept behind the development of Chokhi Dhani is to capture the vibrant spirit of Rajasthani culture. The aim is to encourage and preserve the art and culture for future.
Inferences
1. The village design is settled in a way that it completely regards the culture and tradition of the city.
2. The complex caters to variety of arts and culture in different forms.
3. The complex is highly culture driven. From minute to large all details and embellishments are executed in the traditional style.

Fig. 3. View of Chokhi Dhani.
Source**:** (Google.com/image).

4. It responds to the context through its colors and setting.
5. The complex design is low cost as only the local resources are used entirely.
6. It's a complex welcoming all the age groups.
7. Sense of belongingness is kept intact throughout the experience of whole village.
8. The complex houses cultural depiction of various other Indian states in a well thought manner.
9. The overall complex is a great retreat of Rajasthani Culture.

C. Heritage Village, Dubai (Dubai Cultural and art authority)
The Dubai Heritage Village was created to embrace the heritage and display the old traditions in UAE. The village houses components from the past such as marine, mountain life with special characteristics of old patterns, forms and handicrafts.
The village is considered as an attractive point for the tourists interested in local traditions of Dubai. Village elaborates the different traditional forms of living ranging from costal to desert to mountainous life.

Fig. 4. Heritage Village Dubai, UAE.
Source**:** (Google.com/image).

The architecture is inherited from old arts and traditions of the local community. Building displays the amalgamation of locally used materials from old times like stones, tents, palm fronds etc. and also the use to traditional elements like arches, Jali's etc. Even the color for structure is chosen as traditional color which satisfies the site context. The collection of mud and stone structures give glimpse into the culture and folk of the Middle East. The village helps visitors to look back in time and explore Dubai's past in the village architecture [30].

Inferences
1. Illustration of elements driven by their traditions their form, color etc.

2. The whole village gives a schematic sense of Dubai's past.
3. The architecture it completely governed by the site context.
4. The whole color theme used blends with the natural surroundings (desert).
5. The articulating elements are depiction of Islamic Architecture.
6. The traditional sense of Dubai is kept intact, which is lesser seen in other parts of this place.

V. DECIPHERING URBAN CHARACTERISTICS OF TOWN

Katra town located in Reasi district, accommodating as the base camp for pilgrims who visit Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine and has become one of the popular destinations among Pilgrims in past few years. Important places en-route to Mata Vaishno Devi shrine is Ban Ganga, ArdhKuwari, Charanpaduka, Ganesh Matha and SanjiChhat. Pilgrimage Tourism to the site constitutes a paramount component of total tourism of the state. The place is enriched in its beautiful natural resources [28].
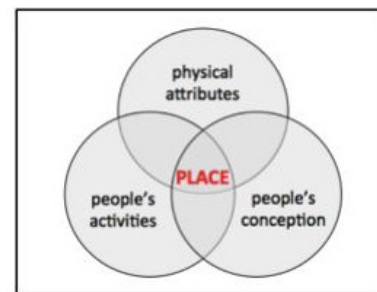

Fig. 5. Understanding Place [28].

The town has prerequisite elements that attract large number of people to understand its context. It is understood with the collaborative formwork of physical attributes which defines people's conception and understanding of the place. The Urban place is optically discerned as a product of social and physical assemblages of norms and forms.
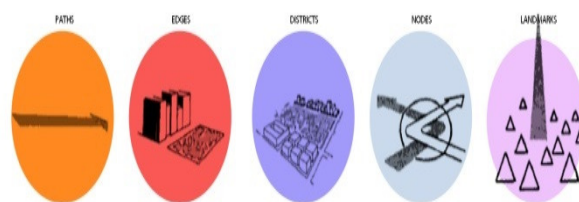

Fig. 6. Architecture of the City.
Source**:** (Google.com/image).

VI. IMAGEABILITY OF TOWN

A. Paths
The legible element in the city image, where the observer experiences the town while walking along the linear forms. The path (streets) having no specific architectural identity [6].

B. Edges
It is an important organizing character feature. Present edge conditions [6].

C. Districts

The identification character is lost in the buildings. No building holds an integral identity [6].

D. Nodes

Nodes as an intersection or junction between paths. The node acts as a break from the long movement zone and buffer between the crowded streets. It has been strategically planned [6].

D. Landmarks

Landmarks are a consequential element that defines the physical object. There are numerous buildings around the town which act as the landmark [6].

VII. URBAN GROWTH SYSTEMS OF TOWN

Katra town located in Reasi district, serving as base camp for pilgrims who visit Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine and from past few years it has become popular destination among pilgrims. Pilgrimage Tourism to the site constitutes an important component of total tourism of the state.

Increased inflow of tourists dictates the occupational pattern of Katra Town & thus prompts the increase change in land use pattern & increased urbanization. To facilitate growing number of pilgrims a lot of agricultural land has been transformed into non-agricultural or mainly to develop spaces for pilgrims facilitation which are still insufficient to cater to the need of pilgrims. This in result has decreased the open spaces, which has made the town congested with lack of public open spaces. Narrow lanes and bazaars are the main occupational and recreational center for the whole town. Despite the authority taking sincere efforts, the unmatched growth of the town has resulted in haphazard urban development [20].

S. No.	Year	Locals	Non-Locals	Ratio
1.	1980	16.90	83.10	17:83
2.	1985	12.09	87.91	12:88
3.	1990	18.21	81.79	18:82
4.	1995	13.69	86.31	14:86
5.	2000	12.49	86.51	13:87
6.	2005	12.30	87.70	12:88
7.	2008	10.25	89.75	10:90
8.	2009	11.30	88.70	11:89
9.	2010	12.44	87.66	12:88
10.	2011	12.10	87.90	12:88
11.	2012	10.90	89.10	11:89

Fig. 7. Respondents visiting the Vaishno Devi shrine
Source: (Digest of Statistics 2011-12. Directorate of Economic & Statistics, Govt. of J&K).

The determination of growth in the number of pilgrims is an important component of tourist impact analysis. The critical analysis carried out reveals that the number of tourists visiting the shrine always bares an upward trend.

VIII. SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACT ON THE DEVELOPMENT

The rapid growth of town has produced both problems as well as opportunity in a vast scale for developed and non-developed zone. The unplanned development has already aggravated the problem. Tourism is identified as one of the major reason. It has grown from the purview of a Privileged to an astronomically immense mass.

There is an urge to discover and explore the unknown places within and around.

Socio-cultural factors include the characterization of society on the basis of its custom, lifestyle and values and for a place like Katra, its social and cultural values are an important element. Below mentioned are some of the parameters and development strategies that are important while governing the development [8].
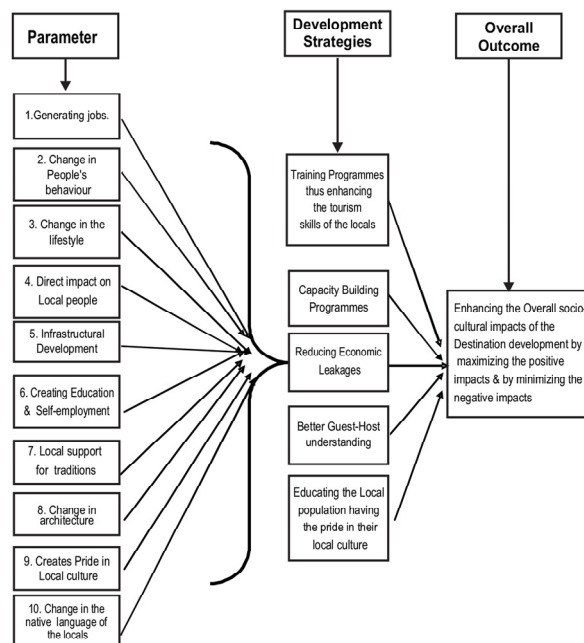

Fig. 8. Socio-Cultural Impact.
Source: Vinay Chauhan (Publishing india.com Volume 2 Issue-2 2009).

IX. INFERENCES OF TOWN

1. Katra Town lags the amenities that support to cater the local as well as floating population.

2. Yes, number of pilgrims has increased over the years beyond expectations but the amenities support for the same is very nominal and hasn't been upgraded for a long time now.

3. The town has become over congested over the time hence hosting no place for recreation; expect a small mall which also does not satisfy the need of people.

4. There is an urge to decongest the central market streets, as the overburdened has affected the urban fabric of town.

5. Understanding that society has a strong relationship with social life and culture, this is embedded in the urban elements.

6. The built open ratio is lost in the streets.

7. Local culture and traditions should be rejuvenated. Present architecture should be redefined keeping in view the history and surroundings.

8. Lost character of paths and no defined edge.

9. Scarcity of human cordial legible urban spaces.

10. No emphasizing on legible urban spaces.

11. The town is burdened with over development and hence there is need to look around other potential sites for development which facilitates local people, tourists and helps in gentrification of economy.

X. ANALYSIS

Conceptualizing Religiousness in tourism
Through numerous researches and cases following points are used to decipher ways of experiencing Religious site in tourist circuit.

1. **Realization of Place through Physical Encounters**: Establishing a place with its sacred meaning and performance. Providing the ambience that connects people understanding to the place and continues the experience. Committing fully with site positioning, religious belief system and influence a sense of identity.

2. **Participation in Collective Rituals**: Social integrity and participation among people complementing to the context and generating a sense of togetherness by affective connections. Ritual performances (like prayer and singing halls) which become a symbolic capital as it perceive to be essential and authentic. Practicing group activities evokes sense towards society and places that address group involvement.

3. **Unconventional Performances**: Not considering the conventional activities to be performed, else engagement of those touristic practices which become the part of journey and are not abruptly introduced. The mundane tourist movements and activities could be freed from structure and bring out the activities to open ground where community interaction is observed.

4. **Sense of Belongings**: Providing users with comfortable environment that mitigates there emotional needs. Accepting members from different groups and imbricating belongingness with the site.

5. **Invention of Material and Usage**: Invention of material and usage in order to enable religious experience and the context. Materials are the prime resource for experiencing the space. Material extension justifies the present value but also the past and future. Symbolic meaning and carvings speak and demonstrate things that embrace the qualities that are essential.

6. **Accessibility**: Connecting typography with all the ease of public transport.

7. **Re-negotiation of Religious Practices**: Religious tourism performances involve interaction among diverse people with diversified spaces and new acquaintances which enable individuals to open and refigure there self and space.

8. **Landscape**: Arrangement and application of sequential landscape elements that will accomplish the purpose of the outer environment.

9. **Performance leading to memories as an intensified experience**: Embedding performances which references to dramaturgical (visuals) performances allowing pilgrims to feel more intensive and subsequently help in remembering.

10. **Cultural Practices**: Manifestation of culture regarded with custom and traditional practices. These practices are distinctive that characterize the society and social group.

11. **Community Participation and Identity**: Encouraging community participatory activities that maintains the local identity.

12. **Safety and Security**: Protection from crime and adverse conditions. There should be a sense of safety and security.

13. **Infrastructural Facilities**: Proper infrastructural facilities to be taken care of from basic to complex.

XI. ABOUT THE SITE

A development that is multifaceted responds to the urban context of town, Satisfying the need for heterogenous group.
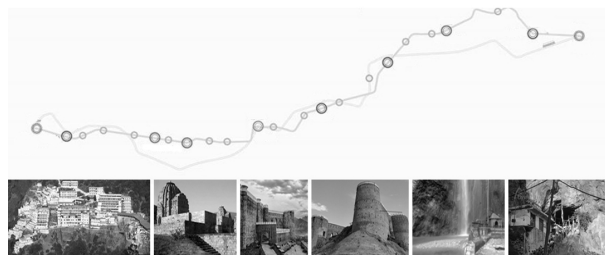

Fig. 9. Base Map of Site and Surrounding

XII. DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

A. Architecture of the place will be reflection of its context

1. Firstly, the development will respond to the urban context of katra, with study of its urban flow, land use, landmark, open spaces etc. the development will be an integral part of the urban fabric in which it lies.

2. Secondly, the design will have holistic approach and will respond to the notion of Pilgrim's in their journey.
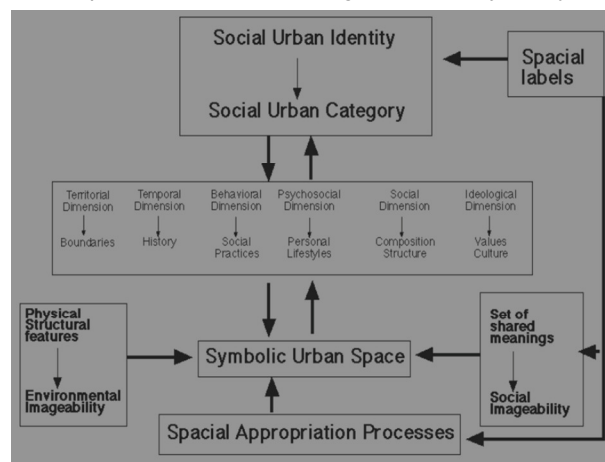

Fig. 10. Relationship between symbolic and identical urban space
Source: (Public Space and Social Identity).

3. Thirdly, the open space and landscape of the site must be designed to respond to the urban fabric as well as act as a landscape of cultural pilgrimage.

(a) Identity and Symbolism
An approach to symbolic urban space that will be understood as identification of social group linked within each other and with the environment. To ensure the unique identity of the place. Socio physical dimension: Intrinsic value of elements triggered by social life, value of interaction elements.

(b) Tangible and Intangible Elements
Tangible and Intangible elements that defines a community enclosing broader concepts that include living expressions and traditions inherited from past (UNESCO INTAGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE).

1. Oral Tradition and Expressions

2. Performing Arts
3. Social Practices, Rituals and Festive events
4. Knowledge and Practices concerning with nature
5. Traditional Craftsmanship
6. Versatile Spaces
7. Planar Connections
8. Materials

The concept of materiality can be articulated with an abstraction and orientation focusing towards local culture and tradition. Material and its ornamentation will be a binding element between vernacular and contemporary styles. The use of material that is locally available.

XIII. DESIGN INITATION AND USER IDENTIFICATION

The design initiation started with identifying various users coming to the site. The users will be diverse belonging to various backgrounds and so as the spaces proposed. It is important to understand the level of engagement provided among different set of groups so that the complex becomes one comprehensive spot. Zones for identified users and the zones that act as a bridge between two different set of users are zoned such that it organizes the whole site.
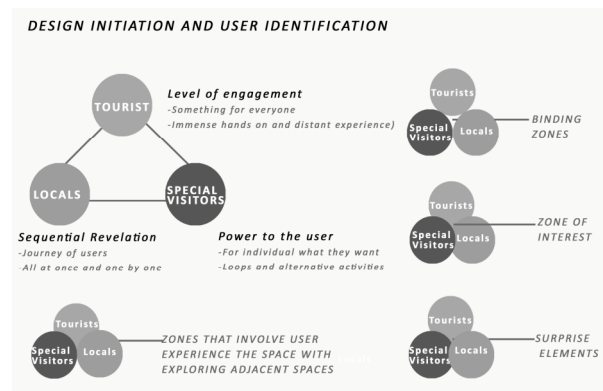

Fig. 11. Design Initiation.

XIV. SPATIAL ANAYSIS AND AREA PROGRAM FOR USERS

Spaces are derived from the tangible and intangible factors given by USECO and understanding the psyche of the user. with them for life.

Fig. 12. Spatial Analysis.

Each space is thought and provided in a way that encourages the user to look forward in its journey and facilitates it with an experience that stays.

All the spaces are well thought and go along the understanding of the project, so that the whole experience for the tourists visiting to the Religious site and to the proposed development go along.

XV. CONCLUSION

The information presented in this research as well as the results obtained from the survey confirms how important and potential the Religious sites have become for architectural development. Not only are they a tourist spot but a great economical support of the area. The process created amid this exploration helped in understanding the different set of tourism and need of different pilgrims, and how to reach up there expectation and provide a coherent comprehensive complex that can become a part of their travel. There should definitely be some contextual complexes in the journey of Pilgrim's so that they have a wholesome experience of the place.

FUTURE SCOPE

In the further research; detailed design execution part shall be presented as part of this research in continuation, which will focus on the designed summary.

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