



# Heritage Walks: As an innovative approach towards the preservation of Cultural Heritage

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## ABSTRACT

*The significance of sustainable tourism has gained momentum across the globe, as the world is confronted with the economic, environmental and social challenges. Preservation of Heritage and Culture is considered one of the important aspects of the sustainable tourism because cultural heritage is the important for the existence of the authenticity of the society. Heritage tourism is an evolving research domain and has received an increasing amount of scholarly attention in recent years. Heritage walks is one of the evolving component of heritage tourism. The main endeavor of the present paper is to study the role of heritage walk as an innovate approach towards the preservation of cultural assets. . The research is qualitative in nature and the data is collected through secondary source by using online resources like Ugc infolibnet, Ebsco host and Google Scholar etc. The main findings of the study reveals that heritage walks play significant role in preservation of cultural heritage of the destination.*

**Key Words:** Cultural Preservation, Heritage Tourism, Heritage Walk.

## INTRODUCTION

Tourism is the activity or practice of touring, especially for pleasure. It is a business industry of providing information about the place, followed by complementary services i.e., (accommodations, transportation) to the tourists. Worldwide tourism industry is one of the largest and fastest growing industries. Tourism sector is an increasingly important for developed as well as for the underdeveloped countries as provides source of income, employment and wealth for these nations

Irrespective of the ever-increasing and unpredictable shocks from terrorist attacks and political instability, to health pandemics and natural disasters, Travel & Tourism continued to show its resilience in the year 2016, contributing direct GDP growth of 3.1% and supporting 6 million net additional jobs in the sector. In total, Travel & Tourism generated US\$7.6 trillion (10.2% of global GDP) and 292 million jobs in 2016, equivalent to



1 in 10 jobs in the global economy. The sector accounted for 6.6% of total global exports and almost 30% of total global service exports. For the sixth successive year, growth in Travel & Tourism outpaced that of the global economy (2.5%). Additionally in 2016, direct Travel & Tourism GDP growth not only outperformed the economy-wide growth recorded in 116 of the 185 countries covered by the annual economic impact research (including in major Travel & Tourism economies such as Australia, Canada, China, India, Mexico and South Africa), but it also was stronger than the growth recorded in the financial and business services, manufacturing, public services, retail and distribution, and transport sectors (WTTC 2017).

In the contemporary world, nations round the globe are so engrossed in developing their tourism, as this sector is giving a rosy picture in socio-economic settings of generating countries and destinations. As a result of this destinations are deluding away from the negative impact it could have on the destinations in the long run i.e., (mass flow of the tourists, over and unlimited resource utilization). As a result of this negative impacts of tourism have led the destinations throughout the world to rethink about tourism development. Moreover, rapid expansion of tourism also have a negative environmental, Economical (and socio cultural) affect and this has given rise to the concept of sustainable development in tourism in order to demarcate the development of tourism. Sustainable development of tourism means to meet the needs of the present tourists without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The year 2017 was designated “*the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development* by the **United Nations**. The International Year provides an enormous opportunity to further showcase the tremendous economic, social, cultural, environmental, and heritage value that the tourism sector can bring into. One of the most important aspect of the sustainable tourism is the preservation of the Culture and Heritage of the destinations.

Urry<sup>[1]</sup> (1990) in his study said tourism is culture of the destination. In other words, it can be said that culture is the main part of travel. Culture is what people think and what people make (Littrell, 1997)<sup>[2]</sup>. Landry<sup>[3]</sup> (2008) pointed out that culture is local and indigenous traditions of public life, festivals, rituals, or stories, as well as hobbies and enthusiasms. Heritage is one of the important part of culture. Heritage, consists of tangible and intangible, natural and cultural, movable and immovable and documentary assets that are inherited from the past records and transferred to future generations by virtue of their irreplaceable value. Over the couple of years the term ‘heritage’ has evolved considerably. In the beginning the concept of heritage was exclusively considered associated to the monumental remains of cultures. However with the growth of the tourism, the concept of heritage has gradually been expanded to embrace living culture and contemporary expressions. Now, this particularly dimension of the tourism is as a source of identity of the destinations, and is considered a valuable factor for empowering local communities and enabling vulnerable groups to participate fully in social and cultural life. Keeping in view the importance of Heritage, its preservation has become one of the burning issue across the globe. So, it important for the travel and tourism operators to come up with the innovative ways



to preserve the cultural heritage of the destinations. One of the important measure to be taken for sustainable development of the heritage tourism can be through the concept of heritage walks. In the contemporary tourism the concept of heritage walks is gaining momentum worldwide as is consider as an innovative tool for the preservation of culture. Keeping in view the importance of the Heritage walk on preservation of cultural heritage of the destination, the present paper will focus on the benefits, which result from heritage walks.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of Sustainable tourism has become an area of huge concern to both academia and industry since the end of the twenty century. The most commonly used definition of sustainable development is still that given in the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development<sup>[4]</sup> (1987), i.e. sustainable development is 'a process to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Therefore Sustainable development is considered as an approach of creating a better life for all people by the means that will be as viable in the future as they are at present. In other words, it can be summarized that the concept of sustainable development is based on principles of utilization of the world's resources, and on equity in the way, those resources are used and in the way in which the benefits obtained from them are not distributed.

Sustainable tourism is a kind of approach to tourism that is meant to make the development of tourism ecologically supportable in the long term. The importance of sustainable tourism lies in its motives to conserve the resources and increase the value of local culture and tradition. Sustainable tourism is considered as responsible tourism that aims at generating employment and income along without having any deeper impact on environment and local culture.

The concept of sustainable tourism has evolved since the 1987 definition, notably through Agenda 21, the plan of action which emerged from the UN Conference on Environment and Development (Rio, 1992), and the plan of implementation from the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002). Three dimensions or 'pillars' of sustainable development are now recognized and underlined. These are:

- Economic sustainability, which means generating the prosperity at different stages of society and dealing with the cost effectiveness of all economic activities.
- Social sustainability, which means valuing human rights and providing equal opportunities for all in society.
- Environmental sustainability, which means conserving, preserving and managing the resources, especially those that are not renewable or are valuable in terms of life support.



*Three Pillars of Sustainable tourism Development*

(Swensen, 2012)<sup>[5]</sup>, in his study suggested, that conservation of heritage sites can help to develop the place-specific character of urban regions, improve the physical conditions of the environment and at the same time would help in maintaining and enhancing local life and culture and the uniqueness of a place (Strange & Whitney, 2003)<sup>[6]</sup>. People's desire for diversity has been increasingly visible in the proliferation of lifestyles which is associated with identity building that could enhance the streetscape and townscape of a city's urban fabric (Cullen, 1961)<sup>[7]</sup>. In order to conserve local culture and characteristics, the understanding of the harmonious relationship between the old and new is very important (Said, Aksah, & Ismail, 2013)<sup>[8]</sup>. The demolition of old monuments and their replacement with new ones results in a failure to safeguard the social and cultural essence of certain areas (Said et al., 2013)<sup>[9]</sup> and, consequently, people's sense of belonging to the place and identity gets severely affected. It can be concluded that maintaining and preserving traditional business activities in local areas, where there is urban renewal is always considered a great challenge for the nations worldwide. The traditional way of selling goods that takes place on the streets and the walkways near the historic buildings creates a sense of place in the city (Said et al., 2013)<sup>[10]</sup>. On the other hand, the relocation of marketplaces and the traditional stalls to new high-rise buildings can result in the loss of the local character and history of the development of the area. (Yung, E. H. K., Zhang, Q., & Chan, E. H, 2017)<sup>[11]</sup>

Negussie (2006)<sup>[12]</sup> claims in his study that 'in order to be glorify heritage tourism, built heritage management in an urban context has to become associated with the wider framework of urban planning policies' 'The author is with the view that Built heritage management must be understood within specific economic and cultural-political contexts, that must be shaped by local, national and global political agendas. Heritage Walk related to cultural heritage might work as catalysts for revaluation and reimagining of place.



## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To study existing literature on the Heritage walks.
2. To study the role of Heritage walks as an innovate approach towards the preservation of cultural assets.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The paper is qualitative in nature and secondary data has been used during the study. Content analysis was undertaken to review and analyze existing literature involving heritage walks and preservation of cultural assets. The area for the study was takes as Srinagar city ( Sheher – E- Khaas) of Jammu and Kashmir State.

The procedure of content analysis includes categorizing articles into six main components: (a) unitizing, (b) sampling, (c) recording/coding, (d) reducing, (e) inferring, and (f) narrating. (Krippendorff 2004)<sup>[13]</sup>, the first four components constitute the process of “data making,” and the last two use the information generated from the previous four components (Krippendorff, 2004)<sup>[14]</sup>.

A number of research papers and articles were reviewed in order to conduct the Content analysis. 74 full research papers and articles were selected and the other various abstracts and thesis were consulted.

Sampling criteria	
Topic selection	Cultural Tourism, Heritage Tourism, Heritage Walk
Data Type	Articles in academic journals (Offline and online)
Data Source	Database searching (EBSCO, UGC INFLIBNET and Science Direct) and Google scholars.
Keywords	Heritage Walk, Heritage Tourism, Cultural Preservation
Publication Date	1961 to 2017

## DISCUSSION

The old city of Srinagar is a virtual open air museum of architecture and material culture. The lanes and markets of the old city are filled with copper smiths, spice dealers, embroiders. The old city is situated on the banks of river Jhelum with a large number of sufi shrines, temples, tombs situated throughout its periphery. Srinagar City is known for its unparalleled beauty, charm and rich heritage. The old city of Srinagar, in particular is the hub of most crafts of the valley. Popularly known as Shehr–e- Khaas, the old city is a labyrinth of arterial roads and



bustling bazaars. This richness in culture needs the preservation for the future generation. The innovative approach towards the preservation of culture is heritage walk. The city of Srinagar has a lot of potential towards heritage walk's as every corner of the city is full of cultural heritage. These heritage tours involve walking through the myriad lanes of Srinagar city, exploring city's heritage, known-unknown, tangible-intangible. The idea behind these walks is to inform participants about various aspects of heritage, be it history, art, architecture, and countless stories associated with these places in order to create awareness and interest about city's heritage. There are number of benefits of these heritage walks, some of them are listed below:

### **Awareness**

One of the prime benefit of the heritage walk is to make people aware about the importance of preserving the rich heritage and culture. With the urbanization of cities, moving at the very fast pace, there is the need to aware the locals about importance of preserving culture and heritage of their area. So, the main purpose of organizing the heritage walk is to create awareness of various historical and heritage sites in the city and to educate the people on the need to preserve these sites.

### **Promote**

The heritage walks won't only create awareness among locals and tourists about the state's historical sites but will also help in promotion of heritage tourism. The whole Kashmir is full of cultural zest, especially the Sheer-E-Khaas of the city Srinagar. The city of Srinagar can be made as prime attraction for cultural lovers as the city is full of culture and heritage. So, the need of an hour is to promote this culture and heritage both at the national as well as at the international level. The heritage walks acts as the tool to promote culture and heritage of the city Srinagar.

### **Sustainability**

Most people are having the misconception that sustainability is only related to the environment, but one of the important pillar of the suitability is local culture and heritage. Sustainable development means meeting the current needs by using what we already have, so that we're not compromising the resources of future generations it has important implications for our environmental, economic, and social well-being.

Heritage walk has demonstrated the significant role that it plays in sustaining local communities: not only reinforcing local identity, traditions, and practices, but also bringing economic benefits through well-managed tourism. Heritage walk can be used an innovative tool in attaining the sustainable tourism concept as it is associated with economic, cultural and environmental benefits for the tourism development of the destination.





### **Preservation**

Protecting and preserving culture includes aspects of human rights, tolerance, development and protecting cultural sites and artifacts, as well as intellectual property rights for culturally specific language and art. The protection and preservation of the diverse cultures of the world is one of the foundations on which the United Nations was built. The United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is the primary body of the UN to protect and preserve culture. At the core of UNESCO's work is the acknowledgement of the links between culture and the broader aims of people throughout the world. Respect, tolerance and protection of culture are central to the UNESCO mandate of "advancing, through the educational, scientific and cultural relations of the peoples of the world. The heritage walk can be a step towards the preservation of the culture and heritage of the destination. The ultimate aim of heritage walks is the preservation of local craft, monuments and religious sites.

### **Entrepreneurial opportunity**

The important aspect of any tourism activity is the upliftment of the local communities. The heritage walk can produce an opportunity to the local entrepreneurs to get benefited by the tourism. As the economy has been from service based to experience based one, now experience is viewed as the divergent factor to attract the tourists. The local tour operators and travel agents have opportunity to utilize their rich culture and heritage asset, and come up the itinerary, which includes heritage walk. As heritage, Walk as the tourism product can magnetize the tourists towards the destination and activities involved in heritage walk is full of experience and creates the memorable events for the tourist. The other aspect of the heritage walk is that it will help the local artisans to earn their livelihood by directly selling their products to the tourists.

Besides the above-mentioned significance of heritage walk, there are other benefits of heritage walks as well. Keeping in view its importance, the department of Tourism Jammu and Kashmir has taken an initiative to organize these walks in collaboration with other stakeholder of tourism. Still these initiatives are not enough to cater the potential of city Srinagar towards heritage walks. More and more such types of events needs to be done in collaboration with locals, educations institutes and other tourism stakeholders. There needs to be differentiation and segmentation of these walks in order to have different products for different tourists. Some of the suggested routes and walks for different types of products are:

#### **1. Religious Walks**

##### ***Pather Masjid to Jamia Masjid***

Pather Masjid– Zaina Kadal - Khanqah Shah Hamdan - Gad Kucha- Wakil Kucha - Mazar Salateen – Saraf Sheikh Mohalla – Saraf Kadal – Qutubuddin Pora – Jamia Masjid.

##### ***Khanqah Shah Hamdan to Nawa Kadal***



Khanqah Shah Hamdan – Zaina Kadal – Mazar Salateen –S.R..Gunj – Kanil Masjid – Sheikh Mohalla – Ganiat Menz – Ali Kadal Chowk – Owassi Saheb –Bulbul Lanker –Batyar- Nawa Kadal.

***Dasthgeer Saheb to Malkha***

Dasthgeer Saheb - Roza Bal-Ranger Mohalla - Naqshbandh Saheb-Bahauddin Saheb – Syedpora Bacchi Darwaza – Makhdoom Saheb – Akhoon Mulla Mosque – KathiDarwaza - Malkah

**2. Monumental and Architectural Walks**

***Sangeen Darwaza to Kathi Darwaza***

Sangeen Darwaza – Kalai – Hari Parbat –Qilla – Badamwari Pokhribal – Mulla Akhoon Masjid - Makhdoom Saheb – Kathi Darwaza

***UN Office to Amira Kadal***

U.N Office – Mazar Shura – Kashmir Golf Course – T.R.C – Emporium – Bundh – Loyd's Bank – Biscoe – Sheikh Bagh – Lal Chowk – Amira Kadal

***Amira Kadal to Div Com Office***

Amira Kadal – H.S.H Street – Maharaji Bazaar – H.S.H Street – Sherghari – Old Secretariat – Shaheed Gunj – Divisional Commissioner Office.

**3. Craft Walks**

***Safa Kadal to Malik Saheb***

Safa Kadal –Shah Kadal –Nawa Kadal – Khanqah-i-Sokhta –Kanth Paristhan – Haft Yarbali – Malik Saheb

***Tankipora to Ali Kadal Chowk***

Tankipora – Haba Kadal –Dal Hassan Yar- Malikyar – Kachgar pora – Islam Yarbali – Aeshan Saheb – Gurgari Mohalla – Ali Kadal Chowk

***Madin Saheb to Kamil Saheb***

Madin Saheb – Shree Bhat – Gazidhoor – Khushal Sar- Kathmaidan – Zadibal-Mirza Kamil Saheb

**CONCLUSION**

Heritage is legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations. Our cultural and natural heritage are both irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration. Cultural heritage is reference point to the past. It helps us to understand history and the ancestry that binds us together, at the same time, being an integral part of our present, and of our future. Srinagar is a city of unparalleled beauty and heritage, and the best way to explore it is by walking through its street and lanes. Almost every street corner will surprise with something new and wonderful. So, its preservation should be the prime concern of the stakeholders associated with it. Heritage walk can be an innovative approach towards the preservation of cultural heritage of the Srinagar city. Heritage walk helps to make people aware about the importance of preserving the rich heritage





and culture, promote culture and heritage at national as well as at international levels, plays significant role in sustaining local communities, and eventually paves way for entrepreneurial opportunities for the locals.

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