



Connecting Tangible Heritage Sites with Intangible Cultural Heritage: Promoting Cultural Preservation and Sustainable Tourism

Aditya Akash

(Research Fellow, IGNCA Puducherry (Sep 2022-Sep 2023), Intern, Archaeological Survey of India, Sarnath Circle (Oct 2021- April 2022) & Master in Heritage Management, Banaras Hindu University (2019-2021)

ABSTRACT:

This review highlights the important relation that exists between tangible Heritage Sites and their intangible cultural heritage. It demonstrates how preserving both tangible and intangible parts of these internationally recognised locations promotes cultural identity, improves the visitor experience, and promotes sustainable tourism. The success of this method, as demonstrated by the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor project, is dependent on awareness campaigns, collaborative decision-making, and sustainable tourism activities. Finally, connecting tangible and intangible heritage empowers local communities, protects cultural legacies, and builds sustainable, welcoming environments, while inspiring pride and responsibility in future generations.

Keywords: Kashi Vishwanath Corridor, Heritage Preservation, Visitor Experience, Sustainable Tourism, Responsible Tourism, Varanasi

1. Introduction:

The Heritage Sites, represent outstanding universal value due to their exceptional cultural, historical, or natural significance. While the physical attributes of these sites are well-known, exploring their intangible or cultural heritage allows for a deeper understanding of their broader significance. This review examines the importance of connecting tangible World Heritage Sites with their intangible cultural heritage, highlighting its role in cultural preservation and promoting sustainable tourism.

2. Understanding Intangible Cultural Heritage:

Intangible cultural heritage encompasses living traditions, oral expressions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, and festive events passed down through generations. It reflects the customs, knowledge, skills, and values that communities attribute to their heritage. Intangible cultural heritage forms an inseparable part of the identity and traditions associated with tangible World Heritage Sites.

3. Significance of Connecting Tangible and Intangible Heritage:

3.1 Preservation of Cultural Identity:

Connecting tangible and intangible heritage helps preserve the cultural identity of communities associated with World Heritage Sites. By acknowledging and safeguarding intangible aspects, such as traditional crafts, music, dance, rituals, and storytelling, the authenticity and continuity of the cultural practices are maintained, reinforcing the link between people and their heritage.

3.2 Enhanced Visitor Experience:

Linking tangible and intangible heritage provides visitors with a more comprehensive and meaningful experience. It allows them to understand the historical, social, and cultural context in which the Heritage Site exists. Experiencing intangible elements like local festivities, traditional performances, or participating in cultural workshops deepens their appreciation and fosters a stronger connection with the site.

3.3 Sustainable Tourism Development:

Intangible cultural heritage offers opportunities for sustainable tourism development. By promoting responsible tourism practices that engage with the intangible aspects, the local communities' cultural traditions and economies can be sustained. This can include supporting local artisans, cultural

performances, culinary traditions, and community-led tourism initiatives. Sustainable tourism contributes to the preservation of intangible heritage while benefiting the local economy and promoting cross-cultural understanding.

4. Best Practices and Case Study:

A notable case study is the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor project in Varanasi, India. Initially met with opposition from residents whose houses were slated for demolition, the government faced much resistance from locals, but they convinced them of the project's significance. This thing will be avoided. By engaging local communities, educating regional people about their cultural heritage, and implementing the programme connecting tangible heritage with intangible heritage, we have to emphasise the pride associated with cultural traditions and the responsibility of preserving ancestral property. Creating awareness about the project's global identity and the community's accountability to protect their heritage fostered cooperation and dedication among the locals. This approach exemplifies how connecting tangible and intangible heritage can facilitate successful government projects while preserving cultural pride.



Preservation of Cultural Identity: By connecting tangible heritage (historic buildings, temples, etc.) with intangible heritage (rituals, traditions, spiritual practices), highlighted the intrinsic value of the community's cultural identity. Emphasizing that the project aimed to preserve and showcase their rich heritage helped alleviate fears of cultural erosion.

Awareness and Education: we have to conducted extensive awareness campaigns to educate local residents about the importance of the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor in revitalizing Varanasi's cultural heritage. By emphasizing the community's responsibility in preserving their ancestral property and traditions, residents were encouraged to view the project as a source of pride and global recognition.

Collaborative Decision-Making: By involved local community leaders, representatives, and heritage experts in the planning and decision-making process. Engaging with residents and incorporating their feedback ensured that their concerns were addressed, building a sense of ownership and cooperation.

Sustainable Tourism Opportunities: The project highlighted the potential for sustainable tourism, creating economic opportunities for the local community. By promoting responsible tourism practices and involving residents in cultural initiatives, the government encouraged locals to actively participate in preserving and showcasing their heritage, leading to long-term benefits.

Conclusion:

Connecting tangible and intangible heritage and empowering local communities is crucial for successful cultural preservation initiatives. The Kashi Vishwanath Corridor instance shows how opposition to government projects may be overcome by raising awareness, integrating communities in decision-making, and recognising the significance of their legacy. Locals are more willing to work together and actively support the preservation of their cultural heritage when they see it as a source of pride and a duty to future generations. This strategy encourages the preservation and celebration of heritage as a shared legacy while also fostering a sustainable and inclusive environment.

Reference:

Rajeev Dikshit / TNN / Dec 12, 2021, 23:21 IST

Available at: http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/88243921.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

Singh, Rana PB, and Pravin S. Rana. "The Kashi Vishwanatha, Varanasi city, India: Construction, Destruction, and Resurrection to Heritagisation." *IJAE*, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 15-30, 2022

Rana, Pravin S., Sudhanshu Mani, and Shushant Kumar Kushwaha. "Subah-E-Banaras and Kashi Vishwanath Dham Corridor: An Addition in Heritage Tourism and New Age Tourism of Varanasi." *Capacity Building Through Heritage Tourism*. Apple Academic Press, pp. 93-112, 2021.