Chapter 6
Challenges for Innovative Transformation in Heritage Tourism Development in India and Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

In the 21st century, tourism has become a popular economic development strategy adopted by developing countries. Among various facets of tourism, heritage tourism has been observed as the economically and commercially most viable option. Since countries with limited investment resources could invite foreign tourists to enjoy their heritage culture, history, arts, and music. However, heritage tourism in India and Pakistan has been observed as the neglected domain. The reasons for ignoring heritage tourism in India and Pakistan will be analyzed in this chapter with the purpose to identify challenges to preserve, conserve, develop, and promote built heritage tourism. Innovative transformation is suggested as the approach to develop, rejuvenate, and transform the tangible and intangible heritage tourism in India and Pakistan for reuse, social and economic prosperity of locals living around heritage sites, as well as to provide transformational experience to visitors.

INTRODUCTION

International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) defined “heritage” as a broad concept that include tangible assets such as natural and cultural environment, encompassing landscape, historic places, and build environment as well as intangible

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-6283-2.ch006

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assets such as collection of past and continuing cultural practices, knowledge and living experiences (ICOMOS, 2002). The World Heritage Committee and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) under the umbrella of UNESCO provide a global platform to identify heritage and heritage sites (UNESCO-IUCN, 1992). By 2001, the WHL (World Heritage List of the UNESCO) enlisted 690 sites from 122 countries as heritage. UNESCO (2016) has 832 cultural sites, 206 natural sites and 35 mixed, and 1073 representing 167 countries.

In India, UNESCO (2016) has listed as world heritage 28 cultural sites, which include, forts, caves, tombs, places of worship, gardens, mountain railways, and 8 natural sites, which include national parks and wild life sanctuaries. In Pakistan, six (6) cultural heritage sites are listed which include forts, shrines, holy places and archaeological sites. It has been observed that there are still hundreds of centuries old heritage sites in both countries, which should be protected and conserved for the future generations, in a sustainable manner. Given the numerous built heritage sites, India and Pakistan cannot just depend upon international organizations like UNESCO to protect priceless cultural, artefacts, historical monuments and natural heritage sites.

There has to be a paradigm shift through local, ‘innovative transformation’ and entrepreneurship to conserve, develop and promote these sites through inclusive involvement of the population living around the sites, local businesses, and educational institutions to be able to sustain local communities, by employing them at these sites, and reviving the local cultural heritage. The purpose of this chapter is to: (i) examine the richness of the heritage of India and Pakistan that could be employed to promote heritage tourism in both countries. (ii) Evaluate the scenarios and issues that have been managed by the Indian and Pakistani Governments to promote ‘innovative transformation’ in heritage tourism. (iii) Propose a framework that could be adopted by public and private tourism agencies in India and Pakistan to promote innovative transformation through start-ups in heritage tourism in both countries and capitalise on 1.5 billion population as potential tourists, visiting each other’s countries for mutual economic and social benefit for peace and friendship.

Timothy (2007, p. 16) asserts that, “Without an economic justification, conservation policies and practices in many places would not be established or justified in the minds of community members and leaders”. Therefore, heritage protection and conservation through innovative transformation strategies should benefit the local population in terms of employment at these sites for conservation as the main goal and heritage tourism development as the second goal. Various employment opportunities such as heritage conservation, tour guide, safety and security, cleaning jobs, maintaining the grounds and gardens, at these sites can be self-sustaining. Revenue earned from tourists could be invested in history and education research,
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