Participatory Approach for Cultural Heritage Resource Management in Small Towns

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Why Focus on Small Towns?

• About two-third of the economic capital of India generated from urban areas, expected growth of urban population to about half of the total population by middle of 21\textsuperscript{st} century (IIHS 2012).

• Rapid growth of the largest metropolitan cities in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century beginning to slow down, whereas the small and medium towns are expanding (IIHS 2011, p. 13).

• Sense of identity, built heritage (protected and unprotected) and living heritage in small towns, at the verge of transformation

• Interdependence with the rural hinterland
Debate of urbanization trends in India, with small and medium towns at the centre of it, recommends promotion of sustainable growth in these towns that lie on the verge of rapid growth (Sahasranaman 2011; IIHS 2011).
Urbanisation and its impact on Cultural heritage Resources

Challenges

• Impact of globalization
• Impact of local development
• Incompatible new development

- Wealth or economic well being creates “environment driven by entrepreneurial spirit and market thinking, and resulting in physical transformations on a grand scale – all directly or indirectly impacting on the city’s urban heritage” (Van Oers & Roders 2012, p. 7).

- Need for inclusive approach (Van Oers & Roders 2012)– participatory planning and stakeholder participation to address the issues and opportunities of urban heritage

Based on Van Oers & Roders (2012)
Introduction: Farukhnagar and Sohna

- Both towns in Gurgaon District, Haryana (part of national Capital Region) that has the highest percentage decadal growth rate of urban population from 2001 to 2011 among the 21 districts of Haryana.
  - State average percentage decadal urban growth rate: 44.25
  - Gurgaon District: 236.45
- Located 20-30 Kms radius of Gurgaon city that has been the centre of urban population explosion
- Farukhnagar
  - Population: 15,715 (2011 Census of India)
  - Built Fabric from 17th century
  - Natural heritage in vicinity – Sultanpur National Park
- Sohna
  - Population: 36,437 (2011 Census of India)
  - Built fabric and associational layers from 14th century onwards
  - Natural heritage in vicinity – Damdama Lake, Aravallis
- Visible Transformations due to change of agricultural land use to commercial and institutional (private university campuses)
"Baoli Ghaus Ali Shah, Farrukhnagar"

"Sethani ki Chhatri, Farrukhnagar"
by Ekabhishek - Own work. Licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons - http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sethani_ki_Chhatri,_Farrukhnagar.jpg#mediaviewer/File:Sethani_ki_Chhatri,_Farrukhnagar.jpg
Challenges of growth and decline

- Growing small towns:
  - threatened sense of place,
  - commodified identity and culture and
  - increasing community capacity;

- Declining small towns:
  - threatened by vacant and abandoned housing,
  - diminishing tax base,
  - lack of animation in politics,
  - isolated indignant population,
  - social isolation and
  - ageing demographics (Knox & Mayer, 2013, p. 13).

- The core areas of Farukhnagar and Sohna reflect characteristics of a declining small town along with some amount of transformation, while the surrounding development is growing rapidly.

- Aspirations of youth to move to newly developed areas

- New development around is not contextualised, ignores the social, cultural and physical identity of the place – threat of lost opportunity for culture based development, degradation of the sense of identity of the small towns
Developing and approach: What, how, by whom?

• Does one remove the encroachment, stop the transformation and ‘museumise’ the town or do we let the historic fabric be replaced by new?
• Can an inclusive, holistic approach be formulated and implemented?
• The important question is how does one decide on the course of development for these towns and who takes the decision.
Culture based development and public participation

- The relation between culture and development has been aptly stated by Bandarin, Hosagrahar and Albernaz (2011, p. 19): ‘the culture-development relationship can be highly synergetic, creating a virtual circle. Culture nourishes development. Development fosters culture, which in turn, leads to development.’

- Cultural heritage is source of sense of purpose, identity and belonging (Bandarin, Hosagrahar & Albernaz 2011)
Applicability of sustainability principles to ‘cultural heritage resource management’. Linked to community participation especially in developing countries (Keitumetse 2011)

Balance between aspects related to physical fabric, social fabric (Bolomey 2010) and economic forces required for ‘resource based sustainable development’ of urban heritage
Role of Stakeholders: Participation and partnerships

- International frameworks of support
- Central, state and local government
- Quasi governmental organizations - PSUs
- Private Corporations and small to medium size local business entities
- Hospitality and Tourism Industry
- Non Governmental Organizations
- Interdisciplinary researchers and experts
- Private heritage property owners
- Local community/communities

Participation and partnerships for cultural heritage resource management and sensitive urban development
Participatory or Community based approach

Application of participatory or community based approach in various related fields

- Cultural ecosystem service (Chan et al. 2012)
- Community based participatory research (Atalay 2010)
- Community archaeology (Atalay 2010)
- Participatory design and construction and urban housing improvement projects (Desai 2010; Pethe & Murugkar 2010)
- Community participation for safeguarding intangible heritage (Bhattacharya 2012)
- Ecotourism eg. community based home-stays (Bhatt 2012) and sustainable heritage tourism (Munjal & Tripathi 2012)
- Role of indigenous community organizations in conserving cultural heritage resources (Shrestha 2012)
- Community level empowerment and participation in ensuring sustainability (Hill 2011)
Critical aspects for community based approach

- Characterisation of roles of associated spiritual values, cultural identity, social cohesion and heritage values (Chan et al, 2012)
- Discussion among stakeholders and need for interdisciplinary research teams (Chan et al, 2012)
- Democratisation of research – involvement of local community in knowledge production and capacity building of communities (Atalay, 2010)
- Addressing the role of indigenous community organisations (Shrestha, 2012), interlinkages and synergies within and among communities, to develop contextual and sustainable solutions (Bapat, Khosla & Kumar, 2010)
- Threat of cultural commodification, power shifting to consumer of culture (Hill, 2011)
- Quality educational and training opportunities, willingness and involvement from within communities (Hill, 2011)
- Threat of ‘substituting one orthodoxy with another’ in the form of ‘patriarchy, racism and inequality’ as reflections of the society (Kapoor, 2011)
- Balance between economic and socio-cultural objectives (Murthy & Bari, 2012).
- Small towns of Haryana - multiplicity of voices in the urban context and the inherent social systems that are exclusive and discriminatory on the basis of caste, gender, occupation and so on
Planning for Small Towns: Farukhnagar and Sohna

• City Development Plans (CDPs) for mission cities under JNNURM – stage wise stakeholder consultation mandated as per toolkits – heritage as cross cutting theme
• Critique of CDPs – low focus on heritage
• Revision of Toolkit for heritage focus
• Process of consultation may be tokenistic or dominated by politics
• States such as Madhya Pradesh followed the example through preparation of CDPs for all small and medium towns
• Haryana State– CDP only for Faridabad – Development Plans (DPs) prepared by State Town and Country Planning Department as per the Punjab Scheduled Roads and Controlled Areas Restriction of Unregulated Development Act, 1963 (Act 41 of 1963) that concerns itself primarily with prevention of ‘haphazard and sub-standard development along scheduled roads and in controlled areas in the State of Punjab’.
• Gurgaon District under purview of **NCR Regional Plan** – identifies both Farukhnagar and Sohna and tourist destination with natural heritage around them: Sultanpur National Park, Damdama Lake, Aravallis and Sohna Lake/Hot Water Spring

• The NCR Regional Plan identifies **lack of host community participation** and **limited private participation** as issues hindering the development of natural and cultural heritage sites as tourism destinations

• The Regional Plan recommendations include that ‘**heritage and tourist sites should be used as instruments to direct land use policy** towards more decentralized patterns of development.’

• Emphasis is also laid on clear identification of the heritage sites on the land use plan to prevent ‘encroachment and inappropriate development’ and enable integration with cultural tourism

• DPs for Farukhnagar and Sohna - induced growth projected over the next three decades does not address any factors relating to the significance or to the heritage resources of the towns
Sohna Development Plan
- severe criticism of the draft plan from residents and environmentalists, primarily stemming from the marking of forest areas under agricultural category.
- Finalised without addressing the concerns
- Leather, leisure and Sports Hub proposed – inducing growth (projects 6,40,000 population by 2031)

Farukhnagar Development Plan
- Not finalized yet
- World trade hub, leisure hub and entertainment hub proposed – inducing growth (projects 1,25,000 population by 2031)
- Vicinity of Sultanpur National Park (Eco Sensitive Zone) seen as impetus for growth – contradiction!

- Lack of focus on cultural and natural heritage resources, no interdisciplinary teams, no consultations, neither transparent nor inclusive
- NGOs have shown interest (AIIS, INTACH) though there is clear lack of integration of the built heritage resources in the development process in government planning approach.
- State Tourism Department has not been able to create local engagement
- Very poor levels of awareness in the community regarding built heritage, no capacity building of urban local bodies or local communities
- Poor participation of private players towards heritage management or inclusive development
Designing the Participatory Process

Attributes of participatory modeling for societal decisions (Bayley & French 2007)

Information sharing
Democratic ideals
Community cohesion
Practicability
Decision quality

Methods in participatory process – strong context dependency (Newig et al. 2008)

Formalised
Non-formalised
Challenges in designing the process for small towns of Haryana

• Need to contextualize international models
• Segregation on basis of caste and religion
• Domination Hindu community apparent in Farukhnagar – Jami Masjid converted to Sita Ram Mandir
• Increasing religious fervor associated with Shiv Kund, Sohna, managed by Thakurs who wield power
• Built heritage of Islamic or Rajput origin, local population does not identify with it due to limited access to certain parts – religious divide
• Gender bias, voice of women!
Jami Masjid of Farukhnagar, is now renamed as the Sita Ram Mandir with additional construction of a Hindu shrine taking place within the compound in 2014.
Conclusion

• Small towns of Haryana way behind in inclusive planning, no lessons borrowed from national and international frameworks working towards it.
• DPs proposal not responsive to the natural and cultural resources of the towns, induced growth insensitive to character of towns or impact on heritage – top down approach
• Heritage resources neglected in terms of governmental initiatives, private investment and local community engagement.
  – Need for capacity building in governmental frameworks
  – Private sector needs to be looped in through promotion and incentivisation of culture based development
  – Sense of pride and ownership for heritage resources needs to be inculcated in the local community - need for community empowerment – capacity building, education and training – role of multiple participants in the process
• Context specific participatory models need to be designed – taking the indigenous social and cultural frameworks into consideration
• Need for designing of participatory processes that deal with the complex politics of power of the local communities and try and mitigate the risk of monopolisation by certain segments of the society, motivated by a clear intent to encourage a bottom-up approach in decision making
• Use of interdisciplinary research teams required to ensure engagement of community with heritage resources
• Need to reclaim and revalidate the interrelationship between the society and its associated cultural resources to make the heritage resources relevant in the current context.