



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Architecture

UNDERSTANDING TOURISM AT HERITAGE RELIGIOUS SITES: BODHGAYA;

KEY WORDS:

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Agenda: To talk about the connection between tourism and religious monuments that are recognised as being of historical and architectural heritage based on my Thesis Research project. They demonstrate in their analysis using locations in Bodhgaya, Niranjana River -Buddhist Religious Site.

Genuine encounters with a place's spiritual culture and hallowed sites can encourage sustainable travel and benefit both the visitor and the local population. The connection between tourism and religious monuments that are recognised as being of historical and architectural heritage based on Buddhist Religious Site. They demonstrate in their study using locations in Bodhgaya, Niranjana River how genuine encounters with holy sites and a place's spiritual culture may advance sustainable tourism and benefit both the traveller and the local population.

The international tourism market includes a significant portion for cultural heritage tourism. Like with any resource, cultural heritage assets must be managed sustainably to preserve their long-term worth. Sustainable tourism offers visitors top-notch experiences while preserving the environment and enhancing the standard of living for locals (African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure). Planning for sustainable tourism necessitates striking a balance between the needs of tourists, visitors, and the local population.

Historical sites and cultural practises are examples of tangible and intangible cultural heritage items (McKercher & du Cros, 2002). Rather than for their tourist appeal, these resources are conserved because of their intrinsic importance to the community.

Tourism offers a compelling political and economic case for site preservation, but improper use, growing visitor numbers, and commercialization pose a threat to the site's integrity. Tourists visit cultural heritage sites for a variety of reasons They vary from the purposeful tourist who is seeking authentic cultural experiences to the casual tourist who may be visiting a historic site simply because it is part of their tour to the one who came for religious beliefs. Sometimes cultural historical sites are play a significant to Religious beliefs. i.e. Bodhgaya Religious Heritage site is a play more asset value to international tourism market than local community.

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The agencies that oversee the assets of cultural heritage face a challenge as a result of tourism. Tourism offers a compelling political and economic case for site preservation, but improper use, growing visitor numbers, and commercialization pose a threat to the site's integrity.

The local community is affected by cultural heritage tourism in both positive and negative ways (UNEP, 2002). A large portion of a community's GDP can come from tourism, which can also generate business and employment possibilities and

foster support for the preservation of cultural heritage assets. The cost of infrastructure development to support the tourism business, however, falls on the host town. Commercialization associated with tourism could harm the ecosystem next to historic monuments. Heritage sites suffer from increased use, which raises their upkeep costs via wear and tear. Proper management of cultural landmarks and the tourism sector can mitigate some of these negative effects and promote local support for the economy.

Religious or sacred site tourism is a particular kind of cultural heritage tourism (Shackley, 2001). Religious rites can be disturbed by tourists, yet maintaining cultural heritage at religious places necessitates allowing the local population to continue using the location. A heritage religious site may become ignored by inappropriate tourism and commercial development in the area (McKercher & du Cros, 2002).

The term "Religious property", as used in the ICOMOS study "Filling the Gaps - an Action Plan for the Future", defines "any form of property with religious or spiritual associations: churches, monasteries, shrines, sanctuaries, mosques, synagogues, temples, sacred landscapes, sacred groves, and other landscape features, etc.".

The term "Sacred site" embraces areas of special spiritual significance to peoples and communities; and the term of "Sacred natural site" corresponds to the areas of land or water having special spiritual significance to peoples and communities," as proposed by the UNESCO/IUCN Guidelines for the Conservation and Management of Sacred Natural Sites, 2008

The sustainability of cultural values depends in large part on the preservation of historically significant religious sites and their ongoing use (McKercher & du Cros, 2002). There are conflicting feelings between the locals and worshippers and the visitors who go there (Bremer, 2004).

Interpretation can be used to help provide these experiences, while minimising some of the detrimental effects of tourism (Coccosis, 2005). By educating visitors about alternate destinations to visit, interpreters can lessen traffic and crowds while also highlighting good tourist conduct that will have the least negative effects on the location and its religious significance.

Heritage religious sites and traditions frequently lose their originality when they are commercialised and altered for simple tourist consumption (McKercher & du Cros, 2002). The degree of commercialization at the locations to support tourism frequently runs counter to what visitors believe is proper in a religious setting (Nolan & Nolan, 1992). But neglecting to manage sites with the visitor experience in mind results in unhappiness and a lack of support for cultural historic preservation.

RESEARCH PROJECT

Our study looked at historic religious places from the viewpoint of visitors in Mahabodhi Temple and Niranjana river. We employed a variety of techniques, such as site visits, behavioural observations, visitor surveys, and analysis of prior tourism studies. The Mahabodhi temple, Bodhgaya and

Ghats of Niranjana river were among the study locations. Tourism is a significant industry in both regions, with cultural tourism playing a significant role in the tourist market. The majority of historic landmarks are temples and monasteries and bank of Ghats, which serve as tourist attractions as well as places of worship for the Buddhist pilgrimage and Hindu pilgrimage and business for local community.

A water element always played an important role for city imageability, helps in formation of cities & play important role in various civilization & various culture which can see in Bodhgaya, the city which is known "heart of Buddhism ". where Niranjana river played fundamental part in various culture i.e.- pindaan, and an early century city established in linear form along river.

Bodhgaya is one of the most important and sacred Buddhist pilgrimage centres in the world located in Gaya district at southern part of Bihar state. It is the place where Lord Buddha attained supreme enlightenment under the holy Bodhi Tree. There is significant growth in urban area during last few years to fulfil the needs of the tourists coming from various parts of India & abroad.

Bodhgaya is a small but internationally renowned town of immense religious and cultural significance, located in the Gaya District of Bihar, India. Its claim to fame lies in the fact that Lord Buddha attained enlightenment here more than 2500 years ago under the Bodhi tree. It is thus considered as the geographical centre of the Buddhist world by followers of this faith worldwide. It has a tremendous cultural connotation, and is therefore an extremely important centre for national, as well as international tourism. It is one of the most revered and sanctified places in the world. The town of Bodhgaya has had a cultural tradition dating back to the times of Emperor Ashoka. Ashoka, a loyal patron of Buddhism built the first tree shrine here in the year 260 BCE. The town has been a well-known pilgrim destination since then. Bodhgaya forms a focal point of the Buddhist tourist circuit. Mahabodhi temple complex in the heart of Bodhgaya is one of the four holy sites related to the life of Lord Buddha. The other three sites being - Lumbini - the birthplace of Lord Buddha, Sarnath - where he preached his first sermon after enlightenment and Kushinagar - where he passed away. Bodhgaya, as the place where Buddha attained enlightenment is the most important of all. The prestige and profile of the town has grown in the recent years with the convening of the momentous Kalachakra festival and construction of monasteries by various Southeast Asian countries. Bodhgaya now occupies the undisputed position of the Regional Cultural and Tourism Centre. The establishment of monasteries here not only reaffirms its position in the Buddhist world but are also symbolic of the 2500-year long journey of the Buddhist faith, a journey which began at Bodhgaya and spread all over the world, to again come back full circle to the place of its origin from where it all began. The siting of Magadh University within the town has given it a regional role as an educational centre too.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Bodhgaya has a rich and varied history going back to 2500 years. Historical evidences suggest existence of settlements at Bodhgaya before the times of Lord Buddha.

1st century BCE, the first evidence of srilanka coming to Bodhgaya, monk Bohiraksita. Srilanka were not only enthusiastic about going Bodhgaya on pilgrimage. the younger brother of king Meghavana (304 BCE-332 BCE) went on pilgrimage to India found difficult to get proper accommodation. King Ashoka was the first to build a temple here. Then Mahabodhi Monasteries came to build at Bodhgaya on the North side of temple Ground. In 1286 temple repair and again restore in 1880 by General Cunningham. since 1800 BCE veskha (Buddha Jayanti) is celebrating in May.

2002 Mahabodhi temple become UNESCO world Heritage sites. Now Buddhist from Srilanka, Thailand, Tibet, Bhutan and Japan have also established Monasteries and Temple. There are 64 countries all around the world come for pilgrimage. Presently there are 38 monasteries in Bodhgaya. In 402 BCE Fa Hein (first Chinese Monk) Reached Bodhgaya, mention in his book.

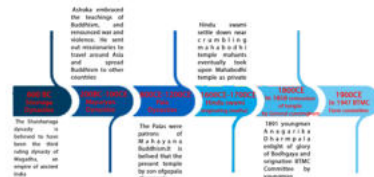


Figure 1 : BODHGAYA HISTORICAL TIMELINE

Source: author

BODHGAYA MORPHOLOGY

The picture one gets of the city at this time is of a pilgrim place, where the monks from all over the world converged and lived peacefully, revered by the local population. Hsuan Tsang described Bodhgaya as a prosperous, flourishing town, especially when compared to Gaya, which he described as desolate. But Historical evidences suggest existence of settlements at Bodhgaya before the times of Lord Buddha. Bodhgaya was probably a small village surrounded by forests before Buddha. Bodhgaya is located in Gaya district, Bodhgaya is located 13km from Gaya.

The Mahabodhi temple complex (5th-6th century AD) (World Heritage Site), the Math and Sujata Kuti are the only tangible physical evidence of its glorious past. In the absence of standing buildings from the earlier period of Bodhgaya's existence, an understanding of the heritage resources, which includes buried archaeological remains, take on increased significance. Later in 1800 matha established and settlement occurs along the Niranjana River and with recent settlement west side and around Magadh universities.

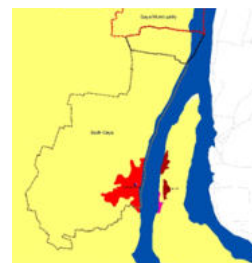


Figure 2: 5TH CENTURY MAP

Source: author

5th Century

The time Gautam buddha visit urevela (Bodhgaya). this place is surrounded by forest and hills by side with small chunks of village

15th Century

The time Shankar Acharya visited this place after that many year Mahabodhi temple is taken care by matha and Acharya. At this settlement done along the river, south to north side

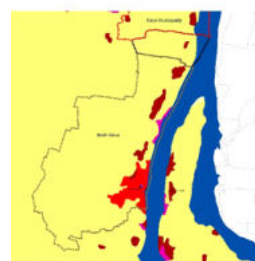


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Source: author

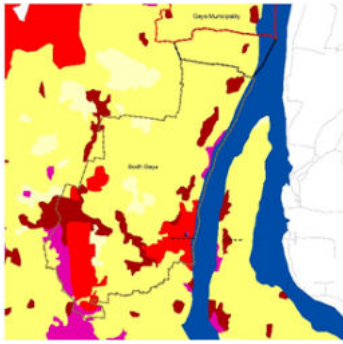


Figure 4: 21 CENTURY MAP

Source: author

21st Century

After independence, BTMC committee who taken care Mahabodhi temple .in 1962 Magadha universities established I n west side of the town Due to high influx of religious international tourist international established 5km away from temple west side. this lead settlement and encroachment around the temple and on west of town in present scenario.

CIRCUITS - BUDDHIST CIRCUIT & BIHAR TOURISM CIRCUIT:

BUDDHIST CIRCUIT: All foot step o lord Buddha is of his life from birth, enlightenment, first sermon to death and all miracle sites, including all monasteries and teaching. Lumbini, Bodhgaya, Sarnath and Kushinagar are the primary pilgrimage places of Buddhist Circuits associated with the life and teachings of the Lord Buddha.

“BODHGAYA IS CALLED HEART OF BUDDHIST CIRCUITAS IT'S PLACE WHERE LORD BUDDHA ATTENT ENLIGHTMENT”.

BODHGAYA, consider as holy place for Buddhist-Buddhism (is the world's fourth-largest religion with over 520 million followers, or over 7% of the global population, known as Buddhists. It is thus considered as the geographical centre of the Buddhist world by followers of this faith worldwide. It has a tremendous cultural connotation, and is therefore an extremely important centre for national, as well as international tourism.

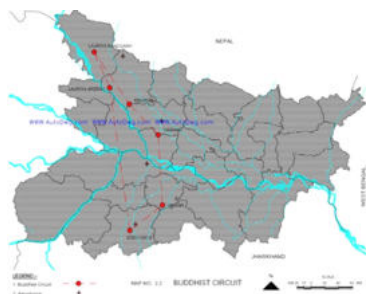


Figure 5: BUDDHIST CIRCUITS

Source: Bihar tourism report

MAHABODHI temple complex considers as focal point in Bodhgaya main pilgrimage Mahabodhi temple consider as UNESCO world Heritage site in 2002. In recent years UNESCO played a leading role in the development and promotion of a powerful normative action related to the protection of cultural and natural heritage in all its form (2010 United Nations International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures).

People from all walks of life visit the place at least once in their lifetime. Though it is the sacred Buddhist pilgrimage.

Bihar is famous for religious and cultural heritage sites. Bihar draws its name from the word vihara or monastery, and was the early home of Buddhism. Steeped in history and religion, Bihar is the birthplace of the great Emperor Ashoka and Lord Mahavir. All major religions of India have left their mark here and this has made Bihar a great religious melting pot. Bihar’s great competitive strength from tourism point of view is its ancient and yet living civilization that gave rise to two of world’s great religions namely Buddhism and Jainism.

The main competitive constraints faced by the tourism sector in Bihar have been the poor quality of the environments surrounding many of states main tourist sites, the security scenario in the state that affects the perception of Bihar as a safe and secure destination, the quality of facilities and services at tourist attraction places, the quantity and quality of transportation service and related infrastructure, limited availability of tourist information in-source markets and at destination, insufficient marketing of Bihar in its domestic and international markets, limited and poor facilities and services especially in rural areas and limited financing of attractive projects by the private sector.

The key competitive opportunities before Bihar are: 1) develop its strength as a major religious destination attracting tourists of diverse religious beliefs; 2) promote the Buddhist circuit to attract Buddhists from a number of countries; 3) leverage its rich cultural history to increase its share of the huge international travel market; 4) harness the huge potential of promoting rural tourism revolving around its rich tradition of art, craft and handloom and 5) leverage its strength in yoga to develop well-being centres to attract a sizeable number of international and domestic tourists.

NEED TO WORK FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM CIRCUIT:

- Countries with a sizeable Buddhist population accounted for almost 75% of the foreign tourists who visited Bihar last year.
- A significant number of tourists visited Bodhgaya as popular Buddhist destination among foreign tourist.
- A significant proportion of tourists were not satisfied on account of availability of tourist guides, public convenience, souvenir shops, places of entertainment, security and even interaction with local people.
- Visiting of friends/ relatives, sightseeing and recreation/ leisure were the primary drivers of domestic tourism through the year. The third quarter witnessed a marked increase in social tourism. Recreation and leisure were the primary purpose of domestic tourism in the first quarter.
- Sightseeing, religion and recreation/ leisure were the primary drivers of foreign tourism through the year.
- In the first and fourth quarters, a majority of the foreign tourists visited places in Bihar with the objective of religious tourism.

TOURIST TRAFFIC IN BIHAR

- A total of 58,44,196 tourists (including day tourists) visited the 24 destinations, in the period January – December 2005.
- The peak in tourist traffic came in the fourth quarter, which accounted for 33% of all tourists. This rise can be attributed to the Sonepu cattle fair, which was attended by approximately 580,000 day tourists in the months of November - December.
- There was a significant increase in the tourist traffic in September because of higher numbers visiting Gaya for *Vishnu Puja* and religious sites (*Pind-dan*). The months of January and December witnessed higher numbers of foreign tourists. Tourist traffic remained weak at both Buddhist and non-Buddhist destinations in the summer months.
- Foreign tourists accounted for almost 7% of the traffic at Buddhist destinations and less than 1% at non-Buddhist destinations.

The visitors' view of these locations as being genuine and religious was favourable in both kinds of settings. The tourist experience included seeing these ancient holy sites and experiencing them as holy sites continuously in use by the native population.

The perceived sanctity of the location was diminished and the tourist experience deteriorated because the area was overcrowded or commercialised for tourism.

These results have a number of significant implications for the maintenance of revered historical religious sites. The local population should be encouraged to visit the sites for religious purposes wherever this is practicable and promote local for commercialization and souvenir to local economy. Both the local community and tourists must continue to use ancient religious places. The local community's usage of the place for religious purposes gives it purpose and helps with preservation and maintenance. The chance to witness and take part in religious activities is a crucial component of the visitor's cultural and personal experience.

From a design perspective, there are three main challenges created by tourism at these heritage religious sites:

- Inappropriate tourist behaviours
- overcrowding
- Inappropriate commercialization

The sheer numbers of tourists at heritage sites causes physical and social impacts. These sites become less spiritual when there are too many inappropriate visitors; they change from being sacred to secular locations.

There are several methods for controlling Inappropriate tourist behaviour. Other Tourists are frequently prohibited from entering Temple spaces during festival at the temple in order to reduce conflicts, but this reduces opportunities for participation and education and might lessen the experience of the temple & Buddhist rituals as a religious site. The Buddhist temple, however, is less likely to separate visitors from worshippers.

The Bodhgaya Temple Management Committee (BTMC) could gain from implementing the strategies implemented by their religious counterparts to promote appropriate tourist behaviour. Fees can be viewed as inappropriate at religious sites and may make access issues for the local community and religious spirit of people but as there a greater number of International tourist so it can also build tourist economy too. Fees are commonly implemented as a strategy to reduce crowding at tourism sites. ours sites and may create access problems for the local community. In Thailand, one popular Buddhist Wat has a foreigner entrance fee; a practice that is highly resented by international tourists. (Daniel levi and sara KoCher).

By highlighting the unique characteristics of less well-known sites that deserve tourist visitation, interpretive materials can also be used to relieve crowding. For instance, the places in Bodhgaya and Gaya i.e. Sita-kund, Niranjana River Ghats, Vishnu pad Temple, different countries Monasteries are more likely to incorporate folk art and can provide intimate environments for Visit and Recreation as Tourist. Most tourists only visit the most well-known religious heritage sites in a region, and as a result, these sites obtain financial support, whereas less well-known sites do not. Tourists may visit unconventional sites if there are more interpretive materials emphasising them and the opportunities people offer. and this helps in tackling the issues introduced on by overcrowding and financial constraints.

In spite of the fact that tourists look for authentic experiences, commercialization happens because the tourism sector seeks to enhance visitor comfort by integrating the tourist

experience. Religious rituals might be modified to keep tourists' interest. There may be shops selling souvenirs, food, and other tourist-related goods and services at the heritage site and in the surrounding areas. Though they often observe it as incompatible with the religious experience of cultural heritage sites, visitors have a mixed opinion of this commercialization. But at Bodhgaya religious heritage site as per my international tourist footfall commercialization play an important role for economic development of the. it can change imageability of the city and helps in State GDP. Betterment of local's standard of living.

Tourist-oriented challenges involve the most distress to the visitors to these sites. development of commercial space adjacent to the both inside and outside of the site complex, persistently gives off the impression of commercialization all through the trip. Design theory has acknowledged the effects for centuries. Of the section on how people view landscapes and buildings in general monuments, and these amateur appraisers were aware of it in addition. restricting the amount of installations at the entrance to the site by establishing a protected entry corridor would assist in protecting the perception of historical and cultural ethics.

Visitors are also affected by the types of goods and services offered. Visitors are frequently grateful that vendors at the BMTC Complex offer cold drinks, as they view the abundance of gift shops and kiosks that sell generic tourist souvenirs unrelated to the site as a distraction. The mission gift shops are stocked with a wide variety of tourist trinkets and are thought to be less appropriate than stores that focus primarily on historical or religious items.

Tourists are searching for opportunities to visit culturally significant locations. Sustainable tourism is promoted by giving visitors the chance to have genuine encounters with a region's spiritual culture and holy sites. This is advantageous for both the visitor and the local community.

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