

THE RECIPROCAL EFFECTS OF ARCHITECTURE AND TOURISM: THE SUSTAINABILITY APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Life, work, recreation, rest and leisure are in fact the activities that occur in places which are usually designed by architects. The positive and negative views and functions of a building will have direct effects on the world ecology; therefore architecture, like many other sciences, hopes to find new solutions for appropriate human life. Sustainability concept and sustainable development in architecture, introduces a new subject labeled "sustainable architecture". The most important issues of this subject are "eco-tech architecture" and "green architecture" which can play an important role in tourism development across the globe. In this regard, architectural sites and buildings can play an important role in attracting more tourists while at the same time providing good services in accommodation facilities such as hotels, motels, camps and inns, where people can comfortably stay and have eye-catching views. However, with careful consideration and respect to the concept of sustainability in the processes of designing and constructing structures such as museums, towers, bazaars, city hall and opera houses, these places can attract more tourists and visitors. Consequently tourism can be considered as a means of making architectural works both valuable to visitors as touristic subjects and also economical to conserve and maintain by public or private sector. Furthermore, sustainable architecture is considered to be an environmentally friendly activity since it is considered to be: "the management of a clean and decent environment based on efficient use of natural resources and respect for ecological principles". The conservation of the environment, respect for the natural resources, realizing the real value and appropriate use of the resources and the environment are the common goal of sustainable architecture and tourism development planning in regard to sustainable development of a country or a region. Iran, as a country with a long history and many architectural buildings and sites, is an excellent example for the purpose of this study. This paper discusses some of the cases.

Keywords: tourism industry, architecture, development, sustainability

INTRODUCTION

In today's world, architecture aligned with other sciences is looking for new ways for securing a desired living for all men. Life, work, recreation, rest and leisure are in fact the activities that occur in places which are usually designed by architects and since the design and construction strengths and weaknesses of a building has direct influence on the surrounding environment, the charge to the architects is critical. The use of sustainability and sustainable development in architecture brought forward the issue of "sustainable architecture" in that its most important subjects include "eco-tech architecture", architecture and energy" and "green architecture". On the other hand, the effects of tourism on the world economy as a rapidly flourishing industry and the potential of causing negative impacts on the environment, the sensitivity and importance of simultaneously considering sustainable architecture and tourism highly unveils.

Sustainable Architecture

Sustainability is an essential challenge for both traditional and modern society and the architectural qualities can be found in both. Therefore, it can be argued that any type of architecture needs to be taken care of and sustained for the betterment of the residents of a country and for the people of the world as a whole. Before go any further, we need to define sustainable development.

The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED, 1987) in its report titled: "Our Common Future", notes: 'Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'

Sharachchandra (1991) argues "Sustainable Development" (SD) has emerged as the latest development catchphrase. A wide range of nongovernmental as well as governmental organizations have embraced it as the new paradigm of development." Sustainable development has been characterized by an emphasis on environmental issues and an ad hoc approach to structuring the subject which hinders the development of knowledge in a systematic way. The built environment contributes significantly to the environment but is also one of the major factors in determining whether a community is sustainable in the longer term. (Brandon, and Lombardi, 2005)

Sustainable architecture and design can probably be considered one of the important issues of contemporary world which provides a logical reflection and solution to the problems and boredoms of industrial era. In this regard, sustainable architecture and design can preserve the memorable and old monuments while it can also create new and attractive qualities in which people can use and enjoy.

Sustainable architecture consists of three principles:

- Economy of Resources: In economy of scale the important consideration is to use resources and energy properly by focusing on sustaining energy, water and materials.
- Life Cycle Design: This principle is based on this notion the useful materials can be transformed without losing their usefulness. Therefore, one of the responsibilities of an architect or designer is to carefully consider this principle for different stages of constructing a building: pre-construction, construction and post-construction.
- Humane Design: The most principle of sustainable architecture is the fact that anything is designed is for the use and for the benefit of human beings. Therefore, this principle is rooted to the needs of men and the importance of preserving the elements of ecosystem chain which is essential for liveliness of men. This can be traced by increasing the symbiosis of the environment and the people using it.

Tourism

Since this paper is intended to highlight the connection between architecture and tourism, this part will endeavor to briefly consider the tourism.

Tourism is a highly growing activity all over the world. It comprises of activities of person traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environments for not more than one consecutive year for business, leisure and other purposes. Tourists and same-day visitors are in search of the places where they find attractions of different kinds, e.g. historic, artistic, natural, social and so on.

The world tourism organization defines tourist as people who “travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for more than 24 hours and less than 1 consecutive year. While same-visitor does not stay overnight. In fact, tourists and same-day visitors are assets for architectural quality in a region where they can value them and enjoy visiting these qualities.

Tourism as an industry can have both positive and negative impacts in the host society. The impacts include economic, social and environmental impacts and the planners are trying to maximize the positive impacts while do their best to minimize the negative impacts.

Architecture in the form of monuments, buildings, towers, religious buildings, particular elements and even objects are one of the most desired attractions of tourism industry. These are valuable assets for a country to contribute to its economic while at the same time can show the people of other countries and regions its artistic and historical values and qualities.

This is probably more important and feasible in countries with old history and notable architectural buildings, site and objects such Iran, Greece, Egypt and China.

Sustainable Architecture and its relation to Tourism

Tourism and architecture may be connected to the benefit of the two and ultimately to the benefit of the people. Today people earn more and demand more. This includes almost everything from food to clothes and to tourism. For food and clothes there is more production and for tourism there are newly discovered natural and man-made attractions. Architectural elements are one of the categories demanded by tourists. However, care must be taken to protect the architectural qualities of a city, region or country.

Tourism should provide ways of escaping from periodical pressures and tensions people are facing in today's society and create the opportunities for tourists to be relaxed and happy in places they travel. Unfortunately sometimes, tourists contribute to the destruction of the host communities. They usually participate in the process of "invasion and destruction" of the host community. This does not do any good to tourism, but it also increases the environmental degradation and creates unfavorable impacts of the social and cultural situation and on the existing architecture in touristic places. These facts mark the essential of sustainable architecture while considering architecture as a means of tourism development.

Therefore, one of the main aims of sustainable tourism should be planning and designing accommodations with careful consideration and suitable to the ecosystem. In fact one of the most important issues in sustainable development of tourism resources is the consideration and expansion of design and construction standards in order to reach an optimum use of energy, water and land resources. This in turn will result in an effective management for preserving the natural and built attractions in tourism industry.

Sustainable planning and design in architecture can develop the indigenous abilities and potentials of an area by using the traditional knowledge and skills of that area. Where local and indigenous materials and methods are used, buildings can be more durable and economical, while at the same time they can be more environmentally ecologically friendly.

If it is intended that tourism creates travel opportunity, understanding other cultures, self-acknowledgement with respect to other cultures and diverse living styles and peace, then we need to introduce and focus on accommodation types and designs that are the symbols of traditions and values of the locale.

Architecture has the talent of defining spaces and therefore has a powerful influence on the human behavior and understanding and this is exactly what is always taken into account in sustainability, maximizing economic benefit and preserving the ecosystem.

Sustainable architecture with respect to indigenous cultural traditions and minimizing the negative impacts on the environment can unite the natural and built spaces and create a sense of place for the tourists. In addition providing aesthetics, culture and special attractions, can seriously save the technological and cultural aspects of indigenous environment. If the construction is done according

to the principles of local and indigenous designs and traditional styles, the local sense of place is vitalized and a unique opportunity for the individual tourists will be introduced.

Localization of Architecture

Localization of architecture specifically in tourism refers to sustainable design for the purpose of expansion of local spatial aspects and converting them into centers for attracting tourists. In regard to accommodations for tourists, this term emphasizes that hotel, motels, inns and other staying places for tourists should be in accordance with the natural and local spaces and the ancient architectural heritages. Table 1 indicates and compares the characteristics of hotels designed and constructed with respect to indigenous and local style (sustainable style) and hotels designed and constructed without such considerations (unsustainable style). In fact, in the former the local culture, tradition and materials and preserving the environment are part of the design but in the later such aspects are not necessarily taken into consideration.

Table 1: A Comparison between Sustainable Style and Unsustainable Style

Considerations	Sustainable Style Hotels	Unsustainable Style Hotels
The environment	Minimized impacts using local materials and designs	high intervention in and destruction of the environment
Energy	Effective use of energy	Waste of energy
Culture and tradition	Respect for local culture and traditions, preserving and introducing the local culture and traditions to the outsiders	Focus on the culture and living styles which may not be appropriate to the area, destroying the local culture and customs
Economy	Employment opportunities for the local people, more use of local and native foods, clothes and handicrafts, money stays in the area	Most employees come from other places, money will be transferred out, most of goods and products are imported to the area
Tourism	An appropriate source of tourism attraction and sense of place	Stereotype and no sense of place

Technical methods of sustainable architecture in building tourism accommodations can result in sustainable development as follow:

- a) Widely use of indigenous materials, traditional skills of local residents, an local investment will end up to the liveliness of consolidated local buildings and revitalization of local economy.

- b) Most of the local environment will be untouched and the new accommodations occupy less land. Therefore, less wastes and poisonous pollutions will be produced and natural resources will be preserved.
- c) The tendency towards the traditional skills and methods, arts and customs, and handicrafts will reinforce the social and cultural aspects of tourism industry.

Architectural local-traditional skills can be updated and more effective by using modern technologies in order to design and create nice, comfortable and environmentally friendly accommodations for tourists. This can be done through the combination of the old and traditional methods with the new and modern technologies and software.

Sustainable Architecture in Iranian Tourism Industry

When taking into account the architectural quality as a means for attracting tourist, Iran is considered to be one of the major destinations for tourists who interested in cultural and historical places. This is rooted in the old history of the country mirrored in the places and sites such as the Persepolis in Fars province, The Old Arg of Bam in Kerman province, Naghsh Jahan Square in Isfahan, and many other places scattered all over the country.

Unique architecture of these monuments, sites and buildings are the main attraction for the visitors. The architecture creates a sense of place. Some monuments and buildings with architectural quality cannot be duplicated. However, there are some facilities which can be designed in a way that people realize or feel to be in a certain place and have a sense of the original place.

The architectural qualities of Iran are quite diverse, but this paper is not focusing on those. It is however, intended to focus on the design of hotels as tourism facilities and the way they can contribute in creating a sense of place for those who stay in them or even visit them.

Therefore, we introduce some hotels with the characteristics of creating sense of place of being in Iran and have the principles of sustainable architecture. For this reason 2 hotels in the city of Yazd, located in the central part of Iran and 1 hotel in Kish Island, located in southern part of the country in the Persian Gulf.

The city of Yazd is one of the old establishes cities of the country with a diversity of architectural monuments and buildings. Its traditional unique architecture will attract any tourist interested in the history, design and architecture.

Some of the hotels in this city were designed and constructed to duplicate the traditional architecture of the city which was made suitable to its desert climate with least waste of energy and most durability.

Daad International Hotel

Originally a passenger and freight terminal, Daad hotel (Photo No. 1 and 2) is located in the center of the city and is designed with least intervention in the environment. The original design is maintained with a few conversion made for memorable place for tourists to stay. It is both convenient for the tourists who want to enjoy visiting the old part of the city and different which gives them a real sense of place.



Photo No. 1: Daad Hotel – Yazd - Iran



Photo No. 2: Daad Hotel – Yazd - Iran

Laleh International Hotel

Like the Daad international Hotel, Laleh International Hotel (photos No. 3 and 4) is also located in the old fabric of the city of Yazd. This hotel was designed by converting the old houses into a place for tourists stay and at the same time preserving the architectural quality. The hotel has conserved the valued elements such as the wind-tower and the revitalization was done in a way that the local material such as sun-dried bricks are used to keep the originality of the building and also to create a real sense of place for the people staying or visiting it.

The use of local and traditional material and keeping the original design unchanged (or least possible change) has highly contributed to the quality of these hotels and in fact produced a different environment in which even if a person enters blind-eyes to the hotel he/she can realize the place with its climate and architecture.



Photo No 3: Laleh International Hotel -Yazd



Photo No 4: Laleh International Hotel-Yazd

Dariush Grand Hotel - Kish Island

Dariush Grand Hotel (photos no. 5 and 6) was built as a look like Persepolis, a symbol of the glory and splendor of the ancient Persian (Iranian) civilization and the Persian Empire. The hotel was designed and developed by Iranian entrepreneur, who also owns and manages several tourist attractions and hotels in the Canary Islands.

This hotel is different from the other 2 hotels mentioned before. In that this is a completely new hotel which was constructed from scratch. However, the design idea was to create a sense in which the visitor finds a luxury accommodation altogether with a look of Persepolis, as a valuable Persian piece of architecture.



Photo No. 5: Dariush Grand Hotel – Kish Island



Photo No. 6: Dariush Grand Hotel – Kish Island

CONCLUSION

Today tourism is considered to be an important phenomenon in the world and its growth and vitality highly depends on its sustainability. In order to make it sustainable, methods of localization should be introduced. Architecture can be considered as a workable and appropriate means of interconnecting tourism to the local and indigenous elements.

Many of the activities of tourism industry take place in the spaces which were designed and build by the architects. Consequently, sustainable architecture creates unique spaces, using traditional and local styles, materials and skills. Sustainable architecture attempts to preserve cultural aspects, social values and respect the environment and create a sense of place for tourists. Therefore, it is trying to have a more effective role in tourism development across the world.

Building indigenous hotels and other accommodation facilities in each region using local material and resources is a successful sustainable architecture. In that due to using traditional methods of conserving energy, less use of valuable land and suitability with the climate it will be successful. Incorporating indigenous accommodations with traditional customs of each region will create opportunities in tourism industry to attract more tourists.

The practice of sustainable architecture in the form of building hotels has been realized in Iran and has had positive impacts in creating a sense of place for the domestic and international tourists in city across Iran.

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