



RESEARCH PAPER

Museums' Problems and Management for Tourism: A Case Study of District Peshawar

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ABSTRACT

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The study is aimed to identify some basic problems of museums and community in Peshawar District and their management to make the museum a visitors' friendly destination. Museums and community are interdependent to flourish. The development of a museum is subject to the interest of the people and community engagement. Similarly, Museums also play a vital role in the development of a society in terms of education, preservation of the cultural assets and creation of sense of ownerships and identity. The connection between Museums and community can be strengthened when museums are properly managed to satisfy the needs and demands of the community and the community in return owns its cultural heritage. The study is carried out through field surveys and personal observations of the authors. For proper management of highlighted problems already standardised remedial case studies have been considered. The study found a number of problems and concluded with their proper management for profitable public outreach and tourism development.

Introduction

Awareness is one of the major tools of motivations for public to visit heritage sites and more specifically the museums. All communities need innovations to be in touch with their past in this rapidly changing world and the personal interest in heritage attract people who possess emotional attachments to a particular place (Timothy, 1996). People well aware of their heritage feel pride to visit their heritage sites and museums.

The Peshawar District, due to its unique strategic position encompasses a rich cultural and natural heritage that needs to be curated, preserved, properly managed and promoted through community participatory approach which is only possible when we have sufficient data regarding the basic problems of the museums.

Literature Review

Education is the main driving force in any museum's mission, particularly if it calls for individuals' participation. The museum experience should therefore make visitors more knowledgeable, stimulate their curiosity to learn something new and allow them to develop skills and abilities for living (Yue Hou, 2009).

Museums in USA record more than 500 million visits a year (Talboys, 2005). The Canadian Museums Association (CMA) estimates that over 59 million people visit museums annually, which includes over 7.5 million visits made by school children (Sarah Culley, 2010).

The interior and exterior environment of a museum influences visitors' satisfaction. The exterior includes the appearance of the building i.e. signage and architecture. The interior refers to the air, temperature, light and display inside a museum. If museums succeed to satisfy these visitors, they are not only retained but also encourage the people in the community to visit and market these museums through oral publicity (DITRC, 2006; Yue Hou, 2009).

The creation of museums or the facilitation of cultural celebration programmes, for example, can be very powerful tools for keeping culture alive. Museums can incorporate changing living perspectives by highlighting how cultural heritage plays a role in contemporary society, portraying its evolving and sometimes contested significance and including interactive and creative displays that are designed in consultation with local communities (Higueras, 2008; Segobye, 2006).

Museum plays an active part in safe-guarding the community's oral history and traditional ways of passing down information to future generations. Its management promotes the community's cultural heritage in a way that is educative to the wider public and has increase community pride in its own unique and valuable history (Zeigler, 2007; Harrison, 2010).

School visit is the most elementary form of museum education and it is carried on almost everywhere and usually with some failures and deficiencies. Sometimes museum visits are failed due to no preparation of visits in the classroom and sometimes visits to museums are not informed to museum staff and then there may be no guide available to help in leading the children through galleries. Another failure of the visits is that the group size is sometimes too large and the children cannot examine the exhibits properly (Dar, 1980).

Arranging and conducting tours, lectures in the museums by experts, encouragement of journalists to write on different sections of museums, persuasion

of schools to send the groups of their students to the museums should be encouraged (Rehmani, 2000).

Material and Methods

In current study the requisite data was retrieved through field visits and personal observations. The field visits and data collection strategy was designed after the careful study of several researches (case studies) in the field of museums at international level. The problems came out of the study were properly analysed in global frame of reference and remedial recommendations were suggested to flourish the museums in a profitable way.

Museums in District Peshawar

Currently there are three Archaeological and Ethnological museums are functional in district Peshawar. A brief introduction of these museums is as under:

Peshawar Museum, Peshawar

It is the earliest museum in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, built in 1906 and formally opened in November 1907 (Ali et al., 2014). In different times it remained under different administrations. After the establishment of the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums in 1992, the Peshawar Museum, Peshawar came under Provincial Directorate.

The two-storey building of Peshawar Museum is an amalgamation of British and Mughal style of architecture. It consists of a main hall and two side aisles on the ground and first floor, surmounted by four elegant cupolas and small pinnacles on all corners (Ali et al., 2014).

The museum houses the most extensive collection of the Gandharan art pieces, excavated from the major Gandharan sites. The main collection includes Gandharan sculptures, coins, manuscripts, copies of the Holy Qura'an, inscriptions, weapons, dresses, jewellery, Kalash effigies, Mughals later-period paintings, household objects, local and Persian handicrafts. Today the Peshawar Museum is best known for its largest Buddhist art collection in the world (Ali et al., 2014).

The Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Museum, University of Peshawar

In 1962-63 a small museum was established as University Archaeological Museum, Peshawar but was inaugurated in 1966. It houses the selected material from sites excavated or explored by the Department of Archaeology, University of Peshawar under the leadership of Ahmad Hassan Dani (Dar, 1977). Later in 1998 Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Museum, University of Peshawar was established with the help of Japanese Government.

The collection of this museum consists of pre and proto historic antiquities, Gandhara Grave Goods, Buddhist collection, model of a Buddhist stupa, Islamic gallery and a rich collection of coins etc. A unique feature of this museum is its lighting system which is based upon natural lighting.

The City Museum, Gor Khuttree

This museum is located in Gor Khuttree Complex in the walled city of Peshawar. The site is under the control of Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The museum was founded by Ihsan Ali, the then director, Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and inaugurated on 23rd, March 2006 by the former Chief Minister, Akram Khan Durrani.

There are two galleries in this museum. One of these housing the Archaeological artefacts unearthed during the excavations at Gor Khuttree from 2003-07, while the other one exhibiting the ethnological objects purchased from Peshawar.

Problems of the Museums

The problems of the museums can be categorised as external and internal problems. Both these problems equally affect the visitor experience. Some of the problems of the museums of Peshawar city are discussed as under:

External Problems

The external problems of the museums are:

Accessibility

All the three museums in Peshawar city are easily accessible in terms of roads and location. But museums don't have any public transport. The visitors to these museums have to arrange their own transport. So, the museums' school visit programmes may suffer due to lack of this facility. Similarly, public cannot access these museums on public holidays and on Sundays. The employees and the especially school children, cannot visit the museums on their holiday. Similarly, timing of these museums is not properly planned. All these museums closed after 4:00 pm in summer, which may be extended to enable the community to visit the Museum till late hours during the summer.

Car Parking

None of the museums except Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Museum, University of Peshawar have spacious car parking facilities. The visitors to these museums face a big problem to park their vehicles.

Museums' Buildings

Buildings of the two museums in Peshawar city in terms of architecture are very attractive but there are some severe problems with the building of City Museum, Gor Khuttree. It is an old building of British Period, located in Gor Khuttree Complex. This building has leakage and seepage in its roof and walls. The rain water through the roof approaches to showcases thus gradually decaying the objects. The Peshawar Museum, Peshawar has some problems of electric wires hanging with the walls. These problems may cause irreplaceable damage to the Museum and its collection.



Figure 1. Garbage in the lawn of the museum



Figure 2. Cracks and seepage in the museum building



Figure 3. Lack of inadequate display and seepage in the background

Signage

The signage on prominent places is also a big problem. Due to lack of proper sign boards most of the community do not come to know about these museums.

Prominent Entrances

Peshawar Museum, Peshawar and City Museum, Gor Khuttree do not have prominent entrances. The need is to provide monumental entrances to the museums to attract the pedestrians and travellers.

Resting Place

The museums have very good lawns but still none of the museums has developed these lawns into proper resting place and parks. There are no proper seating arrangements and play land for children to enjoy.



Figure 4. Kids in the museum



Figure 5. Different activities in the museum



Figure 6. Lack of parking facilities



Figure 7. Lack of electric system management



Figure 8. Water tap

Café/ Tuck Shop

None of the museums in Peshawar city has a reasonable café or tuck shop. Peshawar Museum, Peshawar has a facility of tea stall only but it is very basic and caters to the needs of museum staff mostly.

Wash Rooms

The City Museum, Gor Khuttree has a big problem of wash rooms. There is no single wash room inside or outside the museum for the visitors. The other two museums are having this facility.

Cleanliness

Cleanliness is another big problem of the museums of Peshawar city. This problem of cleanliness is associated with City Museum mostly. Peshawar Museum and Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Museum have better cleanliness standards. The lawns of Peshawar Museum need to be made clean and good looking. Cleanliness should also be reflected through the appearance of the staff.

Souvenirs/ Gifts Shop

In all the three museums of Peshawar city, there is no souvenir or gift shop. Only Peshawar Museum has initiated it recently.

Internal Problems

Reception Desk

In the Peshawar Museum and City Museum there are no prominent and attractive reception desks for the information of the visitors.

Lighting

There is no proper lighting system in any of the selected Museums. In case of electricity break down there is no alternate in the form of generator etc. So during electricity break down there are severe problems of visiting museums and see the objects on display. Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Museum is based upon natural lighting system. In this museum there is also a big problem of observing the objects.



Figure 9. Lack of proper lighting and congested display

Exhibition/ Display

City Museum has severe problems of display. There are highly damaged objects on display which are displayed without conservation. The visitors could not get any information from these objects. Similarly, there are some objects which are without information tags/labels. For the visitors it is difficult to know about the history and use of these objects.



Figure 10. Inappropriate display



Figure 11. Inappropriate coins' display

Use of Modern Technology

We see no use of modern techniques and equipment in any museum of the Peshawar city. Modern equipment and techniques may enhance the overall setting and quality of the displays.

Other Problems

Apart from these there are some other problems also which create an overall bad experience of the museums' visit. If these problems are overcome, the museums would be able to strive for their creative mission.

Museum Guides

There is no proper guide facility in the museums of Peshawar city. The guiding is very much poor in Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Museum and City Museum. In Peshawar Museum there are better guiding facilities. Sometimes staff does not pay any attention to visitors and do not guide intentionally. Lack of professional guides directly influences the educational activities in the museums. In Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Museum there is no single guide. The visitors visit here on their own thus, the visits of several visitors turn into negative thinking about the museums and they regard museums as useless entities.

Lack of Staff

There is lack of staff in almost every museum of Peshawar city. Due to this, museums could not run their daily routine activities efficiently.

Job Satisfaction

There are number of staff members in the museums of Peshawar city who are serving since long at the same post with higher qualifications. They are feeling depressed. Some of the visitors also pointed out the staff attitude in the museums. This dissatisfaction of the employees may also be a reason for the overall bad museums' experience.

Promotional Material

All the three museums are lacking well designed brochures, pamphlets, CDs etc. for the visitors. Similarly, museums do not have any marketing plan to promote themselves at the local, national or international level.

Library

City Museum doesn't have any library while the Peshawar Museum and Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Museum have well-established libraries.

Lecture Rooms/ Seminar Halls

Only Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Museum has attractive lecture rooms or seminar halls. Here international conferences are also organised but the other two museums do not have any seminar hall which may be used for academic activities etc.



Figure 12. Peshawar Museum: Main Hall



Figure 13. A mushaera in the open veranda (Gor Khuttree museum)



Figure 14. Lectures being delivered to school students



Figure 15. Sketching art contests

Conservation Labs

There is no single conservation lab in any of the selected museums. The movement of objects for treatment to other parts of the country might be harmful for antiquities.

Store Room

Proper store rooms for the safe keeping of the antiquities are not available in the City Museum.

Security

There is also shortage of security staff in the museums of Peshawar city. There should be provision of proper security to prevent any mishap.

Funding

There is lack of funding to overcome all the above mentioned problems of the museums. Government should provide enough funds to museums for their smooth running. This will not only save the rich cultural past but also aware the community and raise a sense of ownership about their heritage.

Lack of Inclusive Engagement

There is shortage of active exchange of information, listening to concerns and suggestions and developing in an agreed way forward together. This adversely affects the interest of community stakeholders in sustainability of cultural assets like museum.

Conclusion

There is a huge potential of establishing museums in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa due to its rich cultural heritage. Museums not only aware the community about its history but also a source of revenue generation in this era. Results of the study show that the museums in district Peshawar are suffering from some very severe problems and relation of the museums with the community is also very weak. Very little people know about museums. There are number of reasons for this weak association. This study has explored the facts about this dilemma and provided suggestions for improvement. If these suggestions are properly executed the present alarming situation may be settled to a satisfactory level.

Recommendations

Keeping in view the community (visitors) demand, dissatisfaction, issues raised by them as well as personal observations during the survey of the museums, the following recommendations are made to minimize the problems.

- Public outreach programmes should be undertaken by the museums to raise awareness and sense of ownership about their heritage in general and the museums in particular. Similarly, articles in the newspapers and magazines, use of TV, Radio, museums' awareness programmes like *mushaera* (poetic contests in the museums), quiz and other competitions, guided tours etc. may raise awareness among the community. Similarly, museums should regularly publish research materials regarding their collections and this research should reach to the relevant bodies for taking benefits out of it.
- Museums should provide all the external and internal facilities for the memorable heritage experience of visitors.
- Museums should be accessible in terms of transport facility. For the time being such transport may be used only for schools' children and their teachers for guided tours. At least Peshawar Museum, Peshawar should have its own bus or van for such trips.
- Museums should reset their opening hours and holidays. On Sundays if museums could be accessible, so the government and private employees may visit along with their families.
- Parking facilities should be provided for the visitors.
- Conservation problems should be properly addressed. Museums should consider their buildings. Leakage and seepage problems should be addressed. Similarly, hanging wires, cleanliness problems should be solved. Museums' entrances should be made graceful which may attract the visitors, pedestrians and the other travellers. Proper signage inside and outside the museums should also be provided indicating each and every facility.

Similarly, proper signboards about museums and heritage would also be helpful if displayed at various places in the city.

- Museums should develop their lawns and gardens into proper resting places and play land for children. Museums can get the benefit of socializing from these lawns.
- Museums should provide proper cafeteria and dining facilities to visitors. They should also provide souvenirs shops. Online sale opportunities may also be provided from these gift shops and some specific items like pottery, jewellery etc. may also prove to be popular souvenirs. Similarly, Gor Khuttree Complex has a very large area and ancient cells. This area can be converted into artisan village to see the artisans at work and buy the souvenirs. Along with these, museums should also search out for entrepreneurships and commercialisation to run their expenses.
- Washroom facilities should be provided.
- There should also be reception desk at prominent places in the museums, providing useful information and giving promotional material to the visitors and the interested ones about the museums and heritage. The promotional material may be in the form of brochures, pamphlets, books and booklets, journals and CDs etc. for sale and free of cost.
- Museums should have a look into lighting system and display problems. Generators or alternate could be provided for lighting problems. Displays need to be changed into aesthetically pleasant. For lighting, displays and other related matters the use of modern technology is helpful. Similarly, comfortable temperature inside the museums is also important. This may bring the visitors from chaos to satisfaction and a memorable heritage experience.
- Guiding facilities should be improved. Museums should train their staff as professional guides and realise them the importance of professionalism in heritage industry. The friendly, hospitable attitude and neat and clean staff is of crucial importance in this industry. For this, museums should give their staff the job satisfaction and hire fair number of professional guides to respond to the requests of the visitors. Museums should also come out from their traditional roles and also hire the services of tourism and conservation experts along with archaeologists. It is only possible if museums adopt multi-disciplinary approach.
- Special spaces for the smooth running of the museums i.e. auditorium, library and store rooms should be provided.

- There should be at least one well equipped conservation lab in any one of the museums of Peshawar city.
- Museums should take proper security measures for the safety of visitors and antiquities as well. It may be done through the instalments of cameras, walk through gates and increasing the security staff.
- Federal and provincial governments along with local, regional and district governments, other stakeholders, NGOs and associations like Friends of Museums etc. should support the museums generously to provide better facilities to the visitors.

Apart from these there are some other recommendations which are as under:

- Facilities for physically disable persons should be provided. Ramps can be built at the entrance to the museums. Special seats and toilets can be provided. If tickets must be purchased there should be no charge for people with disabilities. Special guided tours for the blind and the deaf can be provided.
- The tickets are not so much costly in the museums of Peshawar city but still a large number of people want free entry. It may also be due to poor financial conditions of the local community. When a person visits with his/ her family, it may be a burden on that person. So the special discounts, free admission days and membership programmes etc. should be initiated.
- Museums should also add the heritage items from other parts of the country and should also add some new objects on display as well because the frequent visitors want to see some new additions in the museums.
- Lessons on museums and heritage should be introduced in the syllabus from the primary level onwards.
- Museums should also establish dispensaries as there is no proper arrangement of first aid in the museums.
- All the museums of Peshawar city are focussing upon tangible cultural heritage while the intangible aspect of heritage collection and conservation is neglected one. So, there is a need to exhibit intangible heritage of the region.
- Museums should maintain a proper record of visitors (per day visitors/ annual visitors etc.).
- The tour operators and other tourism services vendors should specially focus upon heritage and museums in their tour packages and tourism related activities.

- The government should formulate and rethink its policies regarding heritage and museums.
- After providing these necessary facilities the museums should promote/market themselves to their audiences. Museums in the Peshawar city can attract the local, national and international visitors. Museums should realise their potential and take good benefit from this.
- Present research is a pioneer exploring some basic facts about museums. There is a huge scope of museum studies especially in Pakistan, having a glorious past. Such researches may extend to other parts of the country as well to make museums visitors' friendly.

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