

# Sustainable Development employing Cultural Tourism via insight from the South Asian Forts

Ayesha Agha Shah<sup>1</sup>, Lubaina Soni<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Architecture and Interior Design, College of Engineering, University of Bahrain.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Architecture and Planning, Dawood University of Engineering and Technology, Karachi.

\*Corresponding author: Lubaina Soni

**Abstract\_** Cultural tourism offers local communities the chance to benefit financially from their cultural heritage sites, encouraging them to appreciate and preserve it, while providing the opportunity to expand the personal horizons of visitors. It is closely tied to sustainable approaches, effective management of heritage sites, the built environment, and the social customs of these locations. However, managing the complex relationships between these factors and the impact of unplanned tourist activities is particularly challenging, especially at large-scale heritage sites. In recent years, sustainable cultural tourism has gained prominence as an important topic. In this context, this study explores the intricate connection between cultural tourism and heritage management in augmenting the sustainable development of heritage sites. The study argues that the integrated management of heritage sites, the social inclusion of communities, and informed tourism activities intersect to create a more sustainable approach to tourism at heritage sites. Managing and maintaining these sites has recently posed several challenges, directly contributing to economic, environmental, and social issues. As the demand for more resilient cities and communities grows, it is vital to explore how cultural sustainability can lead to positive outcomes. This research investigates the role of cultural tourism in sustainable development by employing the notion of integrated management to highlight its importance in promoting heritage conservation, enhancing community participation, and supporting social sustainability within heritage sites. It specifically examines the impact of strategic planning for sustainable tourism on communities and, in turn, on heritage sites, using two case studies: Galle Fort in Sri Lanka and Diji Kot Fort in Pakistan. The study collects and analyzes data from these two sites, using an inductive process, and formulates ideas based on archival data, leading to a detailed comparison of the phenomena under investigation. The study utilizes qualitative methodologies, such as archival research, site visits and personal notes to collect data from the sites. The findings reveal that informed tourism activities significantly influence the sustainable approach and the associative experiences within heritage sites. Furthermore, integrating cultural management into heritage conservation initiatives enhances social sustainability and contributes to achieving broader sustainable development goals. The research provides insights into developing sustainable and authentic tourist experiences that conserve heritage sites while fostering a sense of ownership among all stakeholders by incorporating community engagement into heritage conservation efforts. Therefore, cultural and tourism management practices and community involvement align with other policies and techniques, should be considered. This study provides new knowledge and evidence to address the challenges of contemporary cultural tourism in achieving sustainable development goals.

**Key words\_** cultural tourism, sustainable development goals, heritage sites, Bahrain, Sindh.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The sustainable development goal for tourism has been the focus of numerous scholarly studies within the tourism paradigm since the late 20th century. Buckley, (2012) [1] mentioned appropriate tourism can lead to regional improvements by enhancing natural values, achieving tourism objectives, enriching visitor experiences, and respecting the social and cultural backgrounds of local communities. Visiting developed areas is one of the oldest forms of tourism and offers significant economic opportunities for these regions [2]. Previous research indicates that many cities have recognized this

economic potential and have integrated it as a crucial component of their economies since the 1980s. Indeed, a predominant development strategy in urban areas has been to promote tourism as a catalyst for economic growth. Developed countries have been restoring and upgrading recreational sites with the potential to be profitable [3]. Additional research illustrates how these regions have de-industrialized their major cities and shifted focus towards tourism, establishing new growth sectors. As a result, regions that have achieved high levels of tourism have gained new significance in state strategies, undergoing transformations aligned with postmodern shifts and the associated restructuring of their economies [4].

Despite the numerous obstacles, developing countries have opportunities for growing socially and economically, while developing their regional and cultural tourism [5]. The complex relationship between sustainable tourism, heritage conservation and management of historic sites, requires a delicate balance for long-term destination viability [6]. Effective collaboration among stakeholders is essential, emphasizing responsible travel behaviors, cultural sensitivity, and community empowerment [7]. While sustainable tourism holds promise for inclusive growth, challenges such as unequal distribution of benefits and environmental degradation necessitate strategic interventions. Addressing these challenges requires implementing fair trade practices, supporting local enterprises, and enforcing sustainable policies [8]. The relationship between sustainable planning and heritage conservation has historically been compartmentalized, leading to the need for integration of policies and objectives [9]. While both are essential, they have often operated independently, creating potential conflicts. Bridging these spheres is crucial to achieve an integrated approach that effectively marries heritage conservation with urban sustainable development. On the other hand, certain authors acknowledge these challenges while emphasizing the responsibility of the conservation field. They argue that conservation professionals have not effectively connected their work to sustainability and quality of life issues. There's a call for greater engagement and dialogue with stakeholders from various disciplines who share similar concerns but offer different perspectives [10-12].

Subsequently, to discover the challenges of executing maintainable tourism improvement procedures and arrangements, with a set of creating data on information of the economic improvement challenges among partners. The research aims to consider two destinations to produce data on information of the economic advancement procedures and approaches that are being implemented by tourism partners within the Galle Fort of Sri Lanka and the Diji Kot Fort of Pakistan; and distinguish the opportunities and difficulties confronted by tourism partners and stakeholders in accomplishing a tourism sustainability in these fortification cities. These destinations will contribute to the realization of the important point, and the research investigates about the tourism advancement techniques and approaches being actualized by tourism stakeholders, and the challenges encountered by people accomplishing tourism sustainability.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Given that tourism, which is playing a vital role in driving global economic growth, has undergone remarkable expansion in recent decades. Being an industry that intersects with economic, social, and environmental aspects, there's a pressing need for sustainable development within tourism. Recognizing the interconnectedness between tourism and the environment, various stakeholders, policymakers, and the tourism industry have increasingly stressed the importance of adopting sustainable practices [8]. Positive tourist feedback can draw more visitors to destinations, but excessive tourism can lead to social and environmental degradation. Overcrowding may damage cultural

heritage, while commercialization can compromise authenticity [13]. Proper preservation is crucial for sustaining cultural tourism experiences and avoiding long-term sustainability decline. To achieve sustainable cultural tourism, it's essential to manage tourist numbers and minimize negative impacts, despite the temptation for maximum economic gain often prevailing in tourism projects[14]. Mass tourism is frequently accused by the media of causing irreversible harm to cultural heritage sites. Examples include the tomb of Tutankhamun in Egypt and Buddhist pagodas in Myanmar, both of which have suffered significant damage due to excessive numbers of visitors. In some cases, authorities have restricted access to these sites after initial exploitation, while in others, measures to mitigate heritage damage were implemented too late to prevent permanent depreciation. Venice has also been highlighted as a concerning case by The Economist's Editorial Board [15]. In addition to recognizing the broader impacts of heritage on local environments, it's crucial to consider factors such as transaction costs, the distribution of costs and incentives from heritage tourism, and the most efficient organizational modes from economic, social, environmental and cultural perspectives. Institutional frameworks, public strategies, investments, and projects play significant roles in shaping the impact of heritage tourism. It's essential to acknowledge that different actors may compete for the use of heritage resources, leading to issues of resource allocation. Furthermore, heritage tourism activities can generate both positive and negative externalities, which may be addressed through institutional arrangements. Viewing heritage tourism from this perspective involves assessing the possible and desired direct and indirect impacts of formal institutions and stakeholders, including public authorities at various levels and networks of private actors, on the development direction of heritage tourism [16].

Urban heritage conservation and sustainable development are intertwined concepts that have evolved over the past three decades, representing a critical imperative for our era [17]. Cultural heritage is increasingly integrated into various public development strategies at different levels, such as local, regional, and national levels, as it is seen as an asset for contemporary socio-economic development [18]. This inclusion presents significant opportunities for territorial units to undertake projects related to the conservation, restoration, and adaptation of heritage sites, as well as the preservation of intangible heritage. However, it also poses substantial challenges, particularly in achieving sustainable development in certain areas, especially when considering both quantitative and qualitative aspects of development comprehensively [16]. Despite its significance, there remains a lack of a universally accepted definition for sustainable development, leading to ambiguity and vagueness. This ambiguity is exemplified in the influential 1987 Brundtland Report, which defines sustainable development as the ability to meet present needs without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs [10]. Originally founded on three pillars—environmental, economic, and social dimensions—sustainability has undergone a transformative evolution over time, becoming a more intricate and holistic concept, owing to contributions from international debates and gatherings [10, 19].

Cultural heritage and cultural tourism share a symbiotic relationship, with heritage serving as a primary attraction for cultural tourism. Cultural tourism, in turn, provides financial support and raises public awareness for heritage conservation efforts. This paper aims to explore the interconnectedness of three central concepts: cultural heritage, cultural tourism, and sustainability. At the core of sustainable cultural tourism is the preservation of cultural heritage values, which begins with defining conservation concepts and analyzing effective conservation practices. Cultural tourism is differed from the recreational tourism where the essence of the visited destinations are always appreciated [20]. They serve as a fusion of tangible and intangible heritage, providing a rich context to comprehend the intricate relationship between humans and their environment. Cultural tourism is commonly understood as a sociocultural interaction among individuals, facilitated and influenced by a diverse array of actors including planners, politicians, researchers, marketing professionals, and travel agencies

Heritage management is the process of managing cultural properties through identification of heritage, interpretation, maintenance and conservation of physical sites as well as managing of intangible aspects of cultural heritage [21]. Heritage management requires the element of truthfulness so that it is relatively simpler to discern if heritage sites require our utmost attention to detail. Simply put, if truthfulness is not embraced, we lose reliability, an error that can overshadow our historical narratives. According to Liu et al., (2019) [22], modern urban conservation practice which has emerged in Europe in the nineteenth century, has since progressed from preserving monuments to preserving historic districts to now conserving the entire historic cities. Climate change, urbanization, market exploitation, mass tourism, and other factors have increased the pressures on urban heritage since the twenty-first century. Hence, in the face of everchanging urban scenarios, it is of critical importance to focus on integrated conservation management along with informed tourist activities, which may be able to integrate the sustainable development.

Stakeholders in the tourism industry have an impact on its development, and up-keeping and policy-making processes [23]. Throughout the lengthy process of investigating operational strategies for sustainable heritage tourism, the host community has been repeatedly mentioned as a key component [12, 24, 25]. It would be impossible for heritage tourism businesses to set up transparent institutional structures and to fairly and equally divide costs and benefits among stakeholder groups without the active involvement and participation of local communities. The host community is defined in this study as all the stakeholder groups at a heritage site who share an interest in tourism operations. Stakeholder groups that may be involved in heritage conservation and capitalization include government agencies, local hospitality businesses, residents, and relevant institutions like universities and non-profit research organizations. Many writers have examined community involvement from a variety of angles. Salazar, (2012) [12] made the case that before communities can actively engage, they must first identify concrete benefits. Du Cros, (2001) [25] promoted the creation of social capital as a driving force behind a company's collaborative efforts with its communities. More significantly, community involvement was viewed as a philosophical idea at the level of society, making it too abstract for specific travel agencies to manage in their daily operations. The goal of this research is to apply the idea of community involvement at the organizational level.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

The divided administration, vague goals, and emphasis on material heritage pose problems to the conservation of Galle Fort. Long-term preservation necessitates the implementation of sustainable tourism, active community involvement, and the management of the heritage site.

#### **3.1. Case Study 1\_ Galle Fort, Sri Lanka**

The Galle Fort in Sri Lanka holds great historical importance as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, showcasing a diverse colonial history. The fort, which the Portuguese originally built in 1588, underwent modifications, and the Dutch later occupied it from 1649 until the English captured it in 1796 (Kuruppu and Wijesuriya 1992). The establishment of this institution symbolizes the European expansion into Asia and serves as evidence of Sri Lanka's history of colonial occupation. The Galle Fort spans across an area of 52 hectares and includes a wide range of buildings, such as courts, churches, temples, mosques, and warehouses (Figure 1). The fortifications of the structure consist of

14 bastions, a gateway, and a clock tower, which combine European and Asian design elements. The combination of architectural styles demonstrates the coming together of different cultures in the area.



**Figure 1.** Map showing Galle and Matara Fortresses and other main heritage sites in the region.

The historical significance of the Fort extends beyond its tangible architectural elements. The site is home to more than 1,686 people, who experience heritage on a daily basis. This makes it a living heritage site (Multi criteria Assessment (MCA) Srilanka, 2015). The Fort serves as a hub of cultural and religious diversity, housing Buddhists, Christians, Muslims, and a range of ethnic groups, including Sinhalese, Muslims, Tamils, Burghers, and Malays. The presence and peaceful cohabitation of these communities have nurtured a distinctive multiculturalism within the region. Preserving the originality and historical essence of the Fort is crucial for its conservation. The architectural elements of the area, including fortifications, grid streets, front verandas, backyards, and an underground sewer system, have preserved their original designs (MCA-Srilanka, 2015). The Fort's architecture integrates the surrounding geomorphology by incorporating ramparts and strategically placed bastions to protect against natural hazards (MCA-Sri Lanka, 2015). Moreover, the Fort's position next to the Rumassala hillock enhances its aesthetic appeal and ecological significance. The biodiversity of Rumassala and the coastal environment play a crucial role in the significance of the Fort, establishing a robust interdependence between the Fort and its natural surroundings [26]. The Galle Fort in Sri Lanka is a symbol of the country's abundant cultural legacy and intricate historical fabric.

Since its establishment in 1988, this UNESCO World Heritage Site represents a cultural narrative that combines various influences from different time periods. The geographical landscape of this region, located in the Southern Coastal Belt, offers a stunning combination of cultural, natural, and historical features. This region exhibits a rich and diverse range of living organisms, including abundant marine species in its lagoons, mangroves, and forested areas that are characterized by unique maritime plant life [27, 28]. The local inhabitants rely on these natural elements as essential components of their daily lives, which significantly influence the cultural development of the region. The relationship between humans and the environment has played a crucial role in influencing the cultural identity of the Galle Fort and its surrounding areas.



Figure 2. Galle Fort, Srilanka

The Fort, situated in the Galle District next to the historic city of the same name, has experienced a vibrant cultural transformation (Figure 2). The Fort has experienced governance by the Portuguese, Dutch, and English from 1505 to 1948, reflecting a "heritage of dual parentage" [29]. The combination of colonial influences has created a multicultural identity within the Fort. In addition, the Galle Fort has served as a hub for the harmonious coexistence of various religious and ethnic groups. The area accommodates religious establishments for Buddhists, Christians, and Muslims, and has been inhabited by diverse ethnic groups such as Sinhalese, Muslims, Tamils, Burghers, and Malays. The Galle Fort is a symbol of Sri Lanka's historical and cultural wealth, showcasing a distinctive blend of architectural styles and environmental importance closely linked to its heritage. The Fort contains various structures such as courts, churches, temples, mosques, warehouses, and residential quarters. They have remained unchanged, showcasing the architectural excellence of that time. The Fort's structural design effectively incorporates the surrounding topography, making use of natural elements to strengthen its defensive capabilities. In addition to its impressive architecture, the Fort holds great environmental importance. The coral and boulder reefs in the vicinity serve as a natural barrier, providing defense against sea erosion and environmental perils. The reefs serve the dual purpose of protecting the Fort and making a substantial contribution to the marine ecosystem in the Southern Coastal Belt. The Rumassala hillock, located next to the Fort, enhances its picturesque appeal while also hosting a diverse range of plant and animal species. Furthermore, the surrounding communities have relied heavily on the Fort's environment to develop their traditional ways of making a living. The Southern Coastal Belt has developed distinctive fishing techniques due to its location along the coast and abundant marine resources. The combination of exceptional architectural design and the surrounding natural surroundings emphasizes the importance of conserving both the physical structures and the intangible cultural heritage linked to Galle Fort.

The Galle Fort, located in Sri Lanka, represents a significant historical site that is closely connected to a range of difficulties related to its preservation, environmental sustainability, and ability to withstand natural disasters. The fort's importance extends beyond its architectural and cultural heritage, encompassing its ecological interdependence and integration into society. Nevertheless, numerous complex obstacles hinder its conservation and comprehensive safeguarding. An important obstacle is the disorganized system of institutions that oversee the management of the fort. Various organizations, including the Department of Archaeology, Central Cultural Fund, and Galle Heritage Foundation, are participating. Notwithstanding their presence, the absence of coherent policies and coordinated planning obstructs their cooperative endeavors. The fragmented approach results in conflicts among stakeholders and weakens the effectiveness of coordination for conservation efforts. The management primarily emphasizes the tangible aspects of the fort's heritage, unintentionally overlooking its intangible dimensions. This lack of attention not only weakens the fort's ability to withstand disasters,

but also reduces its overall importance, which includes its impact on traditional livelihoods and the natural environment surrounding the fort. The fort's challenges are worsened by environmental vulnerabilities. Its close proximity to the coastline renders it vulnerable to hazards such as sea erosion, deterioration, and devastation. The conservation efforts are immediately at risk due to issues such as algae growth on temple paintings, corrosion of structural elements, and encroachment into buffer zones. The fort's resilience is further compromised by human interventions that result in the destruction of coral reefs and mangroves. The aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami exposed the lack of readiness among local communities and heritage agencies in dealing with such disasters. Although the fort displayed remarkable structural resilience, the absence of organized responses and conservation strategies led to the deterioration of cultural assets in the surrounding regions. Legislative deficiencies also present difficulties. Although Sri Lanka possesses heritage conservation laws established in the 1940s and has officially accepted international agreements such as the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, there is still a notable deficiency in incorporating disaster risk management into heritage policies. The lack of adherence to international frameworks such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction poses obstacles in strengthening the defense against future calamities. To address these complex challenges, it is necessary to adopt a comprehensive approach that integrates heritage preservation, environmental conservation, disaster risk reduction, and community involvement. Establishing connections between different institutions, improving laws, and promoting collaboration among stakeholders are essential measures for protecting the cultural heritage of Galle Fort, ensuring the preservation of its ecological balance, and strengthening its ability to withstand future challenges.

The preservation efforts regarding Galle Fort involve a comprehensive approach that focuses on architectural, environmental, and disaster resilience aspects. The preservation efforts primarily aim to uphold the fort's structural soundness, which involves restoring fortifications, bastions, gateways, and buildings that showcase a fusion of European and Asian architectural designs. Restoration endeavors also encompass grid streets, verandas, and sewer systems, which persist in operating as drainage mechanisms. Conservation efforts prioritize the preservation of the fort's immediate surroundings, particularly the protection of the remaining Galle Fort Reef, which is the sole existing coral reef in close proximity. Efforts are also focused on broader environmental conservation, with a particular emphasis on mangroves, coastal sand dunes, and coral reefs as natural defenses against erosion and disasters. The implementation of physical interventions recognizes the susceptibility of the fort to natural calamities, specifically coastal erosion and tsunamis. The preservation of existing features such as coral and boulder reefs, which played a role in reducing the impact of the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, is currently being examined. The inclusion of traditional knowledge in interventions is crucial for enhancing disaster resilience, particularly in coastal communities. Conservation strategies encompass both physical and non-physical aspects of heritage. Preservation endeavors encompass not only physical edifices, but also traditional means of making a living, portable cultural artifacts such as Ola Leaf Manuscripts, and intangible aspects of heritage. To tackle issues like unauthorized building, intrusion into protected areas, and disregard for intangible cultural heritage, it is necessary to make changes to existing laws, particularly the Antiquity Ordinance and the Galle Heritage Foundation Act. The Integrated Management Plan for Galle Fort, as requested by UNESCO, seeks to address the problems of encroachment and inadequate conservation by coordinating the efforts of different organizations and individuals involved. This plan incorporates architectural, environmental, and disaster resilience factors. It is essential to actively involve local communities, recognizing and respecting their traditional knowledge and practices. Engaging the community in conservation activities and leveraging their knowledge are crucial for fort preservation.

The future advancement and safeguarding of Galle Fort necessitates an all-encompassing approach that integrates the protection of cultural heritage, environmentally-friendly methods, and active

involvement of the community. The primary objective is to conserve the natural elements in the vicinity of the fort, including coastal features like mangroves, sand dunes, and coral reefs. These components play a vital role in bolstering resilience and guaranteeing the enduring viability of coastal heritage. The significance of these natural barriers in offering protection was underscored by the 2004 Tsunami.

The designs place a high priority on minimizing any disruption to the coastal environment surrounding the fort in order to maintain its protective role. It is crucial to safeguard the intangible cultural assets and traditional livelihoods within the fort. Conserving portable cultural artifacts, such as Ola Leaf Manuscripts, is an essential element of this undertaking. UNESCO has enforced an integrated management plan to address institutional divisions and build cohesive rules for the overall administration of forts. The tactics seek to attract guests and preserve the fort's authenticity by applying conscientious tourism techniques. The involvement of local people and the transmission of traditional knowledge are essential for the preservation of the fort. This approach places a high importance on ensuring the long-term viability of the environment, the protection of cultural heritage, the establishment of appropriate legislative structures, active participation from the local community, and the promotion of sustainable tourism. The objective is to ensure the enduring conservation of Galle Fort for subsequent generations.

### 3.1. Case Study 2\_ Kot Diji, Fort Sindh, Pakistan

Kot Diji fort is a typical example of a number of grand strongholds built by Talpurs (1783-1843). It is located about 25 miles east of the River Indus in the south of Pakistan. The fort built on a limestone hill, lies just across the road and opposite to the remains of the ancient site of MoenjoDaro, which itself was a fortified town more than 5000 years ago. Situated on 110 feet high hillock, Kot Diji fort is constructed with kiln-baked bricks and in some places use of sandstone is also seen (Figure 3). The locally found limestone is considered to be very brittle and, if used for the construction of such a grand structure, would have shattered easily.



Figure 3. Kot Diji Fort in Sindh, Pakistan





**Figure 4.** The defensive wall of Kot Diji Fort Sindh, Pakistan.

Historically Kot Diji fort was surrounded by the town of Kot Diji and the town itself was encircled by a 5 kilometer, 12 feet, mud wall. This defensive wall had bastions throughout its length and a huge iron gate that served as the cities only entrance (Figure 4). Very little has survived of this protective wall, but at the time of its existence it witnessed the height of Talpur civilization. It would have encircled the entire city where rich and common lived; it included (madrassas) schools, (kutub khana) libraries, (bazaars) markets, places of cultural significance, palaces and indeed the brilliant burnt brick fort (Pukka Killa) of Kot Diji. The fort was considered invincible and served as the residence of the Talpur rulers in the times of peace. The Fort was allocated the role of central military base for the Kingdom, especially to resist Afghan invasion. It was the strongest of the 20 or so Talpur forts and was named after the Persian architect Ahmed, who designed it. According to folklore it took 30 years to build; in reality, a much shorter, tactically feasible period may have been possible by mobilizing peasants and soldiers on a massive scale.

In 1783, an Afghan King Timur Shah appointed Mir Fateh Ali Khan Talpur ruler of the Sindh, to settle a long tussle between Talpurs and Kalhoras (another powerful family) in Sindh. As recorded in the Gazette of Sindh (Hughes A W, 1876, p34) Talpurs could be considered as being divided into three distinct families, namely Talpurs of: Hyderabad, Mirpur and Khairpur. Each family ruled different region of Sindh. The first Talpur ruler of Kairpur Mirs, Mir Suhrab Khan (1803-1830 AC) founded a number of forts to protect the frontiers of his rule. He is credited with constructing forts like Imam Garh in the Thar region, Shaha Garh towards Jodhpur and Jaisalmar and Ahmed Abad at Diji, which was later named as Kot Diji Fort [30].

According to BURRA Charter (ICOMOS Australia 1988), 'cultural significance is a concept which helps in estimating the value of places. The places that are likely to be of significance are those which help an understanding of the past or enrich the present, and which will be of value to future generations.' Having been built before the partition of India and Pakistan (1974), Kot Diji fort bears a historical and cultural significance in the history of both countries. Kot Diji Fort was resided by Talpurs who were gifted with great political astuteness and took solid measures to promote public welfare. They had the political vision to restore Sindh to its lost glory. The Talpur Court was a centre of cultural activities. Men of letters and poets from Khurasan, Iran, Iraq, etc. frequently visited the Talpurs' Court. He was the author of Fateh Namah, which is metrical history of the beginning of Talpurs' rule in Sindh. This valuable literature is frequently consulted by contemporary historians and writers and gives a good account of cultural and social aspects of the region, at the time. Although some descendants of Talpur family still reside in the region of Sindh, the fort of Kot Diji has been handed over to Pakistan government, in the hope of better maintenance.

#### 4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

A theoretical framework is set to address questions of this research. It clarifies technique as the methodology regarding a specific set of typical suspicions utilized to conduct this research. It incorporates the investigated plan, strategies of gathered information, focused populace, examining criteria, information collection prepare and information examination strategies. It further explains the moral contemplations taken after within the ponder, difficulties that constrain addressing the ponder. In this research, it would be the foremost suitable to attain targets of the investigate and reproduce the strategy utilized in other similar composed investigate researches [31]. The methodology for this research includes a combination of historical document analysis, site visits, interviews with experts from both case studies and their environmental organizations, and a review of existing literature on forts and heritage conservation. Historical documents and records from the past will be reviewed to understand the original construction and overtime use of both Forts. Site visits to the forts and surrounding areas were conducted to assess the current condition of the infrastructure and identify any ongoing environmental issues. Interviews with experts, environmental organizations, local authorities and local community will provide insights into the challenges and opportunities for rehabilitating the selected sites. These methods are designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the forts and formulate actionable recommendations for its preservation and rehabilitation.

The research design is qualitative, employing a combination of historical analysis, field research, and stakeholder interviews. This approach is suitable for exploring the historical and current context of the forts and understanding the complex factors contributing to its decline and potential for rehabilitation. A qualitative exploratory case study design was used in the investigation. Through the process of comparing and categorizing the study's items, the authors were able to make sense of social phenomena and analyze processes using the qualitative approach. According to Creswell et al., (2016) [32], the observations, data collection, analysis, and understanding are guided by the qualitative design. This is to simplify the welfare and practices of stakeholders in sustainable tourism and clarify the degree to which stakeholders are putting sustainable approaches and policies into practice, employing an exploratory approach. These methods were chosen for their ability to collect rich, highly valid data while placing and analyzing the data within a broader framework. for demanding that important informants be interviewed and for managing the various data sources that were gathered. The case studies usually combine actions, feelings and awareness of participants with interesting research exercises to conduct [33]. This cross-sectional study was conducted in a set time frame and was primarily qualitative to ensure adaptability to field conditions. The above-mentioned research design is based on inductive research methodology, which entails studies that initiate with reflection of a situation or problem in order to examine the related contexts, ideas, simulations, and models about it [34, 35]. Because of this, inductive research is a useful technique for elucidating trends that can be seen to verify the accuracy of theories regarding the subject of the study [36]. This study generated knowledge on sustainable tourism policies and strategies in the tourism industry using inductive research. Furthermore, the flexibility of inductive reasoning in obtaining implicit information about the research topic during data collection was a factor in its selection. The authors can read through the data in an inductive analysis and let codes or concept names come to them.

Data collection means were planned based on most investigated interrogations. The apparatuses were based on the categories of workplaces and the related stakeholders and partners. In this way, three key source guides were created and pretested some time recently information collection. These included guides for specialized staff, arrangement producers and tourism location administrators and

supervisors. These were basically tourism businesspeople in Galle Fort and Kot Diji Fort. Documents were sourced from archives, libraries, and online databases. Key documents included construction reports, maintenance records, and correspondence of local authorities. The collected documents were analyzed to extract relevant information about the construction phases and techniques used, and historical context of the forts. This analysis provided a foundational understanding of the system's historical significance and original functionality. Data from historical documents, site visits, interviews, and literature reviews were synthesized to develop a comprehensive understanding of the forts. The analysis focused on identifying the historical significance, current challenges, and potential strategies for rehabilitation. Triangulation is a method used for analysis to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. Data from multiple sources were cross verified to identify consistent patterns and discrepancies. This approach enhanced the robustness of the conclusions drawn from the study.

Historical documents and records from the past archives were reviewed to understand the original construction, purpose, and historical significance of the forts. Sources included archival materials, historical maps, reports, and contemporaneous accounts from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This document review also included academic journals, books, and reports from relevant organizations. Document sources were selected based on their relevance to the study's objectives, including works on historical environmental conservation, and heritage management. Both contemporary and historical sources were included. Document review was used to find secondary data. Using this approach, physical sources' limitations are categorized, investigated, interpreted, and identified [37]. According to Ahmed, (2010) [38], a document is written to be studied in the social context to mainly understand the content and purpose of the document. To ensure that the information in the publications was understood, this study went over several references to sustainable tourism. Most significantly, background data was acquired and examined, which aided in the authors' comprehension of the research's purpose, history, and methodology as well as in getting ready to organize the data in a way that would allow for more informed decision-making. A comprehensive exploration was conducted across multiple databases to obtain appropriate sources containing pertinent content for this study. Peer-reviewed journals, books, and articles with pertinent studies were found by combining manual and database search techniques.

Site visits to the Galle and Kot Diji Forts and surrounding areas were conducted to assess the current condition of the infrastructure and identify any ongoing environmental issues. These visits provided first-hand observations and photographic documentation of the state of the forts. During the site visits, detailed observations were recorded, and photographic evidence was collected. The focus was on identifying structural damage, signs of neglect, and environmental impacts such as erosion and defects. After determining which categories would be most useful for this investigation, the authors created an important participants' list for each category, and then tried to look up their contact information, including email addresses and phone numbers. This was accomplished through her social networks, friends, and formal channels like the district HR representative and the tourism officer. Following that, appointments were set up by phone and email, and the authors created another list of the interview timetable based on the times that the participants had chosen. Interviews were held in each of their offices; for managers and tour operators, they were held at their locations, which included town offices, hotels, and tourist attractions.

Interviews with stakeholders from Sri-Lanka and Karachi, such as environmental organizations, and local authorities and communities provided insights into the challenges and opportunities for rehabilitating the Galle and Kot Diji Forts respectively. Participants were selected based on their expertise and involvement with sites for environmental conservation and historical preservation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted using a set of open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed

responses about the condition of the forts, factors contributing to its decline, and potential rehabilitation strategies. Interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis. Key witness interviews with individuals were studied in-depth, who were aware of the daily routine of the town and neighborhood and these were considered as pioneers, supervisors and proprietors of tourism businesses, destinations and affiliations or tourism representatives [39]. The consider collected information from participants with basic information of the subject beneath examination [40]. In this way, this was chosen after an incorporation measure was formulated by the author depending on the viewpoints required from each participant. In this category, participants were asked open finished questions that were outlined by the authors. Face-to-face interviews were the most optimal and effectively utilized. Hence, an informal examination was connected by the author to extend the essential address, this permitted the participants to continue curiously and confirming important interpretation.

## 5. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Galle Fort, a place of great cultural and environmental importance, requires a comprehensive strategy to guarantee its enduring conservation for future generations. The conservation of Galle Fort is impeded by fragmented institutional management, absence of clear strategies, and a prioritization on tangible heritage over intangible aspects. To prepare for the future, it is essential to give priority to sustainable practices, actively include the community, and safeguard both architectural and environmental characteristics. This entails altering regulatory frameworks, integrating cultural preservation into sustainable tourism, and actively engaging local communities.

Galle Fort's rich historical narrative, maritime legacy, and community stories provide a strong sense of belonging. The Spatial Configuration, distinguished by its well-preserved architecture and picturesque coastal landscapes, elicits a profound emotional reaction. Cultural festivals and landmarks possess symbolic importance, whereas Evolution and Adaptation exemplify adaptive repurposing and continuity. The physical manifestation of Galle Fort provides concrete proof of its history narrative, displaying architectural styles from the colonial era, notable monuments, and coastal features that enhance its attractiveness. The conservation of Galle Fort's cultural heritage and emotional significance is a multifaceted matter that necessitates a thorough and all-encompassing approach.

### 5.1. Integration of Sustainable Strategies and Policies for Cultural Tourism in Forts.

Stakeholder interviews and field visits confirmed that Galle Fort and Kot Diji Fort must play a significant part in diving cultural tourism along with social and environmental issues. Similarly, invention, development and production contribute to climate change. However, the results to achieve sustainability should be prioritized, in Galle Fort and Kot Diji Fort, realizing it in the tourism sector. This is consistent in other destinations that have taken initiative in prioritizing tourism. Therefore, it has been delicate to plan practicality of effective tourism and lay down the set of approaches and policies. If serious issues are given consideration, then a better sustainability can be achieved, such as utmost strategy requires considerable investigation and input from the tourism industry at the root cause and creating important thought process for effective policy action rather than focusing on minor new developments.

Nearby places and systems to achieve the sustainable development regions should be underscored in numerous policy documents about the development of Galle Fort and Kot Diji Fort. Many sustainable strategies and programs by investing in long term structure and creating long-term job openings are

being re-enforced recently by the relevant stakeholders. Authorities may keep this matter as most urgent, given that sustainable tourism is a major source of employment, particularly for low-income and underprivileged locals. The tourists' and visitors' training has been enhanced, likely due to the development of the surrounding infrastructure, offering incentives for youth to be hired and thereby improving their income. The tourists and visitors' perseverance is projected to contribute to profitable and social development by applying programs to promote tourism that creates jobs and promotes original culture and goods by 2030; by ensuring sustainable consumption and product patterns, and by promoting tourism. Galle Fort and Kot Diji Fort's visitors and stakeholders' businesses are frequently regarded as making a substantial donation in terms of these objects. Stakeholders are encouraged to exercise sustainability in their diurnal actions, for illustration, as an important part in planning [4].

According to the observation of this research, if tourism in Galle Fort and Kot Diji Fort City is to be retained, sweats to cover the natural, environmental, and cultural heritage, the preservation of social, economic and cultural values, the creation of resides quality of life, the profitable development must be defined and properly enforced by the strategic plans and therefore stakeholders should as well be given occasion to take part during the policy making process this in turn will profit the destination that's erected on the strong foundation in relation to successful tourism programs.

## 5.2. Challenges Faced by Stakeholders in Developing Sustainable Tourism

The study highlighted that actors in Galle Fort and Kot Diji Fort tourism face a diverse enterprise, including difficulties among stakeholders in establishing tourism industry, with references to hurdles that are being faced by authorities of both private and public sector. Most commonly, the struggle for power in the policy process has greatly escalated the challenges of enforcing tourism policy under all conditions. Such as gratuitous regulatory predispositions, lack of supervising, connecting and advertising, supporting, poor structure, continuing modest benefit, upholding a undesirable attitude, unclear and unfavorable plans, and corruption were some constraints quoted by the stakeholders. Some profitable tourists and visitors could not reach on sites due to the weal road network. For instance, tourism policy has been severely affected by crises in the facilitating place, weak potential of the authority and their commitment to the assiduity [41].

These challenges have been reported away for illustration, Maxim (2015) adds to the complexity by emphasizing that metropolises are inhabited by people with a wide range of bourns and interests, which can occasionally discord with proponents of tourism growth. Following the findings, Galle Fort and Kot Diji Fort megacity's challenges are typical of a fractured tourism business, which is farther exacerbated by the megacity's multi-functionality, making tourism exceedingly complex.

Galle Fort and Kot Diji Fort have been striving to apply policies and conditioning that would upgrade long-term tourism benefits. Likewise, the programs are lengthy and fail to provide a long-term environment for effective tourism. As a result, poor approaches and strategies have continued to fail the system and need to be revised as the need of the hour. This is consistent with the study of Baggio et al., (2010) [42], who stated that numerous communities warrant devoted tourism regulations. The issue is raised due to distinct programs when directly copied and implemented from other countries, performing in dictatorial programs, and hence, failing to address social, environmental and cultural values related to the sites. This is especially true in places, where utmost programs are grounded on European and other foreign principles.

This study discovered an inappropriate monitoring of tourism conditioning. While the study credited low monitoring to different comprehensions regarding tourism, examinations in other locales have

attributed poor monitoring to different generalizations regarding sustainable excursionists. For instance, tourism practices need to be dignified and seen by colorful stakeholders, as the difference between the ideals tourism and the realities of the application, and performance gap or deficiency has developed [43]. Consequently, there are numerous defined norms to determine tourism operations carried out by several actors in different regions across the world.

The findings show that regulatory trends and strategy prosecution are troubled by delivery services. Policymakers have been forced to review their approaches which is noteworthy, and hence, these enterprises must be addressed together to grease the flawless inflow and sharing of visitor information [44]. Advertisers must work to address these trials in a way that impacts marketing conditioning positively. The image problem, the proper use of technology and defying hurdles, withhold from setting idealistic prospects are some of recommendations to minimize the challenges of marketing work. Destinations expecting visitors should take the initiative to make a affirmative appearance by furnishing stylish familiarity and keeping the destination well-secured. There should also be a satisfactory time-round tourism experience provided at a reasonable price. Service that fits all genders and culture is also important to be prioritized when implementing tourist related activities.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Grounded on the disquisition's outcomes, this study concludes the optimal use of official funds, ecology conservation procedures, enhancing biodiversity, fulfilling the need of host communities and infrastructural growth, are main attributes leading towards appropriate tourism industry development. There is a lack of interpretation among visitors and stakeholders when it comes to sustainable initiative programs. There are several guidelines for public access which are not followed by numerous tourists and tourism stakeholders because of their ignorance and unawareness towards any. Consequently, programs and models are needed at tourist sites, which are frequently respectable and straightforward to apply. Tourism stakeholders must address several issues to establish the tourism industry. Connection and advertisement, plutocrat, structure, and maintaining a reasonable benefit challenge. Although the real multitudinous public norms, utmost stakeholders warrant an introductory understanding of appropriate tourism legislation since they were ignorant of any policy. It is vital to increase public mindfulness of policy and integration of the tourism programs with other sectors, for funds, environmental conservation and biodiversity protection, resource operation and taxation. Following the identification of these constraints, further good measures to develop tourism regions, particularly Galle Fort and Kot Diji Fort are needed. Likewise, though Galle Fort and Kot Diji Fort have handsome tourism funds, if the problems prevail, then people of Galle Fort and Kot Diji Fort may continue to live as poor. Cultural tourism, on the other hand, aims to restore visitors' quality of life by maximizing original profitable benefits, conserving culture and established heritage, and furnishing recreational openings. This conclusion cannot be applied to all regions as every site has a different paradigm for growth in this terrain. This could serve as a model for duplicating and distinguishing success stories (if any exist) in the newly expanded neighborhood sites.

## 7. FUTURE RESEARCH

If the tourism of Galle Fort and Kot Diji Fort is to be maintained, development policies must be planned for each tourism site in the neighboring region. To develop new themes for further research, concerned

department should share proposals with the business sector, particularly local tourism industry. The planning and development of the tourism sector should be involved to address the gap between the local policy requires and stakeholders at the foundation level. Public private partnership and community engagement is essential in approaches and strategies dissemination.

The awareness and implementation of the tourism plan should be operated by tourism department who ensures and provides optimal use of ecological resources, protection of biodiversity, meeting the needs of communities and infrastructural development. Maintenance can be done through regular watching with fines and or other paybacks attached to unfollow required standards. A successful tourism strategy will then be included in local, regional, national, and global strategies accordingly.

## 8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Ethical considerations were paramount in this study. Informed consent was obtained from all interview participants, and confidentiality was maintained. The research adhered to ethical guidelines for historical research, field studies, and qualitative interviews. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, their role, and the use of the data collected. Consent was obtained in writing before conducting interviews. To protect the privacy of participants, all personal information was anonymized, and data was stored securely. Only the research team had access to the raw data.

The study faced several limitations, including the availability of historical documents, accessibility of some areas of the selected case study sites due to environmental conditions, and potential biases in interview responses. These limitations were mitigated through careful planning and methodological rigor.

## 9. REFERENCES

- [1] Buckley R. Sustainable tourism: Research and reality. *Annals of tourism research*. 2012; 39(2): 528-46.
- [2] Murillo J, Vayà E, Román J, Suriñach J. How important to a city are tourists and day-trippers? The economic impact of tourism on the city of Barcelona. *Tourism Economics*. 2013; 19(4): 897-917.
- [3] Rogerson CM, Rogerson JM. Urban tourism destinations in South Africa: Divergent trajectories 2001–2012. *Urbani izziv*. 2014; 25: S189-S203.
- [4] Nyerere CY. Determinants of Sustainable Urban Tourism in Tanzania: The Mediation Role of Strategic Planning: The Open University of Tanzania; 2020.
- [5] Musavengane R, Siakwah P, Leonard L. The nexus between tourism and urban risk: Towards inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable outdoor tourism in African cities. *Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism*. 2020; 29: 100254.
- [6] Loulanski T, Loulanski V. The sustainable integration of cultural heritage and tourism: A meta-study. *Journal of sustainable tourism*. 2011; 19(7): 837-62.
- [7] Roxas FMY, Rivera JPR, Gutierrez ELM. Mapping stakeholders' roles in governing sustainable tourism destinations. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*. 2020; 45: 387-98.

- [8] Gupta DR, Mondal MEA, Janardhan M, Kumawat H, Shekhar C. Sustainable Tourism Development: Balancing Economic Growth And Environmental Conservation. *Migration Letters*. 2024; 21.
- [9] Appendino F, editor *Balancing Heritage Conservation and Sustainable Development—The Case of Bordeaux*. IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering; 2017: IOP Publishing.
- [10] Appendino F. *Balancing Heritage Conservation and Sustainable Development – The Case of Bordeaux*. IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering. 2017.
- [11] Gössling S. Tourism, tourist learning and sustainability: An exploratory discussion of complexities, problems and opportunities. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*. 2018; 26(2): 292-306.
- [12] Salazar NB. Community-based cultural tourism: Issues, threats and opportunities. *Journal of sustainable tourism*. 2012; 20(1): 9-22.
- [13] Garrod B. Managing visitor impacts. *Managing Visitor Attractions: New Directions*: Routledge; 2012. p. 143-58.
- [14] 14. Liu S, Shu H. 1. Sustainable Cultural Tourism and Heritage Conservation In China: Case Studies Of The Ancient Waterfront Towns In The South Of The Yangtze River. *WIT Transactions on Ecology and the Environment*, 2020; 241.
- [15] Chenavaz RY, Leocata M, Ogonowska M, Torre D. Sustainable Tourism. *Journal of Economic Dynamics and Control*. 2022.
- [16] Murzyn-Kupisz M. Cultural, economic and social sustainability of heritage tourism: Issues and challenge. *Economic and Environmental Studies (E&ES)*. 2012; 12.
- [17] Nocca F. The role of cultural heritage in sustainable development: Multidimensional indicators as decision-making tool. *Sustainability*. 2017; 9(10): 1882.
- [18] Timothy DJ. Contemporary cultural heritage and tourism: Development issues and emerging trends. *Public Archaeology*. 2014; 13(1-3): 30-47.
- [19] Ruggiero CA. Sustainability and sustainable development: A review of principles and definitions. *Science of The Total Environment*. 2021; 786.
- [20] ICOMOS, editor *Managing Tourism at Places of Heritage Significance* 1999.
- [21] Ababneh A, Darabseh FM, Aloudat AS. The management of natural and cultural heritage: A comparative study from Jordan. *The Historic Environment: Policy & Practice*. 2016; 7(1): 3-24.
- [22] Liu T, Butler RJ, Zhang C. Evaluation of public perceptions of authenticity of urban heritage under the conservation paradigm of Historic Urban Landscape—a case study of the Five Avenues Historic District in Tianjin, China. *Journal of architectural conservation*. 2019; 25(3): 228-51.
- [23] Matiku SM, Zuwarimwe J, Tshipala N. Sustainable tourism planning and management for sustainable livelihoods. *Development Southern Africa*. 2021; 38(4): 524-38.
- [24] Liu G, Eng T-Y, Ko W-W. Strategic direction of corporate community involvement. *Journal of Business Ethics*. 2013; 115: 469-87.
- [25] Du Cros H. A new model to assist in planning for sustainable cultural heritage tourism. *International journal of tourism research*. 2001; 3(2): 165-70.
- [26] Wijerathne B. The Galle Fort World Heritage Site: a nature-culture approach to the conservation of cultural heritage along the southern coast of Sri Lanka. *世界遺產学研究*. 2019: 29-37.



- [27] Madarasinghe SK, Yapa KK, Satyanarayana B, Udayakantha P, Kodikara S, Jayatissa LP. Inland irrigation project causes disappearance of coastal lagoon: the trajectory of Kalametiya Lagoon, Sri Lanka from 1956 to 2016. *Coastal Management*. 2020; 48(3): 188-209.
- [28] Dahdouh-Guebas F, Hettiarachchi S, Seen DL, Batelaan O, Sooriyachchi S, Jayatissa LP, Koedam N. Transitions in ancient inland freshwater resource management in Sri Lanka affect biota and human populations in and around coastal lagoons. *Current biology*. 2005; 15(6): 579-86.
- [29] Janakiraman A. *The local identity politics of world heritage: lessons from Galle Fort in Sri Lanka*: Massachusetts Institute of Technology; 2019.
- [30] Hoffman BC. *Indus tradition copper and bronze metallurgy: a model from Harappa*: The University of Wisconsin-Madison; 2019.
- [31] Joyner RL, Rouse WA, Glatthorn AA. *Writing the winning thesis or dissertation: A step-by-step guide*: Corwin press; 2018.
- [32] Creswell JW, Poth CN. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*: Sage publications; 2016.
- [33] Hancock DR, Algozzine B, Lim JH. *Doing case study research: A practical guide for beginning researchers*. 2021.
- [34] Prince MJ, Felder RM. Inductive teaching and learning methods: Definitions, comparisons, and research bases. *Journal of engineering education*. 2006; 95(2): 123-38.
- [35] Azungah T. Qualitative research: deductive and inductive approaches to data analysis. *Qualitative research journal*. 2018; 18(4): 383-400.
- [36] Malhotra G. Strategies in research. *International Journal for Advance Research and Development*. 2017; 2(5): 172-80.
- [37] Kayesa NK. The role of document reviews in health policy analysis among low and middle-income countries: a systematic review. 2018.
- [38] Ahmed JU. Documentary research method: New dimensions. *Indus Journal of Management & Social Sciences*. 2010; 4(1): 1-14.
- [39] Cossham A, Johanson G. The benefits and limitations of using key informants in library and information studies research. *Information Research*. 2019; 24(3).
- [40] Trakadas A, Karra A. Coastal landscapes, environmental change, and maritime cultural heritage resources in Morocco: the case study of Essaouira. *Journal of Maritime Archaeology*. 2022; 17(3): 401-20.
- [41] Tukamushaba EK, Okech RN. *Tourism training and education, Community empowerment and Participation in tourism planning and development. A case of Uganda*. 2011.
- [42] Baggio R, Scott N, Cooper C. Improving tourism destination governance: a complexity science approach. *Tourism Review*. 2010; 65(4): 51-60.
- [43] Hall CM. Policy learning and policy failure in sustainable tourism governance: From first-and second order to third-order change? *Tourism governance*: Routledge; 2013. p. 239-61.
- [44] Lalicic L, Önder I. Residents' involvement in urban tourism planning: Opportunities from a smart city perspective. *Sustainability*. 2018; 10(6): 1852.