

# Cultural & Architectural Heritage Tourism: Sustainable Development: A Case Study of Khajuraho!

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## Abstract

India is environmentally and culturally so diverse we can say that “India is a country with in a country, for all reasons and for all seasons” it is not viable to focus on a single destination or tourist experience to understand the effects of tourism on culture. Khajuraho is a beautiful village situated in Chhatarpur district in Madhya Pradesh with an old-fashioned, rural ambience and a rich cultural legacy. The World Heritage Day is celebrated on April 18 to create awareness among the people to conserve and protect the valuable assets and cultural heritage across the world. Heritage is something which is specific and typical of a place or region. Buildings of historic and architectural significance become part of the cultural heritage of a city and the society. Cultural heritage is the creation of human beings, who have created it by virtue of their innovative power, creativity and artistic ability. The monuments and the cultural activities associated with the monuments play a very important role in the lifestyle of the people of India and give a special identity to them. It is necessary to improve awareness of cultural heritage due to its historical, social, aesthetic and scientific significance. Historical significance refers to the relationship to era, person or event. Social significance refers to the social, spiritual and other community-oriented values attributed to a place. Aesthetic significance refers to the special sense of importance of a place with reference to architecture, scale and designs. Scientific significance refers to the scope or possibility of scientific findings from a site, monument or place.

**Keywords:** cultural tourism, architectural heritage, intangible heritage, UNESCO, cultural consumption, ATLAS (association for tourism and leisure education).

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## Introduction

### a. History and Development

The ancient and historic temples of Khajuraho were built by the Chandelas in the short span of a hundred years from 950-1050 AD in an inspired burst of creativity, but were abandoned after the 14th century. The once flourishing capital city of the Chandelas survived as a small, picturesque agricultural village, with no other evidence of its former glory besides the 22 remaining temples out of the original 85. These were ‘discovered’ by T.S. Burt in 1838, a young officer in the British colonial army, who out of curiosity diverted from his official itinerary to follow the trail to this remarkable group of temples which his p & i-bearers had talked about (Punja 19923-4). The area was then covered with dense jungle and was dotted with numerous ponds, which would have made the site look very different

from today’s neatly manicured lawns and tourist bustle. The extant temples are widely recognized amongst scholars as unique examples of Hindu architecture, though they are better known to the public for the sensuous sculptures which adorn them. These temples have now been included in the World Heritage List of UNESCO (1986), one of 14 such sites in India. The temples of Khajuraho are one of India’s major tourist attractions close behind the Taj and up there with Varanasi, Jaipur and Delhi (Wightman 1986:227-239).

### b. Accessibility

The Khajuraho monuments are located in the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh, in Chhatarpur district, about 620 kilometres (385 mi) southeast of New Delhi. The temples are located near a small town also known as Khajuraho, with a population of about 20,000 people (2001 Census). Khajuraho is served

by Civil Aerodrome Khajuraho (IATA Code: HJR), with services to Delhi, Agra, Varanasi and Mumbai. The site is also linked by the Indian Railways service, with the railway station located approximately six kilometres from the entrance to the monuments.

The monuments are about ten kilometres off the east-west National Highway 75, and about 50 kilometres from the city of Chhatarpur, which is connected to the state capital Bhopal by the SW-NE running National Highway 86.

**Cultural Tourism**

Many of the comments made by the experts in relation to the elements of culture and heritage related to cultural tourism underlined the broad range of cultural resources of interest to tourists. One expert commented:

“Culture covers almost all aspects of life. Culture in its forms: intangible (values, norms, ethics concepts etc.), social behaviour (way of life), tangible (monuments). Culture in its components: religious practice, community organization,

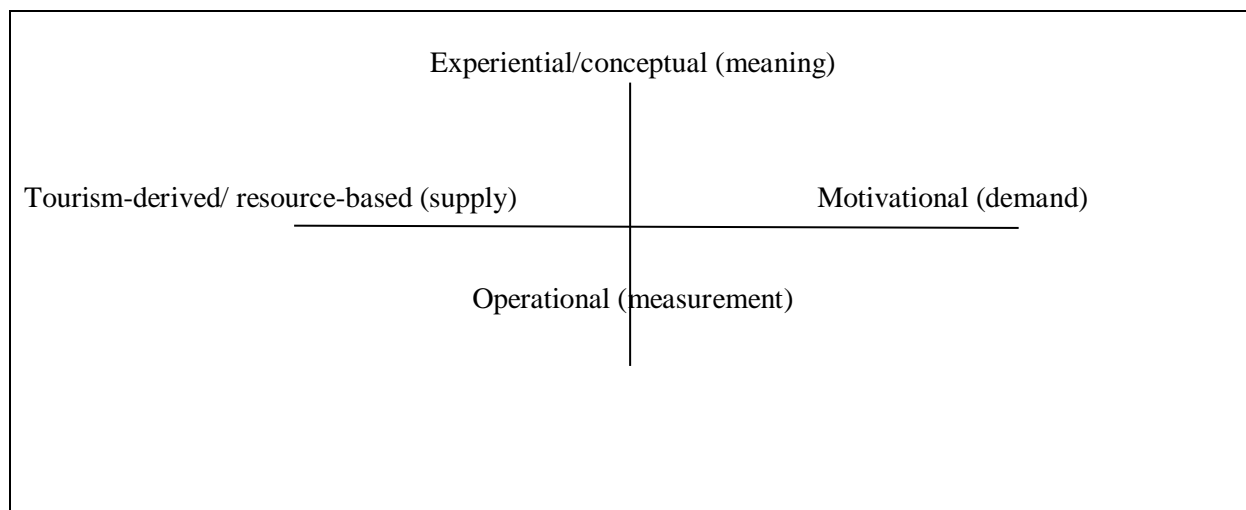
knowledge system, language, arts, livelihood, object and technology.”

The culture and heritage related to cultural tourism also includes many elements of the way of life of the place visited, as another comment indicates:

“Cultural tourism is all aspects which represent over-arching, and clearly defining, ways of life and lifestyle of a population both past and present, with implicit carry-forward into the future. Importantly, they go beyond the curio/arts and craft stereotypes to reflect aspects of identity, visible and invisible, daily and special occasion. Ultimately, they are aspects which give the people of a nation/region a sense of identity, community, belonging and pride.”

Cultural tourism was also one of the types of tourism that received a new operational definition from the UNWTO at the 22nd Session of the General Assembly held in Chengdu, China (UNWTO, 2017: 18):

“Cultural tourism is a type of tourism activity in which the visitor’s essential motivation is to learn, discover, experience and consume the tangible and intangible cultural attractions/products in a tourism destination”.



**Fig. No.-1 Source: Richards, G. (2003), ‘What is Cultural Tourism?’ in: van Maaren, A. (ed.), Erfgoed voor Toerisme, Nationaal Contact Monumenten (online), available at: [www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu).**

**Conceptual Definition:** The movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs”.

#### **Cultural Tourism**

**Technical Definition:** “All movements of persons to specific cultural attractions, such as heritage sites, artistic and cultural manifestations, arts and drama outside their normal place of residence”. (ATLAS, 2009)

We also agree with the definition of the Roshan Cultural Heritage Institute according to which “Culture refers to the following Ways of Life, including but not limited to:

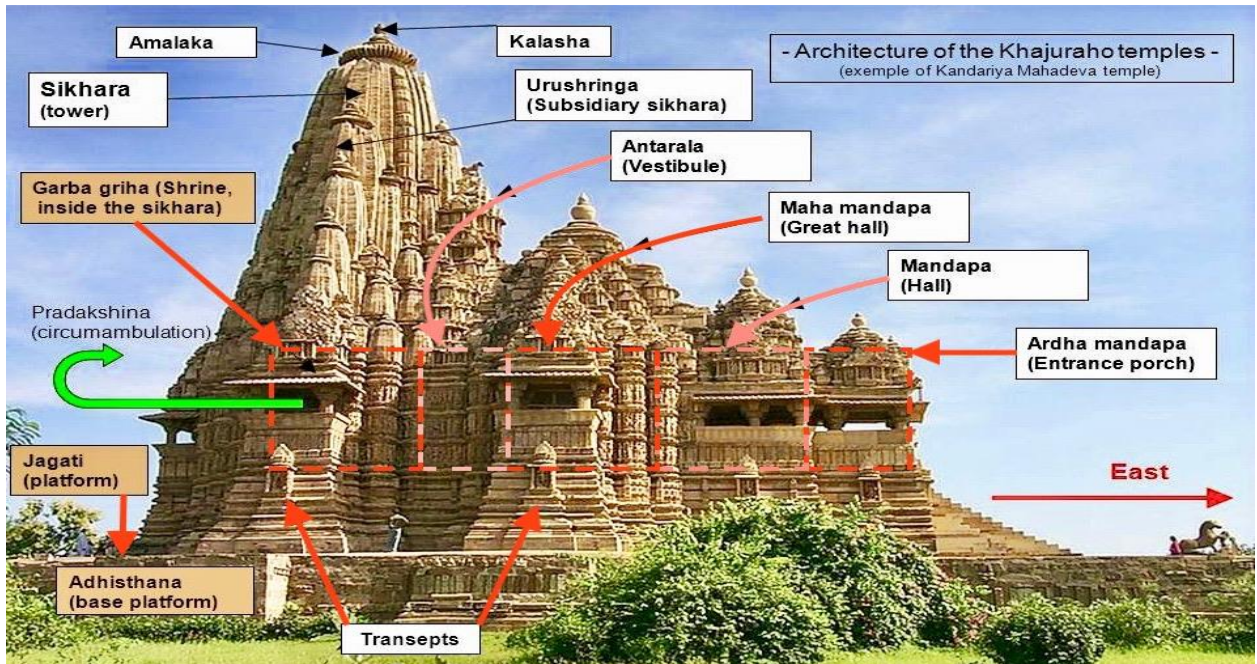
1. Language: the oldest human institution and the most sophisticated medium of expression.
2. Arts & Sciences: the most advanced and refined forms of human expression.
3. Thought: the ways in which people perceive, interpret, and understand the world around them.
4. Spirituality: the value system transmitted through generations for the inner well-being of human beings, expressed through language and actions.
5. Social activity: the shared pursuits within a cultural community, demonstrated in a variety of festivities and life-celebrating events.
6. Interaction: the social aspects of human contact, including the give-and-take of socialization, negotiation, protocol, and conventions”.

#### **Heritage tourism**

Heritage tourism embraces both eco-tourism and cultural tourism, with an emphasis on conserving natural and cultural heritage. Tourism depends on the quality of the natural and cultural environment. It

includes visits to historic sites, museums and art galleries, and exploring national parks. Environmental preservation concerns have given rise to what is known as green tourism, conservation-supporting tourism, and environmentally aware or environmentally sound tourism. Generally, such tourism favours minimal environmental impact, and is concerned with environmental issues. The National Trust for Historic Preservation defines cultural heritage tourism as “travelling to experience the places, artefacts, and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present”. Cultural, historic, and natural resources all make up heritage tourism sites. The relationship between heritage resources and tourism is dynamic, creating opportunities and challenges, and may involve potential conflicts. They should be managed in a sustainable way for present and future generations. Maintaining the authenticity of heritage sites and collections is important. It is an essential element of their cultural significance, as expressed in the physical material, collected memory and intangible traditions that remain from the past. Programs should present the authenticity of places and cultural experiences to enhance the appreciation and understanding of that cultural heritage

#### **Khajuraho: The Cultural Heritage**



**Fig. No.-2, Architecture of Khajuraho Temple**

The only attraction for the tourists at this destination is the temples. The village is basically an agricultural village and is situated some distance away from the temples. Shopping consists of some handicrafts and gem stones, not specifically indigenous to Khajuraho. The temples and contiguous 29 The effects of tourism on culture and the environment in India land are fenced in and protected by the Archaeological Survey of India but haphazard constructions have taken their toll around the temple precincts on account of the tourist activity. Khajuraho and its environments have been designated by the State Government as a Special Area to control its unusual development problems. In 1975 a draft Development Plan was produced which has largely guided subsequent development in Khajuraho.

Khajuraho is also a religious centre in the regional level. What is often overlooked while mentioning the ‘rediscovery’ of Khajuraho by T.S. Burt is that there has been a virtual continuity of ritual practices, at least in one of the temples, Matengeswara, since the time it was built. Burt mentioned that he saw a light burning in this temple and was not allowed to enter. Obviously the temple was worshipped when Burt ‘discovered’ it. Shivruti and Busant Punchumi are two important local festivals attracting tens of thousands of pilgrims from the region. Not all temples are Hindu however,

and there are Jain temples in the Eastern Group which attract large groups of Jain pilgrims to Khajuraho from other parts of the country as well. The temples at Khajuraho were not known to many people as a tourist attraction until the early 50’s. S.N. Chib, the first Director-General of the Tourism Department, describes how to reach Khajuraho in 1955 by making several changes and halts by bus and a 10 kilometer ride by ronga, a one-horse carriage, on an unmetalled road. Even then ‘the temples stood in a sort of wilderness’ and ‘the cattle and pariah dogs who roamed freely around the temples and in the sleepy village seemed to outnumber the human beings’ (Chib 1983:18-19). It was only the odd foreign journalists or photographers who visited Khajuraho and publicized these temples to the outside world. The effects of tourism on culture and the environment in India temples through pictorial books on India produced by these photographers for the European market. Only a determined traveller visited these temples because there was no infrastructure for the tourists in those days.

**Cultural Resources of Khajuraho**

S. No.	Modern Temple Name	Religion	Deity	Completed by(CE)
1	Chausath Yogini	Hinduism	Devi 64 Yogini	885
2	Lalguan Mahadeva temple	Hinduism	Shiva	900
3	Brahma Temple	Hinduism	Vishnu	925
4	Lakshmana	Hinduism	Vaikuntha Vishnu i	939
5	Varaha Temple	Hinduism	Vishnu	950
6	Parshvanatha temple	Jainism	Parshvanatha	954
7	Ghantai temple	Jainism	Adinatha	960
8	Mahishasuramardini	Hinduism	Mahishasuramardini	995
9	Vishvanatha Temple	Hinduism	Shiva	999
10	Matangeshvara temple	Hinduism	Shiva	1000
11	Vishnu-Garuda	Hinduism	Vishnu	1000
12	Beejamandal Temple ruins	Hinduism	Shiva	1000
13	Ganesha	Hinduism	Shiva	100
14	Devi Jagadambika Temple or Jagadambika Temple	Hinduism	Devi Parvati	1023
15	Chitragupta temple	Hinduism	Sun, Chitragupta	1023
16	Adinatha temple	Jainism	Adinatha	1027
17	Shantinatha temple	Jainism	Shantinatha	1027
18	Kandariya Mahadeva Temple	Hinduism	Shiva	1029
19	Vamana temple	Hinduism	Vamana	1062
20	Javari Temple	Hinduism	Vishnu	1090
21	Chaturbhuj temple	Hinduism	Vishnu	1110
22	Duladeo Temple	Hinduism	Shiva	1125

**Table No.-1, Cultural Resources of Khajuraho****Khajuraho Heritage Region: Conservation and Sustainable Development Strategy****a. Sustainable Tourism**

The Brandt-land Sustainable Development Authority's definition has increasingly gained international acclaim. The 1978 report of "Our Common Future" has shown that meeting our present needs does not negatively affect future generations. Sustainability refers to "the long term economic, environmental, and social health". Sustainable tourism is a development model which administrates all of the resources for the economic, social and aesthetical needs of locals and visitors, and provides the same conditions for future generations. Most definitions of sustainable tourism emphasize the environmental, social and economic elements of tourism. Sustainable tourism also

emphasizes conserving the cultural heritage and traditions of local communities. All the definitions address the preservation of resources for future generations by using tourism to contribute in environmental protection, limiting negative socio-economic impacts, and benefiting local people economically and socially. The WTO defines sustainable tourism as "Tourism development that meets the present needs of tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. In an attempt to manage resources in a way that the economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems". The term "sustainable tourism" is frequently used in project proposals seeking international assistance.

**20 years Perspective Plan of Tourism for the State of Madhya Pradesh)**

	Places of Importance	Facilities
<b>Cultural Tourism</b> Heritage Sites	Gwalior, Datia, Orchha, Khajuraho, Bhopal, Sanchi, Mandu, Burhanpur etc.	Heritage Hotels, Up-market and budget accommodation, Museums, Shilpgrams, Cultural shows, Exhibition facilities, etc.
<b>Wildlife &amp; Adventure Tourism</b> Wildlife parks, lakes, rivers and hill stations	Pachmarhi, Amarkantak, Kanha, Bandhavgarh, Panna, Satpura, and Pench Valley National Parks: Tigra Lake (Gwalior), Upper Lake (Bhopal), Gandhi Sagar (Mandsuar), etc.	Log huts, Camping grounds, Dormitories, Trekking, Water Sports, Aero-Sports, Angling, Cruises, Caravans, Tents, etc.
Leisure & Business Tourism: Metros and major tourism centers	Pachmarhi, Mainpat, Khajuraho, Tamia, Bhopal, Gwalior, Indore, Raipur, Jabalpur etc.	Convention centers, Exhibition grounds, Shopping, Evening entertainment, Golf courses, Country clubs, Weekend getaways, etc.
Pilgrim Tourism	Ujjain, Maheshwar, Omkareshwar, Chitrakoot, Bhopal, Sanchi, Orchha, Amarkantak, Rajim, etc.	Budget accommodation, Day shelters, Cafeterias, etc.

**Table N0.-2, 20 years Perspective Plan of Tourism for the State of Madhya Pradesh****Tourist Traffic Circuit wise**

The following are the 4 tourist circuits identified in the state of Madhya Pradesh

S.No.	Tourist Circuits
1	Gwalior – Shivpuri – Orchha – Khajurao
2	Indore – Ujjain – Maheshwar – Omkareshwar - Mandu
3	Jabalpur – Bhedaghat – Mandla – Kanha – Bandhavgarh
4	Sanchi – Bhopal – Bhojpur – Bhimbetka – Panchmarhi

**Table No.-3, Tourist Traffic Circuit-wise****Fairs and Festivals**

S.No.	Festivals	Venue	Period of Occurrence
1	Khajuraho Dance Festival	Western group of temples	February
2	Khajuraho sound and light show	Western group of temples	January -December
3	Folk dance	Near ASI museum	January

**Table No.-4, Fairs and Festivals of Khajuraho**

A Master Plan for Khajuraho was drawn up in 1975. It is now under revision. The plan assumed an increase in the number of tourists (which has not materialized) and typically planned for large segregated functional zones. Planners seldom realize that such 'modern' practices destroy the traditional fabric of towns, the very characteristic which draws the attention of the tourist. On this basis they have acquired a lot of agricultural land for future development. This has only partially succeeded in sorting out the chaotic 'intermingling of incongruous

uses' which was the initial objective of the planning exercise. Relocating certain commercial activity to the new bus stand has not worked because the new site has failed to attract new tourist business and consequently the chaos has intensified opposite the western group of temples. The chaotic activities at the time of the formulation of the Master Plan was thought to be within 'tolerable limits', and, on a relative scale compared to what is taking place in other parts of the country, it is not much worse today. The village is still predominantly agricultural.

From these observations one realizes that the Master Plan has not been put to test because of the low level of development. As a Master Plan it is merely a conventional land use plan, and it reflects the planners' concern for order rather than any understanding of the special forces operating in this town on account of the development of tourism. There was an opportunity earlier to evolve a plan sympathetic to local land-forms (the area was once full of water bodies) and use the presence of the groups of temples to generate a unique urban design, but this was not sought, by the planners and the developments that are now taking place at this site are as unimaginative as the Master Plan.

However, unlike the situation in other towns, at Khajuraho there is visible evidence of the physical development that has taken place and transformed this once sleepy village into a reasonably attractive settlement. Since all these development activities were primarily motivated on account of tourism, one could conclude that tourism has generally benefitted this village. All round improvement of infrastructure facilities and amenities are acknowledged by the local residents. The streets are clean and paved. Drainage and water supply has been provided to ah. While the villagers continue to live as before (materials of construction, layout of homes etc.) one hears the sound of TV/cassette players spilling out of homes; dish antennas are occasionally seen; curio/antique shops are operating from some houses and one sees antique looking sculptures ('new' antiques are a profitable business) strewn about as one strolls along the lanes of the village.

The immediate areas around the various groups of temples were cleared in the 1920s by the Archaeological Survey of India when they removed the vegetation, dressed the land and fenced in the temples 'to prevent the cattle and villagers from entering and damaging the sculptures'. Today the danger to the monuments is not from the cattle or villagers, but the growing interest in Indian antiquities. The Superintendent of the Archaeological Survey of India Museum near the western group of temples confirmed the existence of a continuing trade in stolen/vandalized antiques. He is frequently requested by the police to identify stolen goods.

The main objective of the Archaeological Survey of India protection work appears to be beautification. This has given the monument area a manicured look appreciated by tourists who have to put up with the bustle outside the monument area. Such beautification is of course, not authentic, because these temples were never set in a garden as they are made to today. But the imperatives of conservation, as practised by the Archaeological Survey of India, is restricted to the isolation of monuments from their immediate environment and remains more or less the same, Tourism, and indeed sensible urban development, infuses archaeology with newer meaning which has escaped the notice of the Archaeological Survey of India, who continue to follow archaic precepts. (Kirch and Kirch 1986:14.5-147). As in town planning, the objective of intervention is beautification.

The second important contribution to the promotion of tourism has been the institution of the Khajuraho Dance Festival in 1975. The Festival promotes classical Indian dances for a week in February every year, by inviting well-known performers to perform against the backdrop of the temples. Initially it was held inside the protected area of the western group of temples, but the venue has now been shifted outside the compound, because it was suspected that the temples were being damaged in this process.

For the common person there is the Lokranjan Festival (started in 1984) which is held immediately following the Khajuraho Festival. This Festival is organized by the Adivasi Lok Kala Parishad (the State Government sponsored Tribal Folk: Art Academy at Bhopal, the State Capital) and is hardly publicized beyond the local environment. It is a week-long festival, held in the open with no admission charge. It starts late, after dinner, and often continues late into the night, if the audience - performer rapport is established during the course of the performance. They perform in the vernacular dance/drama traditions of the region, Nautanki, Tamasha, Raslila, Swang, Nacha etc. Recently they invited folk-theatre groups from around the country to perform at Khajuraho. This is good, solid entertainment for the masses, and has no relation to the temples of Khajuraho at least, not their sexual imagery.

**City Level SWOT Analysis**

Strength	Weakness
The core of the city houses the population that is	Poor coordination among the ASI, Tourism

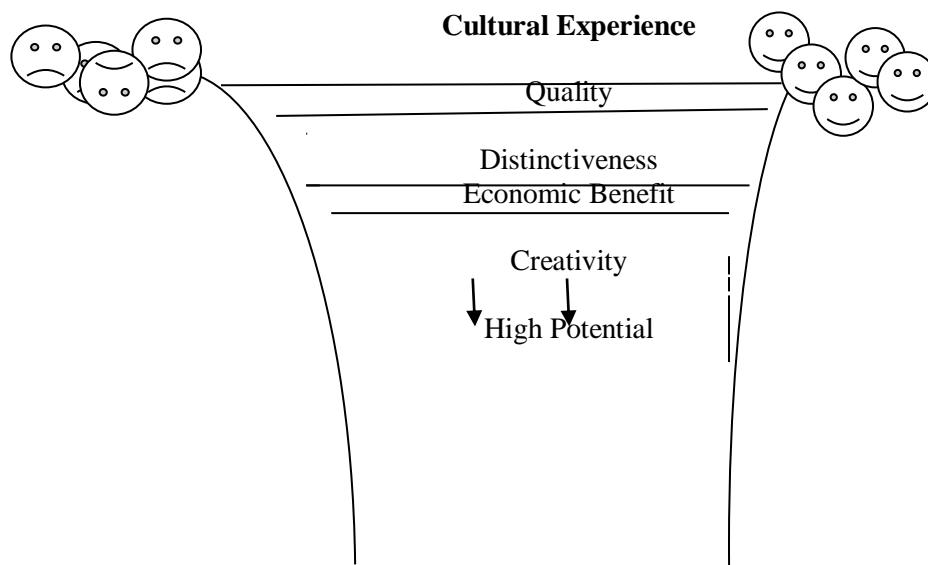
part of the urban fabric of the city	Department and ULB
Tourism potential: UNESCO World heritage site and a major destination for tourism in India.	Unplanned integration of villages as part of the Khajuraho city.
Tremendous amount of heritage treasures and still exploration of new under process	Lack of support infrastructure such as quality roads for better access and facilities for tourists rest rooms, toilets, hotels etc.
Regional significance for social and cultural activities.	Infrastructural services are poor such as high water losses, poor coverage of toilets, and absence of door to door waste collection.
Well connected with rail transport facility.	Lack of social security and economic activities for off-season tourism.

**Table No.-5, City Level SWOT Analysis**

**Motivation: Cultural Experience**

A cluster analysis conducted by Özel and Kozak (2012) identified five distinct cultural tourism motivation groups, labelled: “Relaxation Seekers,” “Sports Seekers,” “Family Oriented,” “Escapists,” and “Achievement and Autonomy Seekers.” The division between those seeking culture and those

using it as a form of escape is also evident in the work of Correia, Kozak and Ferradeira (2013). They identified push and pull satisfaction factors in visits to Lisbon, including the intrinsic desire to learn about particular aspects of culture (such as Fado music) and a search for novelty.



**Fig. No.-3, A 21st Century Framework for Evaluating Cultural Tourism Products**

**Conclusions**

This brief discussion has underlined the rapid growth in cultural and heritage tourism scholarship, which has developed into a well-defined field encompassing multi-disciplinary perspectives. The optimism expressed in the future growth of cultural tourism demand in the UNWTO report (2018) makes it almost certain that this field will continue

to expand. In some senses, this growth may undermine the coherence of cultural tourism as an object of study, as lines of enquiry continue to diverge, tracing the fragmentation and diversification of cultural tourism demand and supply. To some extent, cultural tourism research has already spawned a number of extremely fruitful sub-sectors, such as cultural heritage tourism, film-



induced tourism and literary tourism. This opens up new opportunities for cross-fertilisation with new academic fields, but it may also harbour the danger of removing the study of cultural tourism from its original social science base. The relative infrequency with which reference is now made to some of the cornerstones of cultural sociology, such as Bourdieu's (1984) study of the role of taste in consumption, is one sign of this.

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