

**Cultural Tourism Sites as Cultural Identity Makers:  
A Case Study of District Swat**

**Zulfiqar Ali Kalhoro / Farhad Nazir**

**Abstract**

*Being recalled as heritage heaven i.e. Swat, attracts purposeful and casual cultural tourists both domestic and international. Eventually, tourists and host community face each other with respective cultures exposed as well. This study has been conducted to look at this relationship. Qualitative strategy has been adopted to get exhaustive perspectives from the local populace. Three sub-locales including Bazira of Barikot, the Ghaznavid Mosque of Udegram and Swat Museum of Saidu Sharif, have been selected to see that how local make and remake their cultural identities with respect to these cultural tourism sites. Findings of this study reveal that there is significant role of cultural tourism sites of Swat in shaping the cultural identity of the populace.*

**Keywords:** Cultural Tourism, Cultural Identity, Museums, Local Community, Swat

**1. Introduction**

Undoubtedly the geographical disparity has a visible influence on culture in the form of variation in cuisines, different dressing styles and vernacular architecture s - to counter or balance the climatic and weather conditions. Similarly, the religion also influences the culture in shaping the architectural styles, rituals and traditions. Such dissimilarities among geographical and theological facets have made the 'culture' a distinctive and limbo term. However, for the sake of consolidated denotation, mostly the culture is defined as 'way of life' or 'lifestyle'. No doubt, diversity of mankind inhabiting the multiple regions is reason to produce and exhibit a distinctive cultural profile and cultural identity of every country. Having curiosity to know and experience this distinctiveness or otherness, bridges the tourists as visitors and local community as visited.



Fig.1 - Bazira: A view of architectural remains with Mt Ilam in the background  
(Photo by L.M. Olivieri).

Tourism in general and cultural tourism in particular assuages this curiosity and sum up heritage, culture and identity of tourist and host populace. However, there remain some pros and cons as a result of this overlapping. Particularly the cultural identity faces some development due to the activities of tourism (Verheijen and Putra 2019). In addition, the amalgamation of tourism and heritage further paves the way for creation of novel avenues of cultural identity. This making and remaking of identity entails social and economic gains as well (Qu, Timothy and Zhang 2019). On the other hand, the religious affiliation and belief systems do – play an important part in the identity creation and exhibition at a destination (Mu, Nepal and Lai 2019). Culture, heritage, tourism and identity are inseparably linked together due to recent shift of interest in culture particularly as a source of local identity in the face of globalization, the growth of tourism and easier accessibility of cultural assets and experiences (UNWTO 2018). This connectivity of culture, heritage, cultural tourism and identity also includes many elements regarding lifestyle and defines cultural tourism as “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” (UNWTO 2018: 44-45).

As conduits for the formation of cultural identity, these sites create a sense of belongingness, authenticity and meanings for the population residing in the close proximities. Moreover, one can evidently spot a significant relationship and inter-dependency of local’s cultural identity and these sites. Among other reasons, the connotations and narratives attached with tangible and intangible dimensions of these sites are the most fundamental ones. Nunez and Theron (1963) argued in similar way and describes such relationship as a ‘laboratory situation’ to experiment the cultures of host and tourists, eventually leading to cross cultural exposures, cultural shocks, cultural ethnocentrism and cultural harmony. Considering this importance of sentiments attached, this sensitizing issue has been extensively brainstormed and commented by the academicians and policy makers of developed countries, particularly the westerns. This hegemony of knowledge through western lens has made it quite hard to

address the cultural values and identities particularly in the orient. Moreover, in the Asia, culture has remained under the influence of religion and mystical pressure. The same can be observed in the country of Islamic Republic of Pakistan and more concisely in the area of Swat. In Swat, there exists visible influence of theological teachings of Islam on the Pakhtun culture. The population has identical religion, common language and shared traditions and customs. These features in a broad spectrum formulate the cultural identity of the people of this area (Rome 2008). On the tourism avenue, this area has opulent resources of cultural tourism with numerous archaeological sites, historical sites and a well-managed site i.e. Archaeological and Ethnological Swat museum. These sites are the remains of the ancient communities which belong to Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. Such sites of cultural and historical importance attracted the attention of national and international archaeological bodies e.g. Directorate of Archaeology and Museums (DOAM), Department of Archaeology, University of Peshawar and most importantly to mention Italian Archaeological Mission (IAM), to conserve these sites since 1955 (Olivieri 2006). So far, these bodies in joint collaborations and ventures have been quite successful to conserve, preserve, and hence sustain these cultural heritage and tourism assets for the present and future generations of Swat valley.

The contributions of these bodies, particularly the IAM in conserving and protecting the sites of Swat are way beyond the scope of current study. However, a brief consideration of these contributions has been discussed. The purpose of this conservation has been to protect this tangible heritage on the one hand and to sustain the intangible aspect of this heritage on the other. This conservation and protection of Tangible Cultural Heritage (TCH) and Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) highlighted the geography of Swat as an area rich in archaeological and historical resources. But the title given to this area i.e. “Switzerland of the East” was on the basis of its natural tourism sites rather than its rich cultural heritage leaving an open opportunity of using cultural heritage as new tourism product. This opportunity has been well-addressed by IAM and started Archaeology Community Tourism (ACT) phase II project in 2011 under the Pakistan–Italian Debt for Development Swap Agreement (Olivieri 2016). This project introduced the concept of using the cultural heritage assets as sustainable alternate to conventional nature-based tourism in Swat. As the sole reliance on specific resource of tourism to

attract the tourists could lead to 'Mass Tourism' and 'Over- Tourism', exceeding the carrying capacity and eventually affecting the physical and social environment at any destination. UNWTO in this regard urges the member states to ensure compliance with the 'Goal 15'<sup>1</sup> of the Sustainable Development Goals hereafter SDGs to mitigate the negative consequences either physical or social. Similarly, in Pakistan, being a member state of UNWTO, IAM has been very active to practically diverge the nature-based tourism in Swat to heritage tourism through inaugural of the ACT Project. In addition, social mobilization and community empowerment was also ensured in this project to employ the local population as site watchmen and tour guides. Swat Archaeological Guide Association (SAGA) was formed comprising these site watchmen and guides to have a heritage consortium. On prominent heritage sites of Swat, the members of SAGA are performing assigned duties and motivated enough to impart the historical and cultural knowledge to incoming visitors.

Such looping of the local community not only provided financial assistances to its members, but also protected the tangibility of these sites. However, financial aspect alone, has limitation, for instance couldn't address sense of belongingness by the locals with these sites. Moreover, the conventional short spans of every project, there remained, and are, challenges to these sites and locals there. One of the researchers also participated in the activities of IAM projects (Olivieri 2017) and identified the shortfalls, especially the gap of less emphasis on perception (community-oriented knowledge) with these cultural tourism sites. Having said that, the cultural disparities among 'West' and 'Orient' as mentioned earlier, needed a proper discussion. Moreover, unveiling of novel aspects of culture, based on emic grounds, particularly in an area like Swat, was also worthwhile to be debated in the academic discourse. In past, studies on Swat have been done primarily in archaeological, historical and economical fields but the cultural avenues predominantly under the domain of tourism were previously ignored. The current study besides some limitations was aimed at this under-researched area, and highlighted the neglected cultural perceptions of the host community in accordance with the tourism sites. The purpose of this study was to emphasize some of the novelty aspects of theoretical and practical connections between the cultural tourism sites (either their tangibility or intangibility) with the sense of belongingness by the locals i.e. cultural identity.

---

<sup>1</sup> For details please see: <http://www.tourism4sdgs.org>. (Accessed April 202019).

Embedded relationship of cultural identity and cultural tourism sites have remained a topic of debate in the scholarship. Even the cultural identity itself has been presented as 'Identity Tourism' to have a novel marketing strategy for attracting the tourists. Doing so resulted in the inclination towards the demand side of tourism solely, leaving an overlooked aspect of local's perception having emic grounds incorporated. Identity tourism was backed by 'Community Based Tourism' and Eco-Tourism. But even still the local's perspective and sense of belongingness was neglected in Swat having abundant sites of cultural tourism. The current study was centered on this under-theorized area. Here, cultural avenues through community lenses have been contended. This differentiates the said endeavor from the traditional 'top to bottom' financial oriented approach having less or no emphasis on social and cultural gains. Contrary to this approach, the current study has adopted 'bottom to top' approach, addressing the locals and ascribing their cultural identity relationship, has been followed.

Potential edges of this study are: Firstly, the population's perceptive about these sites and relationship with the culture has been highlighted, doing so presents cultural identity towards the incoming tourists. Secondly, the stakeholders and experts of the field under study may take guidance from this research to have a glimpse of social stance and further inculcate this in the policies of cultural tourism. Thirdly, for the tourists visiting these sites, sense of regard for the cultural identity attached with the tangible and intangible heritage may be revitalized and source of respect for this belongingness and way forward for ethical considerations as well. Fourthly, the current study is an attempt to fill that vacuum in the literature about the indigenous community perspective generally Pakistan and more specifically Swat district. Fifth for industrial stakeholders, particularly the travel agencies, tour companies and tourism consultants, the current study is roadmap for organizing and executing the cultural tours in a more responsible and sustainable manner. Lastly, current study, particularly for interest based cultural tourists and stakeholders, offers a sustainable alternate to nature – based tourism in Swat, as the sole rely on nature – based tourism has already exceeded the carrying capacity of natural places of this area and have deteriorating impact of this over – tourism on the physical and social settings.

## **2. Objectives of the Study**

This study, like other researches, has some inbuilt objectives-followed in the entire structure. Firstly, to describe the synergy between the cultural tourism sites and local cultural identity. Here at this level, the inter-relationship of cultural sites and formation of community's identities have been contended. Secondly, to signify the process entailing to designate cultural sites particularly the archaeological ones, as authentic with the cultural identity of local populace. To explain the importance of historical sites as maker of local community's cultural identity and as a source of commemoration act as third objective of this study. Fourthly, to explain the importance of collection in the museum for the locals in asserting their cultural identity. Here at this point, the role of artefacts in identification of tangible and intangible elements of local culture has been elaborated.

## **3. Review of Literature**

As a matter of fact, cultural tourism is viewed as an opportunity for cross-exposure of host and tourist cultures simultaneously. Moreover, in the same way, the cultural identities of the both comes face to face. This moment of truth has some pros and cons urged the academicians to debate this multi – faceted phenomena entailing the cultural sentiments of the tourists and host community (Kim, Whitford and Arcodia 2019). While arguing the pros, community employment and empowerment seems to be most prominent ones (Puriri and McIntosh 2019). Cultural tourism and cultural identity in the scholarships are addressed by many scholars, but this linkage of cultural tourism is stated as inevitable (Uros'evic'2012). Uros'evic' (ibid.) conducted the study in the Pula city of Croatia, with a sound profile as familiar destination of tourism in the region. The impacts of cultural tourism particularly on the cultural identity of locals have been discussed by the author. She, in the same manner, highlighted some drastic impacts on the cultural identity due to activities of tourism. Locals, tourists and tourism stakeholders were consulted to have opinion over the subject. 'Creative Cultural Tourism' approach as a sustainable alternate to over cultural tourism or mass cultural tourism has been presented in this study. Hybrid methodological strategy including surveys and interviews were adopted in this study. Local population, tourists and organizational stakeholders in the city were consulted by administering surveys and

interviews from them. Findings of the study showed that majority of the respondents viewed that sustainable cultural tourism having cultural identity of locals inculcated may be more viable strategy to promote cultural tourism in the city. Deviation from the conventional cultural tourism activities both on the tourists' end and host end was emphasized as important.

It is safe to say that archaeology being the study of past has a close interconnectedness with the cultural identity at a specific landscape. Or in other words, the archaeological remains are and were considered a solid evidence of the ancient civilizations and their cultural arena. Sustainable cultural tourism, predominantly the indigenous – based, the cultural identity preservation should be a prime importance (McIntosh, Hinch and Ingram 2002). Three Maori attraction sites in New Zealand were selected in this qualitative study, i.e. Te Papa Tongarewa National Museum in Wellington, Tamaki Tours in Rotoura and Kaikooura Whale Watch. All these three sites were being run by Maori Community members and the National Museum has been displaying the Maori artifacts. The researchers conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews from the members of the Maori community, who were working as managers and staff members in the 'Tamaki Tours' and 'Whale Watch' and in National Museum of Te Papa. Findings of this study revealed that cultural identities were constructed in a conscious manner and commoditized in tourism and termed as "attraction-based identity". However, this commodification included the authenticity and meanings inside the presentation of cultural identity towards the tourists, hence a way forward for sustainable Maori tourism. Authenticity of the local cultural identity was emphasized as imperative for the promoting tourism. These findings were divided into two themes: heritage managers and local staff members who shared the multiple dimensions of cultural identity to incoming visitors. The authenticity maintenance in this context has been sought out. In sum, the cultural identity of the Maori community has been constructed depended upon the demand from the tourists and sometimes it was adopted in a more conscious manner for the vitality of sustainable Maori tourism.

Over (2016) contended that effective policy of tourism can contribute in managing the identity at national level. His study was conducted on the Armenian Akhtamar Church and its historical reopening after 95 years on September 19, 2010. Ethnographic study in a historical perspective has been carried out containing both the secondary and



primary data. For secondary data, the archives were consulted and for primary data, onsite interviews and participant observation conducted. Along with the church, other sites include Saint Pierre Church/Museum in Antioche, the Saint Paul Church/Museum in Mersin, Sard Syanagogoue in Manisa, the mosque of Haghia Sophia, Iznik, underground city in Nevsehir, Sumela Monastery in Trabzon and Armenian city in Kars. Findings of this study emphasized that from all other sites, the Akhtamar Church was opened by the Government of Turkey to portray the message of cultural cohesion and solidarity. The reopening of this place after nearly a century as a tourist destination showed the proactive approach of Turkish state. However, there were some narratives from the visitors in denial of this approach as there were some restrictions for the incoming tourists as well.

Museum are the places where cultural identities of both the visitors and locals intersects each other and a contest is formed. Theoretically approaches highlight the museums as an organizational principle for the content of cultural identity and scientific knowledge, and memory as 'thinking of things in their absence' (Crane 2000). Museums were considered as custodians of the archaeological, cultural and historical assets and they serve as foundation centers for construction of cultural identities (Newman and McLean 2006). This study was conducted in United Kingdom, two museums including Glasgow Museum and Tyne and Wear Museum, two exhibitions of Great City in Newcastle upon Tyne and Museum of Transport in Glasgow. In addition to these two museums and exhibitions, two community development projects were also analyzed in this study. These projects were 'Making History Community Development Project, New Castle upon Tyne' and 'Greater Pollok Kist Community Development Project, Glasgow. Mixed method was used for collection of data in the form of interviews, focus groups discussions and questionnaires. The respondents were from both the community members and walk in visitors. The phenomenon of cultural identity construction through the perspectives of locals and visitors who were socially excluded in exhibitions and development projects were emphasized. The findings of the study on two museums, two exhibitions and two community development projects showed that defensive identity was the way out to minimize the exclusion experience of locals and visitors. Moreover, the respondents argued that they ascribed meanings from the exhibitions and community development projects and impact of two museums under

study, upon identity construction of respondents. The museums were denoted as places to construct social policies and social agents.

In the geographical and social contexts of Pakistan, there are quite few studies on the subject, which addressed the cultural identity. Pakistani community in Great Britain, first generation, has been observed to be more patriotic towards their indigenous homeland's culture and urged to visit back, as opposite to the second and third generation, having less interest in visiting their actual homeland (Ali and Holden 2006). Ali and Holden (ibid.) have conducted interpretive ethnographic study on first, second and third generation of Pakistani community in United Kingdom and used qualitative method. Semi-structured, unstructured and focus group discussions were utilized as method of data collection from the participants. Their conclusions reached a point that, second and third generations were on the brink of losing their homeland cultural values as they were born and raised in the UK, while the first generation was aware of their aboriginal cultural arena and their motivation to return to their own country also entailed.

#### **4. Summary of Literature Review**

The above discussions have enabled the authors to understand the importance of cultural heritage and cultural identity relationship. Embarking on the same, for instance, the study conducted by Kim, Whitford and Arcodia (2019) has highlighted the steps to achieve sustainable heritage tourism in the Republic of Korea (South). Interestingly, the roots of Buddhist heritage of Swat have a deep connection with the Buddhism in Korea and such connectivity allowed the researchers to gain insights on a broad level. The literature review done for this study also assisted the authors in selecting the qualitative research strategy, methods of data collection and sampling technique as well. Moreover, the study conducted by Puriri and McIntosh (2019) has provided the indigenous paradigm to operationalize the steps of sustainable heritage tourism in a specific cultural framework of Swat. With respect to Museum studies, the work of Newman and McLean (2006) has been primarily consulted to see how locals shape their cultural identity. In addition, the work of Crane, S, A (2000) about the cultural collectables being displayed in the galleries of Museum has been helpful in establishing the phenomena of memory revival by the locals of Swat

with respect to Swat Museum. On the avenue of religious sites and its affiliation with the community, the study of Over (2106) has provided assistance in measuring the sense of religious affinity of the peoples of Swat with the Udegram Mosque. In sum, the studies discussed in the literature review have been quite resourceful in aligning the authors to establish the relationship of cultural tourism sites and cultural identity.

## **5. Research Methodology**

Qualitative research as a research strategy has been used in this research. In the scholarship of tourism, due to the importance of statistics and quantitative values, the preferred one is quantitative strategy. However, the current study was centered on cultural values and identities, hence qualitative research strategy has been adopted. Moreover, in Social Sciences, qualitative research strategy dominates over the quantitative because of its inductive approach and various studies like cultural studies, feminist studies and critical race theories are associated as qualitative research paradigms. Qualitative research enables the researcher to have empathetic understanding of any phenomenon (Dwyer, Gill, and Seetaram 2012). The qualitative strategy is mostly associated with emic approaches and provides in-depth knowledge about the issue being studied especially where interfaces of culture, tourism and identity occur (ibid.: 310). Dawyer, Gill and Seetaram (ibid.) viewed that, emic approach deals with experiences at insider level and expedites the interpretive process for the addition of deep and multifaceted interpretations. In sum, the usage of qualitative research strategy has enabled us to collect the insights of locals who are living near by the cultural tourism sites.

## **6. Research Design**

Descriptive research design was used in this study. We have described the ongoing relationship between the tangibility and intangibility of cultural tourism sites with local cultural identity. Embarking on the same, the research questions (What and How) were constructed with the same intent, to give voices of the locals on descriptive level, avoiding unnecessary infiltration to the continuing phenomena. Descriptive research designs explore any phenomena related to life experiences in a narrative way with

reference to individual, group and condition (Edmonds and Kennedy 2017). The current study in this regard was oriented in the same direction, hence a reason to select descriptive design.

The units of data collection were the individuals from the target population and comprised of the following:

**Table 1 - Number of Participants**

S#	UDCs	Description	# Interviews	of Focus Discussions	Group	Total
1	UDC 1	Locals	18		02	20
2	UDC 2	Heritage Managers	06		02	08
3	UDC 3	Civil Society Members	06		01	07
					Grand Total	35

The data for this study was collected from primary sources. Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions have been conducted from local population. This study intended to get ideas of local community, their thoughts and experiences. Semi-structured interviews have been used to attain this task. Conventional quantitative methods of data collection i.e. closed ended questionnaires couldn't let the respondents to express their views over any subject openly and in a frank manner. Semi-structured interviews consist of both open-ended questions and theoretical oriented questions and draw the participant completely to the topic under probe (Galleta 2013). This gives respondents more room to express their thinking in a more extended and elaborated manner. Moreover, for understanding the on-ground reality while emphasizing the cultural narratives, semi-structured method has been accredited as more convenient (Grayman-Simpson 2017). Likewise, semi-structured interviews enable us to better understand and describe any societal phenomena (Gill, Stewart, Treasure and Chadwick 2008). Keeping in view this compatibility, semi-structured interviews as method of data collection has been used in the current study.

In addition, focus group discussions were also done in the similar fashion. Duration of interviews lasted between one to two hours.

## **7. Sampling Technique**

Following the criterion of qualitative research strategy, the sampling technique has been formulated. Convenience sampling and purposive sampling techniques have been adopted in the current study, because in qualitative studies, particularly having large population where randomization is nearly impossible, and researcher has limited resources as well (Ilkar, Sulaiman and Alkassim 2016: 1). Keeping in view these virtues, convenience and purposive sampling have been utilized in this study. This sampling technique is being frequently used in qualitative studies, especially in those cases where the target population is subject to easier availability, their geographical proximities and willingness to participate (Dornyei 2007). In the same way, the current study was also oriented in the same direction having some financial, social and periodical constraints as well and convenience sampling has been selected in order to catalyze these barriers and streamline the data collection from the target population. For UDC 1, the convenience sampling technique has been used.

## **8. Results and Discussions**

Architecture and masonry in living premises exhibits the aesthetic taste of the residents. Such structural styles have also been inherited by the upcoming generations. Most of the respondents have contended that there is match among the contemporary architectural styles and the ancient Buddhist and Hindu-Shahi settlements discovered. Moreover, dresses and jewelry, being first exhibition of culture, has been subject of debate while ascribing the relationship of their cultural identity and cultural tourism sites. Bangle styles, designs of rings and bracelets have been argued by the respondents as very similar with the ancient ones found during excavation and being displayed in the museums. One of the respondents shared his remarks as:

*“The turban style of a Pakhtun man is similar to the turban style exhibited in the portrait of ‘Buddha’, also the old dressing style of Pakhtun people entails resemblance with those of Buddhists people. This shows that we have adopted the dressing styles from them and even it is possible that they were our ancestors as well”.*

In addition to dresses and jewelry similarities, a comparison of agricultural products and food cuisines has been argued by the respondents and majority of them floated numberless likeness among the ancient and the contemporary ones. One of the respondents shared the following information in this regard's:

*“From Bazira, the Italian Archaeological Mission has found the seed varieties being used by those people of ancient Bazira. We are using the same seeds to grow crops like bhegmai (rice) and saag (traditional dish comprised of eatable grass). It shows that there is a continual relation in agronomy field as well”.*

There are some botanical plants, still being used by community members for curing certain disease. Respondents have debated that these plants have been inherited from the ancient civilizations of this region.

Beside to these tangible similarities, the intangible dimensions of the culture have also been discussed by the respondents which shows, sense of pride and recognition among the community residing near cultural sites. McIntosh, Hinch, and Ingram (2002) contended that this pride has prevailed reason of cultural authenticity created due to historical hierarchy of culture. Remarks of one of respondent on this subject were as:

*“We feel pride that we have cultural connectivity with the inhabitants of the civilizations passed here. We feel pride to share with the people belonging to other cultural groups that our cultural chronology dates to Alexander the Great and even before him. We do not feel hesitation to say that our ancestors were following some other religion. Religion doesn't cost your ethnicity. These sites show absolute chronological order of ancient civilizations and we (Pakhtun) are part of this order”.*

This sense of pride has some further ownership impressions on the community and our study shows this. Remarks of one community member in this regard were worthwhile as:

*“I consider myself custodian of this site because it is our cultural legacy. The depletion of this site means my culture will be at stake. This site is my cultural asset and I will protect it from any threat”.*

Lastly, social and financial farsightedness has also been emphasized by the respondents in connection to site’s safeguarding as:

*“Although we feel pride, but these sites are at the list of treasure hunters and antiquity smugglers. These hunters and smugglers are also from the local population, but they do not respect these cultural sentiments attached and the dilemma is that they sold out any statue in less than 10,000PKR and if that statue is placed in museum, then it can earn millions of rupees from tourists’ arrival and also the cultural connectivity will be protected while doing so”.*

## **9. Religious- Cultural Amalgamation**

Culture is attributed as an umbrella to pool up peoples having different religions and beliefs. However, in many cases one can see the dominancy of religion on the culture and even shape the cultural practices. Ameli (2002) has argued such relationship and concluded that in case of Islam or Muslims being the followers of Islam, such hegemony was quite visible. The region of Swat, a place inhabited by Muslims may be counted as one of best examples of such religious-cultural mix. The respondents were asked to share their sentiments and remarks about the existence of historical mosque (Ghaznavid Mosque) with respect to their culture and its identity. One of the respondents shared his remarks on the said issue as:

*“In our culture, Islam and its teachings have a decisive position. We respect and pay decorum to each aspect of this religion. Our lifestyle and interactions in and outside our homes are continuously dictated by Islam. Jamat (Mosque) is also very near to our heart and we construct and decorate it more than our homes and hujras. We also discuss our daily issues and matters in Jamat and most of the time the religious teachings of Islam come forward to resolve and consolidate these”.*

It seems that mosque was very much valued by the locals and they consider an obligation to maintain and manage it. Another interviewee said about mosque in this regard as:

*“We Pakhtuns give value to Jumat (Jammat), our every aspect of life like birth, marriage and even death is directly or indirectly related to Jumat. For us this building is representation of religion and culture also”.*

Beside this religious and social connectedness of locals with this mosque, we do have divergent responses from the respondents. One of them shared as:

*“In our Pakhtun social system, the Jumat is considered as a place to judge the character of any individual or group. If you are coming in Jumat to offer prayers on regular basis, then you are pious, and everyone will accept you openly. If not, then negative narratives are floated about you and your life in a society. It seems that people are using the premises of Jumat for their personal perception”.*

Such remarks point that collective biased narrative particularly of religious sentiments may have caused social imbalances in the society. Sokhi (1992) contested that this collective narrative or commemoration was more strengthen when a historical event of religious affiliation has embedded roots in it. Further, the populace ascribes this narrative as one of constituents of their cultural identity. The remarks of one community member were:

*“This Jumat is the third oldest Jamahat of Pakistan, its history is that the Mahmud Ghaznavi conquered the Raja Gira castle and this victory was the assumed as entry of Islam in Swat. So, first as Pakhtun, this Jumat is respectable for me, second the historical victory of Islam over Hinduism is also a source of pride for me. The whole population in a collective way remember this Jumat as a famous historical victory of Islam over the non-believers. And our culture and identity being Pakhtun, we have strong religious affiliation with Jumat, particularly with Ghaznavi Jumat which was the beginning of Islam in this region”.*



The legend attached with the tangible and intangible aspect of Ghaznavid mosque has been equally remembered and shared by the respondents when they were asked to share their views. The historical triumph of forces of Mehmud Ghaznavi was considered as source of honor for the public at large. However, one respondent disagreed with the narrative and shared as:

*“This Jumat is remembered by the people as a historical victory of Muslims, but in the written expeditions of Mahmud Ghaznavi, the region of Swat was not mentioned. So how come we can relate this settlement with him. Even I accept this legend, then how my cultural identity is associated with this site. Only the religious similarity couldn’t shape my cultural identity, my creed, my language, my lifestyle is different from those people of Ghazna, they were speaking Persian, I am speaking Pashto, and their way of life is also very much dissimilar with mine”.*

#### **10. Display in museum vs. Memory of culture**

As a matter of fact, the establishment and function of museum has been a sustainability step for the conservation, preservation and protection of cultural heritage assets. Across the globe, the establishments of museums have been gaining popularity and they are viewed as efforts for the revitalization of cultures, in an era of abrupt urbanization and development. For communities, these museums have been a theatre to exhibit their cultures. One interviewee expressed as:

*“The collection here in this museum is a cultural snapshot of our culture and we, while observing the antiquities, feel a close sense of relationship. This is even more interesting when we visit the ethnological galleries, where the art pieces like terracotta, wooden objects, ornaments, dresses and musical instruments are displayed. While standing in front of this collection, I imagine myself in a classical cultural arena having simple and traditional life. This credit goes to this museum because the development is erasing our every cultural object and even the cultural values”.*

This virtual cultural snapshot also recalls their missing cultural elements and one of our respondents argues that:

*“When roaming into the galleries of this museum, it seems that I can discover that missing link of my culture, because modernism has changed our culture. These galleries connect our cultural string to the civilizations once passed here in this area. And I appreciate the role of museum in this regard”.*

Soon after the creation of this cultural snapshot, here in museums as well, cultural pride was described by the participants of our study. They were of the view that such display and its association with the cultural practices of contemporary times, acted as source of cultural pride for them. One member of community shared his opinion as:

*“The display of museum and our cultural resemblance with it is a source of pride not for me but for the whole Pakhtun community. Because this display and its resemblance dates back to ancient times, and for any culture the classical roots are very important and a source of pride. That’s why I take pride in it”.*

Though, critical remarks over the issue in hand have also been shared by the respondents as:

*“Even there is similarity between this collection and our cultural identity, but I am not feeling any pride. The reason is that I am not following those traditional dresses, utensils and even those cultural values, norms and traditions. So how can I feel pride? First, I have to keep alive that culture, and then I will feel pride”.*

For such pride, level of awareness about the culture was also argued as most important. One interviewee remarked as:

*“The collection of museums is source of pride, but this depends on awareness level. I feel pride because I am aware of my culture and its connection with the objects displayed here, but for those who are unaware of their culture and its affiliation it is not a source of pride. They feel nothing about this collection”.*

Keeping with the ongoing debate, among other functions of museum, it has been shared by the respondents that their cultural identities were being displayed in museum and they considered the museums as identity bunkers. Swat museum as believed by the locals is as a place for protection and safeguarding the Pakhtun cultural identity. One heritage manager shared his remarks in this regard as:

*“The ethnological collection is very important for Pakhtun cultural identity because if this collection is not sustained and displayed, then we cannot relate ourselves with our elders. This museum is like a protective shield for our cultural identity”.*

However, some flaws and loopholes were also discussed by some participants as:

*“The collection which is displayed in this museum is only safeguarding the dominant culture (Pakhtun) of Swat. Other cultures are being ignored here. Also, the evolutionary stages of Pakhtun culture is not visible in display. It means that up to some extent this museum is protecting the Pakhtun culture”.*

The intangible aspect was also debated by the community members and heritage managers and were of the view as:

*“The collection in display is not protecting the culture or cultural identity because we cannot spot any intangible heritage display in any of galleries and to understand a cultural profile of any community, tangible and intangible elements of culture moves parallel. Due to the absence of intangible heritage galleries, I cannot say that museum is safeguarding the cultural identity of Pakhtun community”.*

The role of museum in sustaining the culture was also debated by the community members and one interviewee shared as:

*“The role being played by the Swat museum is worthy of appreciation, but there are some areas where the museum governing bodies should focus. The ethnological section should*

*also include the non – dominant cultures of Swat (Kohistani, Torwali and Gujjari). Also, this museum should have proper hospitality sector to offer services to the visitors. The galleries information should be in the form of booklets”.*

Some future thoughts and suggestions were also contended by the participants about denoting the whole villages into “Eco-Museums”. One heritage manager shared as:

*“Museums can be sustainable cultural tourism destinations, but total reliance on museums will not be good idea. Because you cannot construct museum when you have to represent many communities, and it will be very hard for governing bodies to do so. One option can be that in developed countries, the concept of “Eco-Museums” is in practice, so that idea can be applicable here. In this option, the whole village is converted into a living museum and visitors to allow to visit, spectate and experience their culture”.*

A member of civil society shared over the same subject as:

*“The Swat museum can be like such destination subject to the condition that the intangible heritage should be displayed as being displayed in ‘Bamburat Museum’ Chitral. At there the traditional festival (intangible heritage) is displayed with the help of dummies, even the burial style is explained by an artificial dead body. So, if those things are applied here, Swat museum can be a sustainable cultural tourist destination”.*

## **11. Discussion**

There were significant visible commonalities between the architecture and masonry styles of the ancient civilizations and the present Pakhtun society. In addition, they also designated the dressing and jewelry styles as almost similar with the existing ones in the society. However, modernity has been discussed as one of major barrier to adopt and continue these ancient styles. Because the majority of young generation has been more inclined towards adopting the modern styles of living. As a result, modernization is abruptly replacing the ancient styles of almost every material and non-

material form of culture. Agricultural and food cuisines were also debated by the respondents. Our research show that it was quite difficult to establish resemblance between the agriculture and food cuisines of those time with the existing. However, there were some evident examples like rice, *Saag* and excavated seeds, asserting a relationship between the agronomy and food as well. Cultural chronology and hierarchy of culture were also discussed with the respondents and they believed that this authentic and continuous relationship is a reason of pride for them. Such cultural pride and its contribution in the sustainable cultural tourism was also contested by McIntosh, Hinch, and Ingram (2002), and find out that cultural authenticity attained through cultural integrity was vital for cultural tourists experience as well. Gotham (2011) argued that in recent era, tourism discourses, practices and framings can act as mechanism for racial identity construction and authenticity of culture. This architectural heritage and its elemental role in cultural identity has also been argued by Blagojevich et al (2009). They emphasized that awareness of public to cater to the site's safeguarding or protection was deemed vital, and involvement and empowerment of local graduates in cultural sites may be novel approach for more social gains. Particularly for the young generations, such involvement may result in the inspiration and devotion with the sites and an urge for the revitalization of their culture.

Besides, the current study finds out that authenticity and continuity both were central to host and visitor. In addition, the site safeguarding was also denoted as conditional with the continuity of culture and majority of the discussants supported the argument that site's protection was mainly dependent on this. Moreover, connectivity, resemblance and pride, all these merge together to have sense of ownership at individual and group level. It was also found to be having more concern about this ownership and custody of this site. This sense of ownership may be tapped to conserve, preserve and sustain the cultural heritage assets, both the tangible and intangible one for the cultural pride of the existing community and for the prospective legacy of the coming generations as well.

The intersection of religion with culture was also discussed by the participants of the study. Majority of the respondents were in favor of argument that culture and religion particularly in Pakhtun society seemed to be inseparable. They elaborated that due to close affiliation of Pakhtun people with their religion and cultural identity both, in most of the cases was hard to bifurcate the boundaries between these two. In academia,

Ameli (2002) debated this influence of religion on identity construction and find out that Muslims identity in a cultural setting is subjective to faith. Sokhi (1992), in the same fashion viewed that collective memory or commemoration entailed in religious sentiments attached with historical event is more evident. Busteed (2007) also contested the commemoration by the populace in a historical fashion, by quoting the Irish collective remembrance in memory of two executions back in 1888. However, current study further supported that community was having commemoration on behalf of historical triumph over Hindu Raja by forces of Mahmud Ghaznavi at Udegram site.

Cultural heritage being displayed in the galleries of the Swat museum was also debated by the respondents. Most of them shared their views and ascribed that this collection was source of memory revival for them. Museums studies and its associated scholarship has also argued about such role of galleries of museum in reviving the memory and enhancing self-identity (Crane 2000: 12-13). Alongside to this revival, this display was termed as snapshot of their culture. This become more interesting when the locals pay visit to these nearby museums and assign the collection as a snapshot of their passed or living culture (Whitehead 2009). Besides, locals blamed modernity as a threat to partially or completely vanish the traditional cultural values and their exhibition. Such important function of this museum is applauded by respondents and they designated this display as a major source of pride for them. For the host nation, displaying of heritage assets in the galleries of museum sketched a pride portrait as well (Catalani 2009). Heron (1991) also argued this pride due to heritage and suggested that locals due to this pride urged to protect their threatened culture.

## **12. Conclusion**

The voices of the local community are unheeded in the fantasy of cultural tourism activities resulting in the hegemony of top to bottom financial oriented approach. Moreover, area like Swat having enough cultural tourism sites, the same can be observed having little emphasis on community's perspective particularly about these sites and cultural identity. Doing so leaves an unaddressed avenue, having sensitized cultural strings attached. One justification for this can be that as the area is in developing phase and priority on financial aspect is need of the time. However, equal consideration on cultural aspects, under any stretch of explanation, cannot be ignored. Findings of the study revealed that there is

significant relationship between the cultural tourism sites and cultural identity of community living in proximities. Cultural hierarchy has been established by the participants with respect to three sites of the study. Moreover, numerous commonalities in the tangible and intangible elements of existing culture and the passed ones are posed. Architectural, dressing and livelihood similarities are also shared by the community. The display of cultural heritage in museum is designated as source of memory revival and pride for the locals. In addition, the religious sentiments are also denoted as important in commemorating narratives attached with historical building. Moreover, some novice scopes are also originated due to this study including racial connectivity, religious commonalities and cultural cohesion. These scopes required some comprehensive study in future to have in depth understanding. Besides, the current study is applicable to other areas of Swat (particularly rural areas) and to urban areas subject to some modifications as well. Above all, it is safe to say here that bottom to top culturally oriented approach is quite need of time to mitigate the challenges to major cultures and their subgroups. Such approach initiates a sense of awareness and safeguarding in community about them and their culture. In sum, the cultural tourism sites in Swat have embedded values of cultural identity and community also exhibits such relationship in both letter and spirit. These values and its relationship with the existing community in Swat, requires consideration in the models of cultural tourism development and in tourism policies as well.

### **13. Suggestions**

Based on the findings of the study, following are the major suggestions:

1. Community oriented approach on cultural tourism sites may be more productive to develop alternate tourism destinations in Swat.
2. The sub-cultural groups i.e. Kohistani, Torwali, and Gujjari may be given equal representation in museums and social arena, to overcome their exclusion experience from the cultural mainstream.
3. Inculcation of community perspectives in the policies of cultural tourism may be a novel and industrious strategy in Swat.
4. Educational and awareness campaigns in terms of culture for the illiterates may be a reason to create sense of knowing about own culture and its protection.

5. Deviation may be made from demand side of tourism to supply side, especially at the end of local community, stakeholders and experts of the field.
6. Projection of linkage of cultural identity and sites in print and electronic media on local level may be used to aware the public at large about the importance, connection and sustainability of these sites.
7. For incoming tourists, this perspective of the community may be utilized while formulating the ethical considerations which are necessary to follow while during activities of tour.
8. Establishment of tourist's information and facilitation center along with food and beverage sections on sites and museum can mentally and physically rejoice the visitors.
9. In depth study on the indigenous knowledge, in contrast to western lenses, may be more viable and acceptable approach in order to culturally recognize the communities and executing the cultural tourism practices.
10. Focus on intangible heritage at sites is also quite need of time as the tangible heritage has some physical structure but the intangible must be sustained. Digital section at sites and galleries of museum can represent the intangible heritage.
11. Courses of cultural tourism sites either short or degree programs at secondary and higher secondary level may create a sense of ownership in the students.
12. Cultural events and festivals like in Chitral, may be arranged round the year to showcase the Pakhtoon culture to the national and international tourists.
13. Establishment of ethnological museum with sufficient space to store and display the major and minor cultural groups of Swat may be culturally recognized.



## References

- Ali, N. and A. Holden (2006) Post-colonial Pakistani Mobilities: the Embodiment of the 'Myth of Return' in Tourism. *Mobilities*, 1 (2): 217-242.
- Ameli, S. R. (2002). *Globalization, Americanization and British Muslim Identity*. London: Islamic College for Advance Studies Press.
- Balgojevic, M.R., G. Milosevic and A. Radivojevic (2009) A New Approach to Renewel and Presentation of An Archaeological Site as Unique Cultural Landscape. *Spatium International Review*20: 35-40.
- Busteed, M. (2007) 'Fostered To Trouble The Next Generation': Contesting the Ownership of the Martyrs Commemoration Ritual in Manchester 1888-1921. In N. Moore and Y. Whelan, eds, *Heritage, Memory and the Politics of Identity: New Perspectives on the Cultural Landscape*. Hampshire: Ashgate, pp. 69-85.
- Catalani, A. (2009) Yoruba identity and Western musuems: Ethnic pride and artistic representation. In M. Anico and E. Peralta, eds, *Heritage and Identity:Engagement and Demission in Contemporary World*. New York: Routledge, pp. 181-193.
- Crane, S. A. (2000). *Museums and Memory*. Stanford, Caalifornia: Stanford University Press.
- Dornyei, Z. (2007) *Research methods in applied linguistics*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Dwyer, L., A. Gill, A. and N. Seetaram (2012) *Handbook of Research Methods in Tourism*. Massachusetts: Edward Elgar Publishing, Inc.
- Edmonds, W.A. and T.D. Kennedy (2017) *An Applied Guide to Research Designs*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publication.
- Galleta, A. (2013) *Mastering the Semi-Structured Interview and Beyond: From Research Designs to Anaylsis and Publication*. New York and London: New York University Press.
- Gill, P., K. Stewart, E. Treasure and B. Chadwick (2008) Methods of data collection in qualitative research:interviews and focus groups. *British Dental Journal*204 (6): 291-295.

Gotham, K.F. (2011). Reconstructing the Big Easy: racial heritage tourism in New Orleans. *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism Leisure and Events*, 3 (2): 109-120.

Grayman-Simpson, N. (2017) Cultural Identity. In A. Wenzel, ed., *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Abnormal and Clinical Psychology*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., pp. 934-935.

Heron, P. (1991) 'Eco-musems' - a new museology. *Alberta Museums Review*, 17 (2): 8-11.

Ilkar, E., M.A. Sulaiman and R.S. Alkassim (2016) Comparison of Convenience Sampling and Purposive Sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5 (1): 1-4.

Kim, S., M. Whitford and C. Arcodia (2019) Development of intangible cultural heritage as sustainable tourism resource: the tangible cultural heritage practitioners' perspectives. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 14 (5-6): 422-435.

McIntosh, A. J., T. Hinch and T. Ingram (2002) Cultural Identity and Tourism. *International Journal of Arts Management*, 4(2), 39-49. Retrieved from <http://www.jstore.org/stable/41064754>.

Mu, Y., S.K. Nepal and P.-H. Lai (2019) Tourism and sacred landscape in Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest) National Park, Nepal. *Tourism Geographies* 21 (3): 442-449.

Newman, A. and F. McLean (2006) The Impact of Museums upon Identity. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 12 (1): 49-68.

Nunez, J. and A. Theron (1963) Tourism, Tradition, and Acculturation: Weekendismo in a Mexican Village. *Ethnology* 2 (3): 347-352.

Olivieri, L. M. (2006) Outline History of the IsIAO Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan (1956-2006). *East and West*, 56, 1-323-41.

Olivieri, L.M. (2016) *Archaeology Community Tourism*. Swat (unpublished internal report to PIDSA-EAD).

Olivieri, L. M. (2017) *Archaeology Community Tourism- Field School Project (ACT Swat)*. Swat (unpublished internal report to PIDSA-EAD).

Over, D. (2016). Cultural Tourism and Complex Histories: The Armenian Akhtamar Church, the Turkish State and National Identity. *Qual Scoial*, Published online 12 April 2016.

Puriri, A. and A. McIntosh (2019) A cultural framework for Maori tourism: values and processes of a Whanau tourism bussness development. *Journal of Royal society of New Zealand*, 49 (1): 89-103.

Qu, C., D.J. Timothy and C. Zhang (2019) Does Tourism erode or prosper culture? Evidence from the Tibetan ethnic area of Sichuan Province , China. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Heritage*, 17 (4): 1-18.

Rome, S. (2008) *Swat State (1915-1969): From Genesis to Merger: An Anyalsis of Political ,Administrative, Socio-Political and Economic Development*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.

Sokhi, B. S. (1992) Spotting historical monuments and sites from 'SPOT' image. *Journal of the Indian Society of Remote Sensing* 20 (1-3): 65-71.

UNWTO. (2018) *Tourism and Cultural Synergies*. Madrid: UNWTO. doi:<https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284418978> .

Uros`evic`, N. (2012) Cultural Identity and Cultural Tourism-Between The Local And The Global(A Case Study Of Pula,Croatia). *SINGIDUNUM Journal of Applied Sciences*, 9 (1): 67-76.

Verheijen, B. and I.D. Putra (2019) Balinese cultural identity and global tourism:the Garuda Wisnu Kencana Cultural Park. *Asian Ethnicity, Online (July 2019)*: 1-18.

Whitehead, C. (2009) Locating art: The display and construction of place identity in art galleries. In M. Anico and E. Peralta, eds, *Heritage and Identity:Engagement and Demission in the Contemporary World*. New York: Routledge, pp. 29-47.



Fig. 2 - Bazira: Turki-Shahi Settlement, fortifications wall with bastion (Photo by the author).

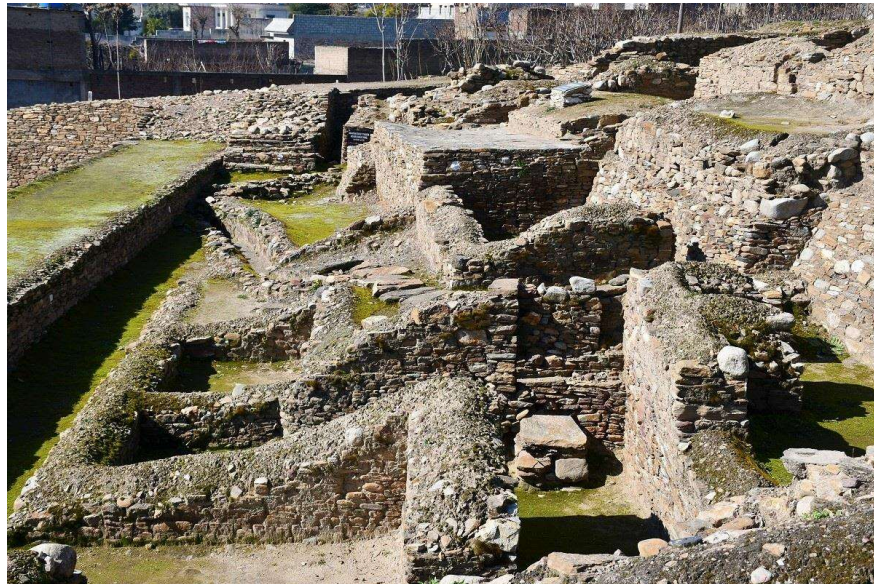


Fig. 3 - Bazira: A view of Saka- Parthian period remains (Photo by ZK).





Fig. 5 - Udegram: Aerial view of Ghaznavid Mosque (Photo by FN).



Fig. 6 - Udegram: Close view of *Mehrab* in the Ghaznavid mosque (Photo by FN).



Fig. 7 - Udegram: Close view of paved floor with ablution tank of Ghaznavid mosque (Photo by FN).



Fig. 8 - Swat Museum: Buddhists sculptures in the Ghandhara gallery (Photo by FN).





Fig. 9 - Swat Museum: Footprints of Buddha (Photo by FN).



Fig. 10 - Swat Museum: Display of local jewellery in ethnological gallery (Photo by FN).



Fig. 11 - Swat Museum: Local wooden architecture in ethnological gallery  
(Photo by FN).



Fig. 12 - Swat Museum: Display of household objects in ethnological gallery  
(Photo by FN).