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CHANDANNAGORE: A LOST HERITAGE OR A BEAUTY?

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ABSTRACT

A destination is considered as a beauty, when it is clean, hygienic, and liked by the tourists. But when it loses its values, culture and heritage, the beauty is lost. This losing is due to carelessness, selling off lands to promoters, lack of awareness, improper communication, improper government support among others. All these issues are seen in the French heritage sites of Chandannagore, West Bengal especially Lal Dighi, French cemetery, museum artifacts among others. Locals are not proactive towards caring for the lands, for which they cannot be blamed. They are not involved in the protection and preservation initiatives. This is not desired in terms of increasing the tourist influx. Need is to increase destination management, through 3D mapping, designing and investigations, which will increase beauty of these places, attracting more tourists across borders.

Key words: Heritage, culture, beauty, tourism, locals, tourists

1. INTRODUCTION

Some places gain accolades and glory from the likeliness of tourists to repeat selection to spend their vacation. Here, the concept of destination management comes, which tourism department conducts for managing the sites, so that tourists can be retained. But scenes are not always the same, as the sites lose their values, due to man-made activities and the lackadaisical approach of locals and that of caretakers. Evidences are not trimming the in-grown wild plants, wastes being accumulated, climate changes destroying the buildings, rust being formed on the artefacts in the museum. All these aspects are not at all desired for attracting tourists from all over the world. Based on these aspects, the tag of lost heritage can be applied on Chandannagore, West Bengal. But presence of sites like Sett Bari, Rash Behari Bose, Patal Bari adds interrogative parameter to the tag of lost heritage. With time, these sites have degraded in their cultural heritage value.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Pechmann, (2026) argues that beauty is important for increasing the attractiveness of a destination, among the people. If there is carelessness in caring for the destination, then this beauty is lost in terms of culture, heritage and lineage, which the sites have carried, since their inception. Repairing the damages is a form of restoring the lost beauty of the sites.

Pazzaglia et al., (2020) brought lacunae into the limelight. These lacunae incur damage into the artwork, which are placed in museums to see and learn about the culture and heritage which the place held in the historic times. Experts from the bodies like UNESCO, Archaeological Survey of India adopt aesthetic value for enriching experience on evaluating the artworks. Attitudes among these experts are different and varied while evaluating the artworks and artefacts. Art conservation programs are mentioned which are effective in terms of increasing the knowledge of heritage conservation among the experts.

Luger, (2025) states that past was much beautiful as compared to the present time. Landscapes gave sensation to the people, taking them back to the history. The past events, although horrifying, soothed their mind and body. They questioned the events and their resolutions, but nothing was threatful here, except for critics, counter arguing their evaluation and perceptions. This evaluation establishes a connection between sensation and abstractness.

de Winter, (2025) tagged world heritage as beautiful as it is diversified. This is reflected from the assemblage of different cultures. But people from all cultures are not that conscious about their heritage and culture, which the sites carry. This is evident from the lack of awareness, not being conscious of caring for the heritage sites, selling off the heritage properties to promoters among others. In this context, beauty in terms of diversity, is contradicted, affirming commercialism, which is the

trend among the people.

Bose, L. (2023) created a mass appeal by stating the importance of community driven approaches towards restoring the lost heritage in sites like Chandannagore, West Bengal, India. This type of inclusive approach is effective for developing tourism management through destination management. Due to ignorance, sites like Lal Dighi, French cemetery, museum artefacts in Chandannagore have lost its cultural heritage. Impact is seen in reduced number of tourists choosing the place for spending their vacation. Involvement of the locals is necessary as they are very well aware of the scenario since the historic times. But striking to note is that they are not aware about the heritage and cultural values, which these sites carry. They sell off the lands to promoters, who are greedy for possession of these lands, to construct shopping malls, high rise buildings, factories, which will increase their profit. Here, lost heritage tag is apt for the sites in Chandannagore, destroying its beauty.

Chattopadhyay, (2018) researched on the coasts of Bengal, which induced prospects in trade through waterways. Archaeological surveys of these waterways reconstruct the human settlements which was there during French and British colonial rule in west Bengal. This reconstruction also focuses on the social aspects, that is, lifestyle of the locals residing in these coasts. Now, in the postmodern society, the architectural beauty of these coasts has lost, as renovations have been made, and overcrowding has been seen. Reconstruction is effective, when it retains the cultural heritage is preserved.

Arguments of Ghosh and Singh, (2022) are also relevant here, as they relate to the recent trends in tourism, that are 3D mapping and designing of the heritage sites. Spatiotemporal dynamics of the survey and analysis is referred here, which reflects technological advancement towards enhancing the beauty of French heritage sites. The focus is on green and blue spaces, which induces sustainable development consciousness. Specific mention can be made of Normalized Difference Vegetation Index and Normalized Difference water Index scales are used for detecting the blue and green spaces in Chandannagore, West Bengal. The analysis detects severe decline in green spaces in the central and eastern parts of the city. But strikingly there are lots of green and blue spaces in the urban areas.

3. METHODOLOGY

The paper follows secondary research method, where books, journal articles, papers, government websites and reports are considered for collecting data on French heritage sites, and their conservation. From these secondary sources, further prospects from this conservation, is denoted, and evaluated, based on sustenance for retaining tourists. From these sources, themes related to French heritage conservation is developed. These themes expand the research scope, arena and dynamics on culture, heritage, value, perceptions, tourism among others. While considering these sources, researcher has maintained ethical considerations in the form of acknowledging them, avoiding the sites which needs subscriptions, maintaining confidentiality, privacy and security. In order to make the propositions and

assumptions valid, researcher adopts inclusion and exclusion criteria. In this context, only those sources are included, which have been published within last 10 years ago. Exploratory research design has been adopted for exploring the unexplored realms of preserving the French heritage sites, which has lost its glory due to commercialism and apartment culture. Deductive approach seems justified for deducing relevant aspects on tourism, culture, heritage preservation, among others. Positivism philosophy is also used for establishing positive, scientific, objective, real, and epistemological notions on these aspects.

4. CONCLUSION

Chandannagore, as a French heritage site, is a beauty. But the amount of loss and damage incurred, makes it a lost heritage. Evidences are the wild plants and flowers grown the funeral tombs of French cemetery, wastes in Lal Dighi, artefacts lying unattended in museum among others. Hotels also lacks quality accommodation, preferred by the foreign tourists. In this context, Kolkata tourist spots like Victoria Memorial, Park Street gains higher preference among the tourists. Need is proper scanning and inspection of the sites, to come up with proper restoration measures. Proactiveness lies in involving the locals in heritage and destination management, as they are well aware of the culture, heritage and lineage which the sites carry. Governmental assistance could alter the standards of living for the locals, in the form of prospects in fairs, and exhibitions, upholding the culture and heritage of Chandannagore.

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