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RESEARCH ARTICLE

COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS AND HERITAGE BUILDINGS CONSERVATIONS, SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KOLKATA MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

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Abstract

Cost-benefit analysis can play a useful role in heritage buildings conservation. Even when it is difficult to estimate some heritage conservation costs and benefits with precision, applying the cost-benefit analysis framework is important and useful in itself. By using cost-benefit analysis, scarce conservation resources are more likely to be directed towards those historic heritage places the community values most highly.

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INTRODUCTION

Buildings with architectural significance and historical values are considered for their preservation and conservation. These buildings playing an important role in the history of the city of Kolkata in particular and maintained properly. For this purpose it has been realised that an inventory of such buildings upon which the heritage status has been conferred is to be undertaken. Through various process and documentation stages in assistance with the Expert Committee formed by the Government of West Bengal, a list of such heritage buildings has been prepared and being up-dated regularly. The Corporation with the recommendation of the Heritage Conservation Committee has prepared a Graded List of Heritage Buildings for Grade-I, Grade-IIA & Grade-IIB. Under the provisions of Section 2 (42A) of the K.M.C. Act 1980 the definition of heritage building has been given. The definition runs thus "heritage building means any building of one or more premises, or any part thereof, which requires preservation and conservation for historical, architectural, environmental or ecological purpose and includes such portion of the land adjoining such building or any part thereof as may be required for fencing or covering or otherwise preserving such building and also includes the areas and buildings requiring preservation and conservation for the purpose as aforesaid under sub-clause (ii) of clause (a) of subsection (4) of the section 31 of the West Bengal Town and Country (Planning and Development) Act, 1979 (West Beng. Act XIII of 1979)". Conservation may be defined as the process involved in the preservation of a building, precinct or artifact, in order to retain its architectural, historical, environmental or cultural significance. This term includes maintenance and according to necessity, may require preservation, restoration or reconstruction and may commonly be a combination of more than one of the above.

2.STUDY AREA: The Kolkata Municipal Corporation was established in 1876. Under the guidance of the first Minister of Local Self-Government in Bengal, Sir Surendranath Banerjee, the Calcutta Municipal Act of 1923 made provision for the enfranchisement of women and the election of a Mayor annually; the first was Chittaranjan Das with Subhas Chandra Bose as his Chief Executive Officer. The city is divided into 144 administrative wards that are grouped into 15 boroughs. Therefore, we have focused on only Ward no-37,38,39,40 Kolkata's cultural heritage places and brief of the destinations given below:

Monumental heritage (Art and architecture): Indian Museum, Victoria Memorial Hall, Gandhi ghat and museum at Barrackpur, Robindra Setu (Howrah bridge) etc.

Religious heritage: Belur Math, Dakshineswar, Kalighat, Thonthonia Kalibari, Chandannagar church, Bandel church,

Historical Heritage: Vidyasagar House, Laha Bari, Marble Palace, University of Calcutta(College street campus)

Traditional arts and crafts: Few famous art galleries like: Academy of Fine Arts, Birla Academy of art & culture, Center for International modern art, Asutosh Museums of modern art,.

3.OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

- 1.To study the present conditions of heritage Buildings of Kolkata Municipal Corporation.
- 2 To examine the significance of Heritage Buildings..
- 3.To asses the economic importance of Heritage Buildings .
4. Cost Benefit Analysis of Conservation of Heritage Buildings

4 METHODOLOGY:

The entire work has been divided into four phases:

A) Phase-1:

- 1) Construction of sample .
- 2) Construction of a questionnaire
- 3) Collection of primary information from sample

B) Phase-2:

Collection of secondary information from different Govt and Non Govt. offices

C) Phase-3:

To analyze data/information and their cartographic representation with the help of the simple statistical tool and GIS.

D) Phase-4:

Interpretation of data

5.DATA ANALYSIS AND MAJOR FINDINGS:

West Bengal, being the home of ancient civilizations and a glorious history of freedom struggle , has a rich cultural heritage. This cultures are reflected in a the historical monuments, palaces, ruins of ancient civilizations, remnants of past cultural heritage of the civilizations destroyed by the natural calamities.

Previously there were some provisions for preservation and conservation of this heritage in the West Bengal Town and Country (Planning & Development) Act, 1979. Later in 1997 an expert Committee was set up under the Chairmanship of Dr. Barun De and seven other eminent personalities.

The said Committee suggested for framing of comprehensive statutory provision by making necessary amendments in the West Bengal Town and Country (Planning & Development) Act, 1979 and also to set up West Bengal Heritage Commission in order to supervise the modification, enlistment and maintenance of all Heritage Buildings, Monuments, Precincts and sites within the purview of entire State of West Bengal. Accordingly the West Bengal Heritage Commission Act, 2001 has been enacted with effect from the 1st day of August, 2001. As per provisions of this Act the West Bengal Heritage Commission has been constituted under the Chairmanship of Dr. Pratap Chandra Chandra. The West Bengal Heritage Commission Rules has been framed in 2003. Kolkata Metropolitan

Development Authority is actively participating in the work of the said Commission. One Heritage Cell has been constituted within Municipal Planning Unit of KMDA. There are Planners and Planning Assistants in the said Cell.

In the Municipal and the Municipal Corporation Acts provisions for constitution of the Heritage Conservation Committee has been made. In Kolkata Municipal Corporation and the relevant Municipalities have constituted Municipal Heritage Conservation Committee in order to identify the Heritage Buildings and sites within the ULB area and to recommend their conservation to the West Bengal Heritage Commission.

In Kolkata the Heritage Conservation Committee, headed by the Municipal Commissioner of Kolkata Municipal Corporation, has already taken initiative in this regard and thus 163 buildings in Kolkata has been declared as Heritage Buildings, and documentation of around 200 buildings have been done out of identified buildings (1348) by the Expert Committee. Kolkata Municipal Corporation has already taken steps for restoration / renovation of different Heritage Buildings like the Town Hall, Prinsep Ghat, Metropolitan Building, Metcalfe Hall, Star Theatre, Vidyasagar House, Queens Mansion, Vivekananda House, Minerva Theatre etc.

Apart from the above efforts have been initiated by KMDA to conserve the heritage buildings in the Urban Local Bodies in KMA Area. In this effort 73 number of buildings in 14 Urban Local Bodies have been identified, and work for preservation of some buildings has already been taken up.

The State of West Bengal is rich with the heritage of old civilizations. Thus there exist a number of Heritage Buildings and Structures in, inter alia, the Urban areas of this State. The State Government in Department of Information and Cultural Affairs has enacted the **West Bengal Heritage Commission Act, 2001** in order to constitute a Heritage Commission to take steps for preservation and conservation of Heritage Buildings and Structures located in this State. The Municipalities have also assigned a part in preservation and conservation of heritage of this State. As per provisions of **section 23C of the West Bengal Municipal Act, 1993** the Municipality shall constitute a Heritage Conservation Committee with the members stipulated in sub-section (2) of the said section. The matter regarding conservation of the municipal building or any other building or site, considered as heritage building or site, has to be examined by the said Committee, and thereafter the said Committee shall send its recommendation regarding preservation and conservation of such heritage buildings to the West Bengal Heritage Commission, constituted under the West Bengal Heritage Commission Act, 2001, for taking final decision in the matter.

Maximum heritage buildings of the study area are occupied by illegal owners. For the illegal occupancy the condition of the buildings are very poor and about to destroy. Another causes of worst condition of buildings is a large no. of inhabitants. There are too many family live in each buildings. Most of them are illegal. So they are not conscious about the conservation. There is no denying the fact that, for the ill maintenances of the buildings its are about to destroy. Mainly the ground floor used commercially and most of the users are illegal owners. Mainly Shops, offices etc are found in ground floor. Others floor used for residential or commercial. The educational institutions are funded by govt. of West Bengal for conservation. But others buildings are funded by N.G.O. for conservation. Maximum landlord or inhabitants of the buildings are not capable to repair the buildings. Moreover multi- ownership is one of the main obstacle for conservation

. problem Conservation of Heritage Buildings has an economic dimensions:

(a) **Replacement cost:** The cost of replacing a good is often used as a proxy for its value. This approach has two problems, however. First, since cultural heritage sites are often thought to be essentially

irreplaceable, replacement may not be possible. Where the site is only damaged, restoration cost might be used. Second, this measure begs the question. If the point of the exercise is to decide whether a site is worth restoring, using the restoration cost as a measure of value is clearly of little use. This measure may be appropriate for some critical aspects of the site, however, where the value might reasonably be thought to be extremely high. In such cases, however, the appropriate approach is one of cost-effectiveness rather than cost-benefit.

(b) Travel cost

Basic principles. The travel cost (TC) method is an example of a technique that attempts to deduce value from observed behavior. It uses information on visitors' total expenditure to visit a site to derive their demand curve for the site's services. The technique assumes that changes in total travel costs are equivalent to changes in admission

fees. From this demand curve, the total benefit visitors obtain can be calculated. (It is important to note that the value of the site is *not* given by the total travel cost; this information is only used to derive the demand curve.)

Applications. The travel cost method was designed for and has been used extensively to value the benefits of recreation.

Data requirements. Data on the travel costs of visitors are required. These are collected through surveys on the site.

Limitations. The travel cost method depends on numerous assumptions, many of which are problematic in the context of international tourism. The basic technique generally assumes that travel cost is proportional to distance from the site and that people living at the same distance from the site have identical preferences. Neither assumption is plausible in the case of international tourism. The technique also assumes a single-purpose trip and encounters difficulties when trips have multiple purposes. It should also be borne in mind that the resulting estimates are site-specific.

(c)Private cost: Sometimes illegal inhabitants loose their residence due to govt. policy..

(d)Social cost: The Resale , Reconstruction and development are depend on heritage act, so the maximum buildings area are misused or unused for lack of conservation. Moreover sometimes commercial uses of land is not possible.

BENEFIT:

i)Private Bebefit: (a) **Residents of the site.** Since residents live on the site, they are able to benefit from any use value year-round. They may also experience more directly any trade-offs between conflicting objectives at the site.

(b) **Visitors.** Since they visit the site, visitors also receive use benefits, although not necessarily the same ones as residents.

(c) **Others.** To the extent that they might visit the site, they have option value on its continued existence. To the extent that they do not, they only have existence value'

Inhabitants or commercial user of these buildings access costless stay .Because they have not to pay reconstruction costs. Restoration projects are also a boon to the labour force, being more labour intensive than new construction. Typically, labour represents 60-75% of project costs in a conservation project..

ii)Social Benifit: Businesses benefit from locating in heritage buildings and areas

- The growth in employment in the restoration industry in construction trades, professionals and product manufacturing
- Enhanced municipal tax base through restored individual buildings and areas
- Increased tourism
- Restoration is often cheaper than new construction

Heritage tourism is often rooted by historic buildings. These powerful, tangible connections to our past are the ways in which people today come in touch with the past. Heritage buildings are also increasingly accepted as important venues linking a new generation with an older one, and thus as places to be used for **education and citizenship**. Revitalizing old neighbourhoods—the buildings and the landscape—ensures that our quality of life is improved and that **community cohesion** is maintained. The **volunteer activity** that often goes into maintaining and promoting heritage buildings—walking tours, neighbourhood activities—is also recognized as a valuable way to keep people, especially seniors, active and involved in their community.

Some of the most significant benefits from the conservation of heritage buildings are related to economic issues. The following collection of information is an introduction to this subject, and highlights some of the key issues and statistics associated with heritage building conservation.

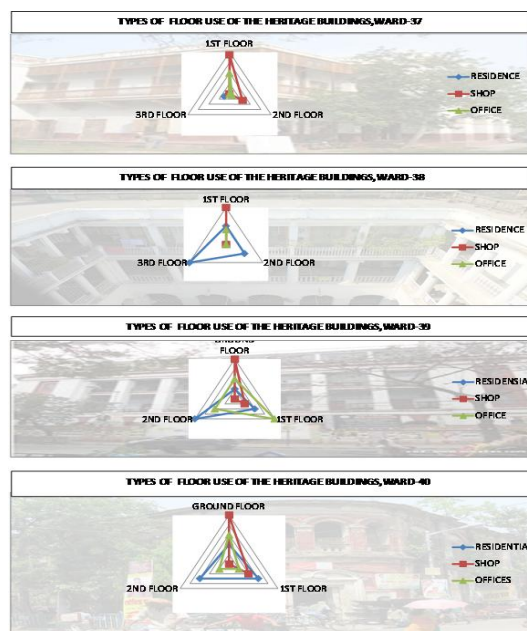
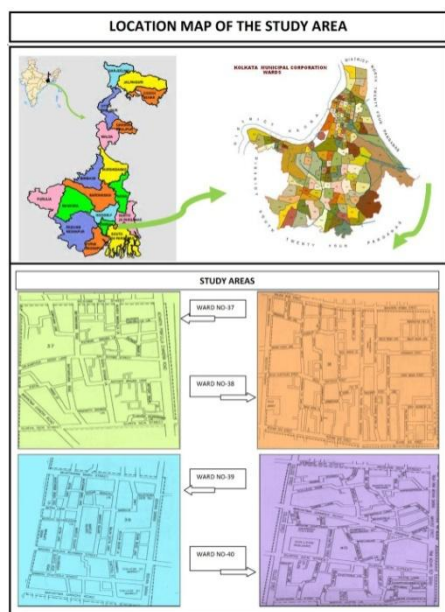


FIG:6: TYPES OF FLOOR USE OF THE HERITAGE BUILDINGS

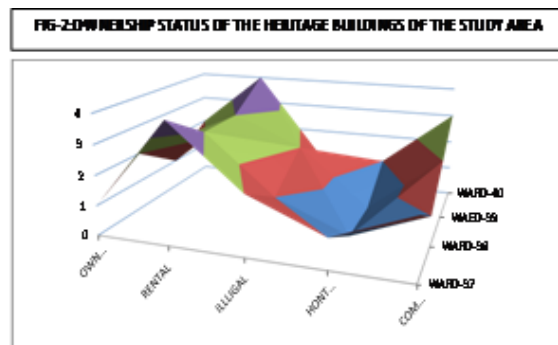
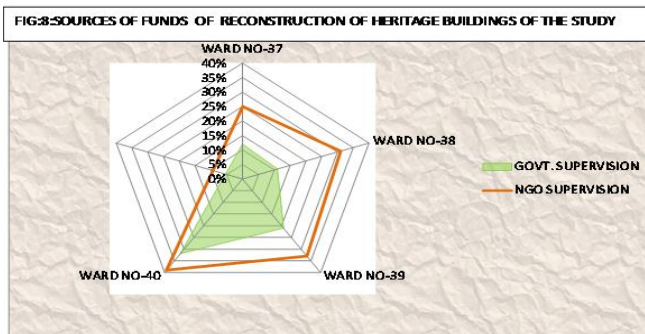
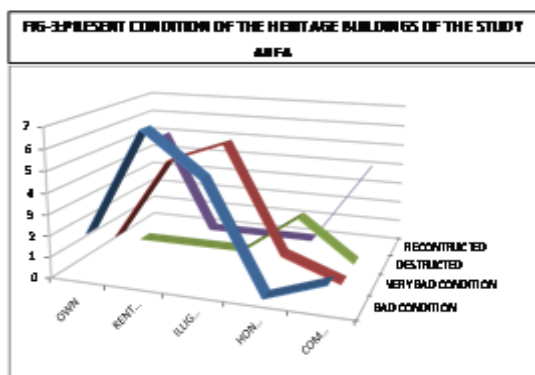
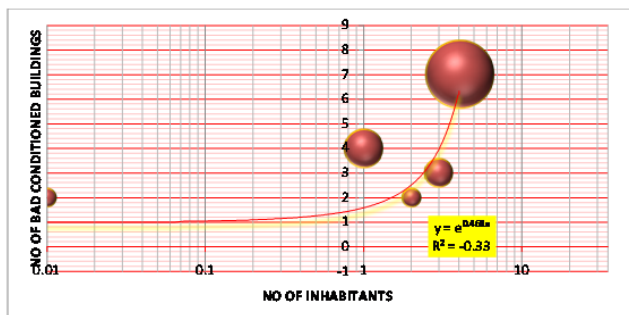
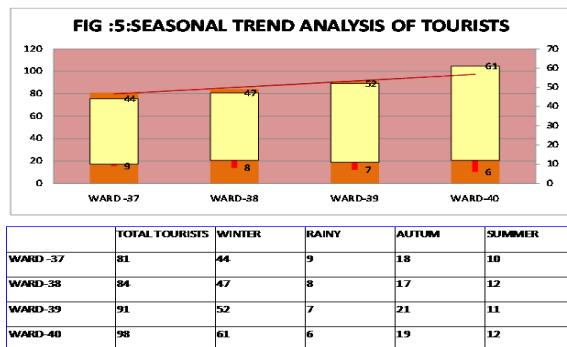


FIG:4: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NO OF RESIDENTS AND BUILDING CONDITION OF THE STUDY AREA



6.CONCLUSION:

In competing for scarce government resources, it is increasingly important that portfolios provide sound economic justification for their work. This imperative is twofold, involving not just a business case for government intervention, but also empirical evidence that the most economically efficient policy and program options are chosen. This requires that the costs and benefits of government intervention be assessed. Economic analysis of heritage provides a number of valuable insights into heritage conservation in Kolkata. An understanding of market failure not only augments justification for government intervention in heritage conservation, but can help indicate how intervention might best be targeted. The next step in heritage economics is to develop tools for practical implementation of these insights. Conducting cost-benefit analysis of policy options for heritage conservation can help ensure that they have a net benefit by addressing the specific causes of market failure. This will demand further development and application of non-market valuation techniques, as well as better information regarding the costs of heritage, particularly to the private sector. Comprehensive assessments of the costs and benefits of heritage may assist in contributing to a system of heritage conservation that is more efficient and effective.

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