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**Kot Diji Fort and Mound of Diji, Khairpur Current Issues Regarding Administrations
and Tourism Development**

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Abstract



This paper deals with the current tourism development issues present at Kot Diji fort and mound of Diji Khairpur, Sindh. To know what are the problem in these both sites interviews were conduct through open-ended questions. The questions asked in the interviews were gathered from reviewing different kind of literature on tourism, heritage and facilities at tourist's sites. Eleven interviews done for survey. The interviews done via snowball sampling method. The data was collected and analysed through tabular analysis. It was said by the respondents of interviews that there are number of development issues at Kot Diji fort and mound of Kot Diji Khairpur like administrations problem, physical service, services, encroachment and self-sufficiency kind of issues. Respondents gave various suggestion for the problems present at Kot Diji fort and mound of Diji Khairpur, Sindh. The tourism authority must take action for the problem at both heritage sites.

Keywords: Tourism, Development of Tourism, Kot Diji fort, Mound of Kot Diji, Khairpur Tourism, Issues in Tourism

Introduction

Kot Diji fort and Mound of Diji Khairpur, Sindh are ancient archeological sites in Kot Diji city, district Khairpur, Sindh, Pakistan. Mir Murad Ali Khan Talpur in Kot Diji city constructed Kot Diji fort also named Ahmedabad fort Khairpur in 18th century, district Khairpur, Sindh, Pakistan. The fort is located at the distance of 40 km from Khairpur city. The fort is clearly visible from the old national highway Khairpur (Khan, 2015). It has 30 feet high walls all around the fort. It had towers whose height is 50 feet high. The fort itself is sites on 110 feet hill high above the ground(Butler, 2018). The fort has 3 levels. On level one, there is well, tuck shop, sitting area, restrooms for tourists. On level number two, there is a huge room for soldiers in ancient days. on level number three there is a water reservoir, different cannon towers, prison, security rooms, king's residency and a parade ground(Kaka et al., 2021). Now Kot Diji fort is a heritage site and is currently under the Government of Pakistan (Fatima et al., 2022). The site of Kot Diji is a mound with is also known as "Diji ji Takri" in local language. This site is a part of pre-Indus valley civilization. This site was built in 3300. BCE. The archeological site has two parts one is the citadel area and the other is on the ground, which is still buried under the ground of Kot Diji city(Fatima et al., 2022). Pottery was the evidence which shows that the culture of this site is changed from the era of Moen-jo-daro and Amri(Fauzel et al., 2021). The mound of Diji was founded and excavated by Dr F. A. Khan

The concept of this paper is to let you know what is the current condition of the Kot Diji fort Khairpur and what could be done further to develop the fort according to the current issues present at the fort of tourists and administration. Now here could be a question that why do we need to develop the fort further so the answer is that in weekdays there are 600 o 700 tourists, who visits the fort per day. In weekends 1200 to 1400 tourists visits the fort per day. Furthermore, in the days of festivals there are uncountable tourists in these days. As for as international tourists are concerned there are 400 to 500 foreign tourists per year. Right now, the fort is not in a good condition regarding the development strategies. The structure of the fort could be fine enough but the there are some

issues/problems in the fort for tourists and administration. Therefore, some open ended questions were design to know what are the current issues faced by tourists and administration in the terms of different facilities, services and development at Kot Diji fort.

Literature Review

The Kot Diji fort is located in Kot Diji city in Khairpur district in Sindh province, Pakistan. The fort is km away from Khairpur city. In Kot Diji city, there are few other historical sites of Talpur’s family some of them being used for tourism purpose and some are still under the supervision of the Talpur’s family(Ahmed, 2014). The Kot Diji fort is clearly visible from old national highway, Khairpur but the entrance of the fort is from the city centre, which is approximately at the distance of 1 km from old national highway. Khairpur district is surrounded by some other district too like Sukkur, Larkana, Shikarpur, Sanghar, Nawabshah and Noushehro Feroz. After the completion of Multan to Sukkur motorway tourist are even coming from south Punjab to visit the fort (Rengel, 2003).

Basically Heritage Tourism is frequently considered to be a risk to the survival of local/native communities and cultural sites. Tourist industry is, in actuality, a forum and a driver for revealing and protecting inheritance, as well as guaranteeing its economic/financial and social stability. As a result, tourism is often used as a balancing method to preserve and protect a society's culture(Baig et al., 2022).

Tourism and travel seems to have a solid relationship by additional industries in the country's budget/economy, generating significant secondary earnings and improving international investors, trade/business opportunities, non-government/private, local growth, and civic/public infrastructure investments. Pakistan partakes a high tourism potential because to its diverse ethos and culture, topographical and natural diversity, and heritage. Tourism has grown as a means for breeding noteworthy financial progress (Arshad et al., 2017).

Scholars in the field of tourism are mostly concerned about policy decisions, poor infrastructure, security issues, tourism related, conservation and protection of the environment, extremism, inflation and increased costs, waste disposal, financial recession, insufficient tourism education, role of media, pollution, lack of awareness, lack of interdepartmental coordination, and so on. Scholars propose that a sustainable tourism growth strategy should also include training, awareness, infrastructural facilities, policies, preservation and conservation methods, and coordination across departments. The majority of study troubles have yet to be solved. Nevertheless, in some areas, security and infrastructure have gotten better like in terms of guides there are not too much guides in the fort and mound but those guides which are present at both sites have a lot of knowledge about their work and the site(Arif & Du, 2019).

Research Questions:

Following are the research questions according to which the research has been done

1. What are the issues with the administrations of the fort and the mound?
2. What kind of Physical services provided in the fort and the mound?
3. What kind of security services are being provided to the fort and the mound?
4. How much is the fort and mound accessible from the old national highway?
5. How to make the fort and the mound self-sufficient in terms of revenue generation?

So according to these research questions the research has been done and the interviews were taken from various people.

Qualitative research methodology:

Qualitative data gathering technique is used wherever non-numerical figures is required. In qualitative research there are mainly open-ended queries, these queries are not specific questions, which are being asked only in the interview, but interviewer can ask about various things at the time that is the cause it is named as open-ended research. This kind of research collects the data in depth. In qualitative research quota sampling is used mainly, here uncontrolled quota sampling is used because the researcher decided that from whom interviews should take. The quota sampling is time saving and it creates the research easier. This a non- probability research technique as researcher selects individuals according to their experience and knowledge.

Data Collection:

Data was collected through eleven interviews from archeology, tourism and engineering fields. The data was collected via physical surveys and interviews.

Physical survey:

Various physical surveys were prepared at both locations Kot Diji fort and Mound of Diji. In those studies, structural and semi-structural observation conducted about these two sites.

Interviews:

Many interview conducted for data collection method. Some interviews conducted via archeologists of Shah Abdul Latif University Khairpur, some conducted via civil engineers, and some conducted via experts working in the Kot Diji fort and Mound of Diji some interviews collected from guides working there. Here is the list of designation and numbers of interviews.

Sampling Technique

The sampling technique, which is used in this research, is snowball-sampling technique. Because at the time of data collection one respondent was recommending the second respondent and the second respondent recommended the third respondents in this way the chain continues up to 11 interviews.

Data analysis:

The data, which gathered from interviews, was analyzed by content analysis.

Research Findings and Results

The following table indicates that what kind issues and their sub-issues are there, how many persons respond to it and what suggestion did they give.

S.no	No: of interviews	Designation
01	4	Archology Department, SALU Khairpur
02	2	Civil Engineers, WAPDA
03	4	Kot Diji Fort
04	1	Khazana Resource Centre
Total no:	of Interviews	11

Factors	Sub-factors/Issues	No: of Respondents out of 10	Suggestions
Administration	Office	8	There isn't any proper administration office for the fort neither inside the fort nor outside, there must an office for the fort and mound
	Shortage of employees	9	Fort and mound have shortage of employees, there aren't enough guides, guards and sweepers
	No proper funds	9	There is not any proper fund given to the fort and mound, there should be 50,000 fund given to the fort every month as there is not any ticketing system in the fort.
	Entry Fees	10	There isn't any entrance fees in the fort and mound, if there will be a a ticketing system than it will create a good revenue which can be used for the betterment of these both sites

Kot Diji Fort and Mound of Diji, Khairpur Current Issues.....Fatima, Shah & Fahim

Factors	Sub-factors/Issues	No: of Respondents out of 10	Suggestions
Physical Services	Parking space	8	The fort and mound should have a proper parking space so that the people do not park their vehicles in front of the sites'gate.
	Electricity	8	There should be electricity in the fort and mound so if people want to visit these sites in late hours everything should be visible to them.
	Shop inside the fort	7	There is a tuck shop at ground level of the fort, the fort's land is a heritage property it is not good to place a tuck shop inside a heritage building.
	Internet service	8	The fort should have internet and Wi-Fi system.
	Restaurants/Cafes	10	There aren't any good restaurants in the city there, so there must be and it will also increase the employment opportunities for the locals
	Sign Boards	7	There is not any kind of signboard outside the fort, which indicate about location of the fort and neither for the mound as well.
	Guide	9	There must be enough tourists guide in the fort and mound to brief about the history if these sites
	Hotels/guest houses	9	There should be hotel service too in the city near these two site so people who are from other cities can stay there.

Factors	Sub-factors/Issues	No: of Respondents	Suggestions
Security	CCTV cameras	9	There should cameras inside the fort and mound which records the activities of the fort and mound, so there must be CCTV cameras located in both sites.
	Security checking	8	There should be a proper security checking like walk-through gates and baggage scanners
Accessibility	Encroachment	10	The fort has given 150 feet area around the fort so the shops, house and streets these all are constructed on encroachment
	Road Condition	9	The road condition is not so good. first it is very narrow, second it is not appealing due to encroachment
Self-sufficient	Entry Fees	9	If there will be entrance fees for both sites it will create a good revenue for the fort and mound.
	Parking Fees	9	If there will be parking fees for both sites it will create a good revenue for the fort and mound.
	Shops for cultural Goods	7	There must be a shop for cultural good, which are being produced in Khairpur region.

Discussions:

The Kot Diji fort and mound of Kot Diji has a numbers of issues present in it according to admiration and tourism. The first issues is that the fort has various issues in administration like the fort does not have any kind of proper administration office not at inner side of fort not at the outer side of fort same issue has with the mound too. Fort and mound does not have enough employees in it like there is not enough number or guides, sweepers and guards, the fort has some of them but the

mound of Diji has a few employees. There are not proper funds provided to the fort and mound for its maintenance it was suggested in an interview that if the fort will get Rs.50,000 per month then the bills of electricity, gas and water will be given easily, it was also said in the interviews that this money will be enough for both sites Mound of Kot Diji and Kot Diji Fort. In the 2010 to 2012 there was a proper ticket system to get entry inside the fort but a local influential family, to who the fort belongs partially decided that this ticket system should be ended and the tourists can visit it free of cost, which results no more self-sufficient fund produced by the site.

In the fort there are various issues of physical services too like; the fort does not have a proper parking system where tourists can part their vehicles easily, a site is being provided by the government for parking area but again a department which works for tourism is saying that this site is a an archeological site it is not a good idea to remove it and make a parking spot for the fort, as for as mound of Kot Diji is concerned the vehicles are being parked on the side of old national highway and tourists can visit the site in short the mound also does not have a proper parking areas allotted to it. The electricity in the fort and the mound is not provided in a proper way even. The light fluctuates and goes on and off. There is no internet facility provided to neither administration nor to the tourists in the fort. As the fort is a heritage property so there is tuck-shop inside the fort at level 1, so this tuck shop should not be there it was suggested in interviews. There aren't even good restaurants and cafes near the fort where tourists can sit and get relaxed after a long hike inside the fort as fort is constructed as a hill, for the mound it is at the side of old national highway from where different petrol stations and some small road sided restaurants are near actually. But if there will be restaurants near the fort it will actually increase the employment rate in the city. There are not even clear sign boards in the fort which can tell the path or details of a particular area inside the fort. And there is not any kind of sign board outside the mound to let tourists know that this is Mound of Kot Diji, Khairpur. There are guides in the fort but the number of guides in the fort is very low, it was suggested in the interview that there must be more guides provided to the fort as there is a huge number of tourists visits daily especially on weekdays.

If a person coming to visit fort from any area fart from the fort and a person wanted to get live there for one or two night, so for this activity there aren't any kind of hotels and guesthouse in the city of Kot Diji.

There is not CCTV cameras located in the fort to see the activities of tourists and there is not any security checking at the gate of the fort. What they just do, they write the name and NIC number in entry log and that's it. On other kind of checking is happening in the fort.

The road condition from old national highway up to the fort is not good even. There is a lot of encroachment in the way towards the fort. Whereas mound of Diji is located on the side of national highway so it is easily approachable for people and large vehicles like bus or vans etc.

There is not any kind of parking fees for the tourists who parks there vehicles there. And there must be shop for cultural goods from where people can buy different souvenirs for them.

Conclusion:

Kot Diji fort and Mound of Diji at Kot Diji, Khairpur district Sindh. The fort is approximately 220 years old fort and the mound is there from the time of pre-Harappa civilization. Number of tourists use to visit this site daily. Eleven interviews were conducted to research about the issues in Kot Diji fort and Mound of Kot Diji to see what is the perception of people from those are related to archology, engineering and tourism department. Respondents gave different suggestion regarding the issues of these both sites. There are the issues in administration department of the fort. Security services at fort are not given. Physical services are even not provided properly to the tourists. There are issues in accessing the fort and mound. The fort is not even self-sufficient. Hence, the issues of the Kot Diji fort and Mound of Diji should be solved in proper ways. If these above listed services will be provided and problems are solve one by one in the Fort and the Mound so there will be more tourists. It is a huge fort and an ancient mound of pre-Harappa civilization what else a region wants if they have got such ancients sites for them where tourism can happen and it is happening but not in a way that tourist can enjoy perfectly. So if the authorities wants to boost the tourism in the region it will be necessary for them to work on above listed issues and may be some more. We have a lot of areas where tourism is happening and will take place in future too but, if one wants to boost the economy and tourism of the region so it is necessary to provide tourists better facilities in the there.

Recommendations:

Following are the recommendations on which more studies should be done.

1. **Conservation of the Fort and the Mound:**
There must be a through conservation of the fort as recently in august 2022, it rained a lot and it destroyed the fort wall at ground level.
2. **Preservation at the Fort and the Mound:**
The fort must be preserved and by the related authority and the upper layer of the fort i.e. bricks should be preserved well.
3. **Sidewalks in the fort:**
There are sidewalks all around the fort so, these sidewalks must be closed for the tourists as they used to walk on them and try to destroy the bricks of the fort.
4. **Cover over the mound:**
There must be some kind of cover/shade over the mound of Kot Diji as it an ancient site and can be harmed due to harsh weather i.e. rain and sun.
5. **Construction and irrigation around the Mound:**
There are various petrol stations and other kind of construction around the mound, there are cultivated lands behind the mound as well. These all things must be removed from there as they can destroy the life of mound.

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