

## Cultural Heritage Of Potohar: Role Of Digital Anthropology In Molding The Cultural Legacy



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**Abstract:** *The preservation and development of the potohar region's cultural legacy are greatly aided by Digital Anthropology. In the middle of modernization and tradition, potohar boasts a diverse range of historical sites, customs, and artistic expression. In order to record, interpret, and promote potohar's cultural legacy, this study investigate the use of digital tools and methodologies. We study the ways in which digital ethnography, social media, 3D modeling, and virtual reality facilitate the preservation of intangible cultural elements like rituals, folklore, and oral histories. Furthermore, in order to guarantee that potohar's cultural legacy is passed on to future generations, the study looks at how digital platforms can promote intercultural communication and community involvement. By employing qualitative research methods, this study highlights the potential of Digital Anthropology and continuity in the digital era.*

**Keywords:** Cultural Heritage, potohar region, Conservation, Challenges, Digital platforms

### Introduction

The potohar region, situated in the northern area of Punjab is one of the oldest cultures in Pakistan region. Centuries old cultural legacy include Indus valley civilization, Gandhara civilization, Sikh dominance, Islamic rulers, Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms and British colonization had diverse influence on the history of this region. As a result of this cultural fusion, the potohar region has a distinct personality that is represented by festivals, customs, art, architecture, music and cuisine.

The potohar region's architecture has combine elements of many historical periods with natives form. The rich historical legacy of the area is enhanced by its archeological sites like Taxila, which is home to Buddhist stupas and monasteries. Mosques, forts and gardens from the Mughal era enhanced the architectural environment of the region where as the

administrative structures and infrastructure from British colonial authority left their impact.

Potohar is known for its elaborate woodworking, pottery, ajrak printing and needlework. The craft people of this region are showing their talent and creativity by preserving age-old methods that have been transmitted down through centuries. Folk songs and rhythms, which captures the joy and incidents of rural life are essential part of potohar's cultural fabric as dance and music. Customary dances such as Bhangra and sammi highlights weddings and harvest seasons, strengthening community bonds through experiences that are shared.

Digital Anthropology has had significant influence on potohar's cultural legacy. Through innovative use of technology, digital anthropology examines, records and preserve the cultural heritage of this region. Researchers

might employ it to collect and analyze data that comes from a wide range of sources, such as social media, digital archives and virtual reality platforms.

Potohar's cultural legacy can be stored digitally and shared with a people around the globe through digital ethnography, safeguarding its ongoing existence for the future generation. Through interactive experiences created by digital venues people can view artefacts, tour archaeological sites and even take part in virtual cultural festivities.

Digital anthropology also facilitates community empowerment as well as engagement by providing local voices a place where they can share their viewpoints, customs and narratives. Through the inclusion of digital technologies within historic preservation measures, Potohar's heritage may be protected from various threats such as urbanization, degradation of the environment and homogenization of cultures.

#### **Review of literature:**

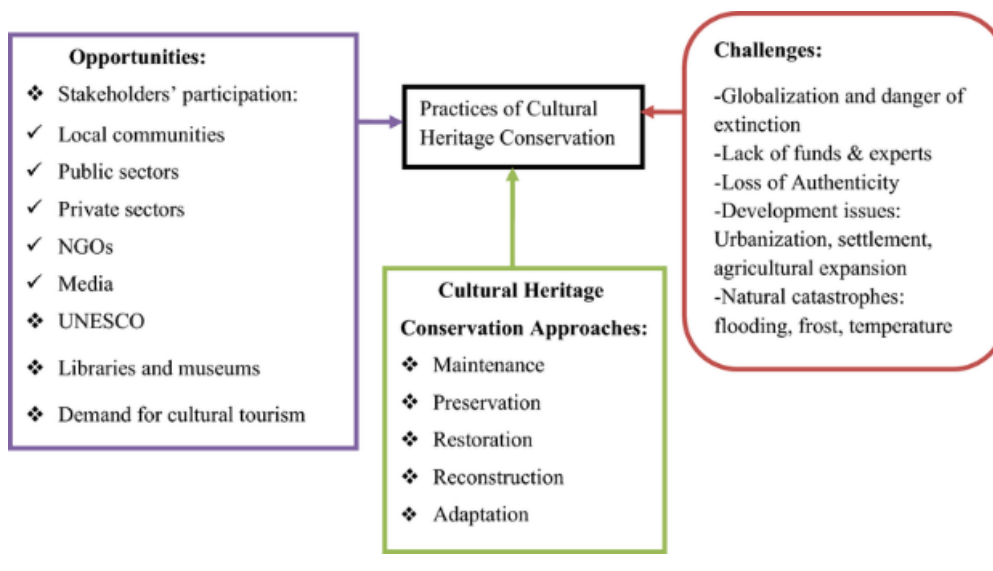
The identity of a region and its people are defined through the way they live. It is an indication of their ways of life, values, history and beliefs. By establishing the connection between the past, present and generations to come, cultural heritage conservation fosters a sense of continuity and self-identity. It helps people recognize their origin and practices while providing them feeling of togetherness. Digital anthropology is the guide for illustrating the different cultures that flourish within our technologically advanced society.

In their research Biryukova and Nikonova

(2017) examines the unique features of virtual cultural heritage preservation approaches within the context of the relation between modern society and traditional cultural practices. In this paper they outline the basic methods of digital cultural heritage preservation which consist of:

- i. Traditional cultural archives in electronic format, including electronic museums, databases, libraries, and exhibitions.
- ii. Digital representation of new cultural assets i.e. Computer events, network, technology, online artwork etc.

An emerging notion in the digital age is digital legacy. It relates to unique resources as well as information developed electronically which hold everlasting value and significance. It also reflects the amalgamation of digital technology with cultural legacy. The acronym "digital heritage" signifies both the development and utilization of digital content alongside the three traditional pillars of cultural heritage: research and information, management, display and analysis, collection and recording it. Documents, records, remaining as well as moving images, visuals, designs, computer programmes and websites are merely examples of the variety of the formats that together make up digital cultural content. Such formats have been generated according to certain guidelines, criteria, specifications which means they must have ongoing administration and maintenance for their content to stay conserved as long as possible.



## Mediatization Theory:

Mediatization theory explores how media influences social, cultural, and political processes, arguing that media is not just a communication channel but a key factor shaped by societal practices and structures.

The core concept of this theory is that media operates as an autonomous institution with its own rules, logic, and power, influencing other social institutions like politics, education, and religion. Media logic shapes content production and consumption, with sensationalism and entertainment being preferred. Social practices are increasingly integrated with media processes, leading to transformations in their execution and perception. Mediatization is a two-way process, shaping society and influencing media practices, such as social movements.

### Mediatization and cultural legacy:

Mediatization theory explains how digital media technologies impact cultural heritage preservation and transmission. It highlights enhanced accessibility, changing perceptions through media representation, interactive engagement, and commercialization. Digital media allows global reach, transforming public perception and engagement. However, it also highlights the potential for commodification and the economic impact of media-driven tourism on

cultural heritage.

## Globalization and Glocalization:

The world is becoming increasingly interconnected due to globalization, which is made possible by digital technology. Digital platforms and techniques that build a global network for the exchange and preservation of cultural assets are the main emphasis of digital anthropology. Cultural artefacts can be accessed globally through digital archives and databases, and cultural information can be shared globally through social media platforms. Collaborations between institutions and communities are common in digital anthropology projects.

Glocalization is the process of adapting global phenomena to local settings, with an emphasis on the ways in which local cultures incorporate digital influences into their behaviors related to cultural heritage. Important elements include developing community-specific content that represents localized narratives, integrating global and local cultural practices, and adapting digital tools locally.

### Aims and objectives:

- Investigate how the cultural heritage of Potohar can be preserved and recorded using modern techniques.
- To evaluate the impact of digital anthropology contributes in understanding

and awareness about cultural heritage of potohar to the local community and global audience.

- Investigate the sustainability and ethical consequences of technological use in preserving cultural heritage of potohar.

### **Research Methodology:**

Qualitative method was followed to continue this research. In this study the data sources which has been utilized are articles, case studies, and other media platforms throughout the literature review. Qualitative data are usually collected for descriptive research using methods like surveys, case studies, focus group, content analysis or ethnography.

### **Research Methods:**

- 1. Digital data observation:** It includes studying social media platforms, online communities and websites in order to understand how culture is presented, concluded and modified within digital spaces.
- 2. Collaborative digital projects:** Work in partnership with cultural heritage institutions to create digital projects which promotes the conservation, advertising and sharing cultural heritage of potohar.
- 3. Digital storytelling:** This approach used to presenting and understanding the cultural heritage in digital format. It involves creating interactive storytelling events, documentaries or multimedia narratives which attracts viewers reflect the richness and diversity of cultural heritage of potohar.

### **Tools:**

- Social media platforms
- Mobile apps
- Geographic information system (GIS)

The qualitative study was conducted and the data were collected from various sources including articles, case studies, phone apps like You Tube and Facebook.

### **The Forgotten Mosques and Tombs in Potohar Plateau**

Numerous tombs and mosques that had previously undergone renovations lost their original cultural and historic significance. Scholars are less familiar with these mosques. Despite this, the locals respect them for their spiritual significance. However, the cultural and historic significance of these monuments is unknown to them. These tombs and mosques were situated in Islamabad and also in the remote areas of Districts Attock and Rawalpindi.

The following mosques and tombs are named as:

- The Muslim tombs in Makhad Sharif, District Attock.
- The Jamia Mosque, Kuri Shehr, Islamabad.
- The Bilal Mosque, Malahi Tola Village, District Attock.
- The Jamia Mosque, Kot Fateh Khan, District Attock.

### **The Havelis of potohar: Pakistan's opportunity to promote heritage tourism**

The author Zulfiqar Ali Kalhoro, beautifully documenting the historic buildings and indigenous tribes. The Khem Singh Bedi haveli in Kallar Syedan, the havelis of Atam Singh Gujral and Jeevan Singh in Daultana town, the Sikh and Hindu havelis in Narali, the haveli of Bakhshi Ram in Kontrilla, the haveli of Ratan Singh in Sagri, and a few others in the villages of Gulyana and Dora Badhal are just a few of the havelis located in the small and large towns of Potohar.

The author suggest that in an effort to boost history tourism, the havelis had been converted into hotels, the Punjab government need to take this lead and designate all of the havelis in the region as historical landmarks. That would not only encourage heritage tourism but also provide the amazing people of Potohar with additional work opportunities.

### **Recent survey and documentation of tangible cultural heritage of district Chakwal, Punjab, Pakistan**

The Rawalpindi division includes District Chakwal, which is renowned for archaeology. It encompasses several periods, from the Stone

Age to the British Period. District Chakwal is home to a sizable number of towns, villages, and slums at the moment. The greatest part of the Sikhs and Hindus lived in villages in Chakwal. It is also possible to observe their holy structures, such as temples and samadhis.

The sites are mentioned below:

- Pind, Town Bhoun
- Temple in Mohalla Koat, Town Bhoun
- Temple with a pond in Mohalla Naka, Town Bhoun
- Temple, Chakwal City
- Samadhi, Town Bhoun
- Small baazar, Town Bhoun
- Haveli, Town Bhoun (located in main Baazar)
- Haveli, Town Bhoun (located in Mohallah Nandon Wali Deodhi)
- House, Town Bhoun (located in Mohallah Qazidan)
- House, Town Bhoun (located near Government High school Bhoun for Girls)
- Shmshana, Town Bhoun
- Shmshana Ghat, Town Bhoun
- Baoli, Chakwal City
- Railway station, Chakwal City

A few of the historical sites have been destroyed due to both human and natural damage. But throughout this specific area, there are still a lot of heritage sites.

### **The dying temples of Hindus and Sikhs in potohar plateau: A case study of Katas Raj Temple**

In Pakistan's potohar region, the katas raj temples signify as a symbol of recognized heritage and togetherness between the Muslims and Indian nations. The Chakwal district is home to the seven temples that comprise the Katas Raj Temples. The fact that Hindus travel from all over the world to this location to pray and purify themselves further emphasizes the significance

of the sacred water of Katas. The Ganga water is considered sacred in Hinduism, same as Katas Pond water is in Sikhism.

### **Challenges:**

- Vandalism
- Environmental degradation
- Political instability
- Limited resources

### **State patronage for potohari culture sought**

In this article of the express TRIBUNE the artistes says that they and their culture are in danger of being forgotten as potohar culture is one of the oldest culture of the Pakistan region.

According to artisans the Potohar region's culture began to gradually disappear, partly due to technological advancements, partly to cultural globalization, and partly because local craftsmen and artists were not given enough support.

### **YouTube channels:**

- Discover Pakistan
- Explore potohar Official

Many other videos upload by the tourist and locals of potohar region in which famous personalities of potohar region, festivals of potohar, history of this region and also village life of potohar is presented and explained by them. While some of these blogs and videos are in Potohari, some are in Urdu.

### **Audience Response**

- People find the content informational.
- They gave positive response by encouraging to promote such hype channels to provide good qualitative content about historical sites.
- They mostly were supporting in preserving the cultural heritage and the places.
- People with associated culture find a sense of closeness with the heritage and distant ones got the excitement to visit such places.
- Tourist find these content so informational and get inspiration to mark them for their

next milestone.

### **Results and discussion**

- Ensuring the sustainability of preservation projects is difficult without consistent financial support. Many initiatives require ongoing funding for maintenance, staffing, and upgrades to digital infrastructure.
- The lack of advanced technological infrastructure hinders the digitization and digital preservation efforts which includes challenges in creating digital archives, virtual museums, and online resources accessible to a wider audience.
- Rapid urbanization and development in and around Rawalpindi can threaten historical sites and cultural landscapes.
- Navigating bureaucratic processes for project approvals, funding allocations, and inter-agency collaborations can be time-consuming and hinder timely execution of preservation initiatives.
- Inconsistent or inadequate cultural heritage policies and governance structures can impede effective preservation efforts. Coordination between different government agencies and stakeholders is often lacking.
- Maintaining and restoring cultural heritage sites is an ongoing challenge that requires substantial investment and expertise.
- The conservation of physical artifacts requires specialized knowledge, equipment, and materials.
- Develop and implement conservation plans tailored to each site's specific needs. These plans should include measures for structural stabilization, protection from environmental damage, and regular maintenance.
- Enforce laws and regulations that protect historical sites from unauthorized alterations, demolition, and encroachments.
- Promote sustainable cultural tourism that generates economic benefits for local communities while ensuring the preservation of historical sites.

### **Conclusion**

Limited access to digital technologies and the internet in rural and remote areas of Potohar can hinder the participation of local communities in digital preservation efforts. Improving technological infrastructure and digital literacy is essential for inclusive cultural documentation and engagement. Digital projects require ongoing maintenance and updates to remain relevant and accessible. Developing sustainable models for the upkeep and preservation of digital cultural resources is necessary to ensure their longevity and continued impact. Digital anthropology projects often require substantial financial and technical resources. Securing funding and skilled personnel can be challenging, particularly in regions with limited economic opportunities. Sustainable funding models and partnerships are necessary to support long-term cultural heritage initiatives. Develop online platforms and digital archives that provide access to cultural resources related to Potohar. This includes virtual tours, digital exhibitions, and online libraries. By addressing these challenges through collaborative, ethical, and inclusive approaches, digital anthropology can play a transformative role in safeguarding and revitalizing the rich cultural heritage of Potohar for future generations.

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