Community engagement and public education in northwestern part of Bangladesh: A study regarding heritage conservation

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ABSTRACT

Heritage management is important to conserve the identity of history and culture, which can generate economic activity, enhance aesthetics, increase surrounding land value, and transfer knowledge from generation to generation. Bangladesh is a land that belongs to various forms of heritage, and Rajshahi city is not an exception with different cultural and natural heritage. Overpopulation growth, unplanned urbanization, poor infrastructure, and weak urban management are imposing risks on deteriorating heritage in current days. This study was conducted to rummage the involvement of community people in imperishability and management of heritage in the Rajshahi City Corporation of Bangladesh. To fulfill the objectives, 205 individual surveys, 3 Focus Group Discussions, and 10 Key Informant Interviews were conducted to ascertain public engagement and their visualization in respect to predicament of heritage, conservation, and the way for the future. Findings reveal that 95% of respondents thought that all the heritages express the identity of Rajshahi, where around 30% of people identified some heritages as directly or indirectly related to their family. Besides, 56.67% of people strongly expressed their views that they want to conserve their heritage through the development process, while 34.17% usually accept this argument. This research also shows a Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat (SWOT) matrix regarding heritage management, where a priority and decision matrix have been carried out to a certain internal and external factors for heritage conservation. This research thus expected to help different people from government, non-government and local people take action regarding different forms of heritage conservation in Bangladesh.

1. Introduction

Heritage provides the intuition of identity that promotes plurality between different cultures (Kruse and Paulowitz, 2020) and fabricate the sense of 'who we are and how we identify ourselves' (Yılmaz and Yılmaz, 2019). Moreover, it boosts the realization of the past that fecundate the present, which will esteem the hereafter generations (Bender and Messenger, 2019; Yılmaz and Yılmaz, 2019). But, heritage is in danger due to the lack of experience and exercise, meticulous care, proper appreciation, and off-course community negligence. Heritage management is essential and so-called a growing field with the stewardship, conservation, recording, identifying and analyzing from the point of public interest (Embaby, 2014). Proper heritage management can generate economic activities, enhance aesthetics, increase surrounding land value, and transfer knowledge from generation to generation (Demirbag et al., 2021; Medina and Abella, 2021). There are numerous ways, e.g. willingness to pay (WTP), tourism development, enforcing the restriction, community-based organization (CBO) for effectual and sustainable heritage conservation (Craig et al., 2013).

From the recent few decades, community-based planning and engaging local communities have extensively been confessed by the national and international donor agencies and researchers (Baldus et al., 2003). A community-based approach is identified as more popular to safeguard heritage worldwide (Lertcharnrit and Niyomsap, 2020). For instance, various community-focused techniques have been imposed in Tanzania, such as strengthening antiquity authority, employing custodians, research, and project-based conservation for local heritage development (Chami, 2018). Besides, community involvement was established as a vital tool to ensure heritage management (Chami, 2018). Several studies emphasized the importance of community people involvement in heritage conservation (Balen and Vandesande, 2015; Mokoena, 2017). China set an example about community participation in
the heritage sector conservation (Kostka and Mol, 2013; Fan, 2014). Azman et al. (2010) found a significant relation of people’s understanding and knowledge, belongingness, responsibilities, opportunities, and empowerment regarding conservation of heritage in local communities of langkawi geopark, Malaysia. Public education is highly mandatory as it helps the individual develop capacity, enhance ability and awareness and most importantly, grow the sense of belongingness regarding conservation agenda (Baldus et al., 2003; Azman et al., 2010). Apart from community involvement, scientific research and public education are prerequisites for heritage conservation (Azman et al., 2011).

Heritage conservation is a prerequisite in the national document of Bangladesh as this land belongs to different shorts of heritage from the past to the present (Islam et al., 2020). Religious heritage (e.g. sixty dome mosque), tangible cultural heritage (e.g. structural buildings), intangible cultural heritage (e.g. Baul song and traditional arts), and natural heritage (e.g. the Sundarbans) are possessing their importance as an emblem of stature, identity, own cognizance (Nayna and Lee, 2017). Notwithstanding, overpopulation growth, uncontrolled urbanization, poor infrastructure facilities, and weak urban management contribute to the deterioration of these heritages rapidly (Schendel, 2020). Besides, the practice of heritage conservation is seen only in city-centric areas (Sharmin and Hossain, 2020). Also, Ahmed (2019) discussed that managing local heritage is one of the challenges, where community ownership, capacity building and transferring traditional knowledge were recommended for the Bangladeshi communities. Likewise, Ahmed (2012) summarized the role of informal community participation and education to repose the heritage alive.

While, in the case of Bangladesh, several studies have explored heritage focusing on the identification, representation, existing situation or vulnerabilities of heritage (Islam and Wahab, 2020; Khalid and Chowdhury, 2018), community-based heritage tourism (Sharmin and Hossain, 2020). No significant research has been found in Bangladesh, where community engagement and public education has emphasized heritage conservation. Rajshahi, an important city in Bangladesh, is not an exception. In a paradigm situation, the aim of this study examines the necessity of public education and people’s participation. Following the background, this study was aimed to rummage the involvement of community people in imperishability and management of heritage with the heritage sector conservation (Kostka and Mol, 2013; Fan, 2014). Azman et al. (2010) found a significant relation of people’s understanding and knowledge, belongingness, responsibilities, opportunities, and empowerment regarding conservation of heritage in local communities of langkawi geopark, Malaysia. Public education is highly mandatory as it helps the individual develop capacity, enhance ability and awareness and most importantly, grow the sense of belongingness regarding conservation agenda (Baldus et al., 2003; Azman et al., 2010). Apart from community involvement, scientific research and public education are prerequisites for heritage conservation (Azman et al., 2011).

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2. Methodology

This study adopts a mixed method approach i.e. both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Before the questionnaire survey, a reconnaissance survey was conducted to understand the study area and finalize the survey question. Also, published secondary documents from online and offline sources were reviewed.

2.1. Study area

Rajshahi, the oldest city as the 4th largest metropolitan city in Bangladesh, is located right bank of the Ganges River (between 24.374° north to 88.601114° east), which is also known as Silk city (BBS, 2011; RCC, 2020). Besides, tropical climate with high temperature (32–36 °C), considerable rainfall and humidity have been seen here. Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) has total population of 449756 with 97.17 Square kilometer area (BBS, 2011a; RCC, 2020).

The city hosted Mughals, Dutch, Portuguese, British and so on (Chisholm, 1911; Clemett et al., 2006). Consequently, it witnessed many tangible and intangible cultural and natural patrimony and heritage shown in Table 1.

Also, some images of existing heritages in Rajshahi city of Bangladesh is presented in Figure 1. Some religious beliefs and religious infrastructures exist in this city, and some are extinct. Besides, the wedding ceremony of Rajshahi, own music, the local language, hospitality and the proverb of Rajshahi can be considered as significant heritage aspects of Rajshahi (Hasan et al., 2019).

Among the 30 wards, ward no. 9 was selected purposively as the study site of this research (Figure 2). This ward is situated under Boalia Thana, the oldest part of Rajshahi city, consisting of most of the oldest (70–100 years old) buildings located by the bank of Ganges River and southern part of Rajshahi city.

2.2. Data collection

To fulfill the objectives of this research, 205 individual surveys were conducted following a random sampling method. An open-ended questionnaire was used during this survey to identify the present condition of heritage, local authority and local government, people’s attitude, knowledge about their heritage, values etc. Special care was taken to

| Name of heritage | Description |
|------------------|-------------|
| Varendra Museum, Dhopkul, Lal Kuthi, Mohini Niketon, Kaja Kuthi, Boro kuthi, Kaja Kuthi, Boalia Club, Queen hemonto kumari's Hindu Hostel, Tomb of Hozrat Turkan Shah, Taldono Vohon | Apart from Varendra museum and Boro Kuthir, most of the tangible cultural heritages are being use less or moribund or demolished |
| Intangible cultural heritage | |
| Wedding ceremony of Rajshahi, own music, local language (Lila kirton music festice at west pream toil, khetur; music of Kantonkobi and song theming local agricultural scenario called ‘Gonvira’, hospitality and the proverb of Rajshahi | Except local language most of the intangible heritages are being moribund, though own music for instance ‘Gonvira’ getting popularity to young people. |
| Natural heritage | |
| Oddvorp Munkegaard Park (Padma garden), Shahid Kamruzzaman Central Zoo and Park, Sikkhipara, Dorgapara, Hossohenigon Well, Rani Dighi | Padma garden and zoo have been renovated but wells and ponds are abandoned |
| Idiosyncratic heritage | |
| Silk industry | Not getting international attention and recognition as industrial heritage due to connivance and proper publicity |
| Religious heritage | |
| Kheturdham festival, Twin Kali Mondir for Hindus, Sah Mokhdum Dorga Majhar and Mosque, Mohorrom festival for Muslim | Have local attraction but declining national and international involvement |
select respondents so that they could best contribute to their understanding of the socio-cultural elements.

Besides, 3 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and 10 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) as experts were conducted to figure out the current situation of heritage education and community involvement regarding heritage protection and the way for the future. The key respondents were university faculties, experts, urban planners of Rajshahi Development Authority (RDA), and members of RCC. In each FGD, 10–12 respondents participated, where FGDs were conducted in the local language. Besides, both males and females from the community participated in FGDs. During data collection, all kinds of ethical issues were maintained properly. This study was ethically approved by the department of Urban and Regional Planning, Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology, Rajshahi, Bangladesh. A written consent form was given to all
individual respondent prior to start the interview. In the consent form it was written that participation of the respondents was voluntary and no findings will be presented as individual. They were free to leave the survey at any time and their personal information maintained secret very carefully.

2.3. Data analysis

After collecting all of the data from the field survey, all of the quantitative data were input in an Excel file and rechecked to ensure the quality of data. In qualitative information from FGDs and KIIs, all information was translated into English as these were conducted in Bengali (local language). Then, Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) was used to analyze the data following the objectives of this research.

2.3.1. SWOT analysis and Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP)

SWOT-TOWS (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat - Threat, Opportunity, Weakness, Strength) exploration has been carried out to unearth external and internal drivers. Strength and opportunity as internal, contrariwise weakness and threat are contemplated as external factors. These assist in tracing different significant issues that may help to find a worthy and sustainable pathway for heritage conservation (Jailani and Rahim, 2014; Jiang et al., 2018). A descriptive design of a questionnaire was used to investigate SWOT-TOWS.

Furthermore, in this study, Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) is used to evaluate sub-factors of internal and external drivers as well as SWOT categories itself followed by Bottero et al. (2020), Dalalah et al. (2010) and Saaty (2008). AHP is ecumenical recognized scoring and prioritizing tool by using a bunch of weighted criteria (Dalalah et al., 2010). For developing hierarchical structure, weightage has been assessed at two levels, where first level consists of external and internal factors on the other hand second level consists of sixteen criteria of the factors (Criteria of the factors are described in Table 2).

Experts were put their view by comparing of criteria in respect of strength, weakness, opportunity and threat by giving value according to their importance using Saaty’s 1 to 9 scale (Saaty, 2008)( Table 3). Verbal

| Table 2. Criteria and sub-criteria of internal and external factors. |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| SWOT                      | Criteria                  | Sub-criteria                                                      |
| Strength                  | Accessibility             | Excellent accessibility and well public transit system             |
|                           |                           | Aircraft movement                                                  |
|                           |                           | Presence of water way (Ganges river beside Rajshahi city)          |
|                           |                           | Light traffic volume                                               |
| Location and geography    |                           | Adequate land for further planning                                 |
|                           |                           | Relatively less catastrophic/disastrous area                      |
| Heritage potential        |                           | High potential of heritage value                                   |
|                           |                           | Multi variety of heritage                                          |
|                           |                           | Local, national and international organizations                   |
|                           |                           | Interested women group                                             |
|                           |                           | Museum                                                             |
| Weakness                  | Coordination and participation | Absence/Less community participation                        |
|                           |                           | Less coordination institutions and locality                        |
|                           | Research and development  | Less research about heritage                                       |
|                           |                           | Less found on research and development                             |
|                           |                           | Need extensive and time consuming restoration work                 |
| O&M ability               |                           | Less publicity                                                     |
|                           |                           | Loss of functionality due to less use                              |
|                           |                           | No or less Operation and maintenance                               |
| Resource                  |                           | Accommodation problem and no access facilities for person with disability |
|                           |                           | Absence of heritage priority map                                   |
|                           |                           | Resource under seized                                              |
|                           |                           | No accessibility map for heritages                                  |
|                           |                           | Scarcity of tourism expertise                                      |
| Opportunity               | Economy                   | Employment opportunity                                             |
|                           |                           | Foster local economic activity                                      |
| Tourism                   |                           | Prominent tourism industry                                         |
| Competitive mechanism     |                           | Potential of Silk industry as an industrial tourism sector          |
| Socio-environmental sustainability |                       | Land value                                                          |
|                           |                           | Competitive tourism and hotel industry                             |
| Threat                    | Financial context         | High operation and maintenance cost                               |
|                           |                           | Difficult to acknowledge and raise fund                            |
|                           | Socio-political context   | Crime prone area                                                    |
|                           |                           | Political instability                                               |
|                           |                           | Relatively less economically impoverished area                     |
| Market acceptance         |                           | Reluctance of private sectors                                      |
|                           |                           | Manage potential investors                                          |
| Immature policy/master plan|                           | Immature master plan                                                |
|                           |                           | Non protective resources                                            |
assessment was used to understand and summarize expert’s opinion. For example, considering the strength as an internal factor under which three criteria need to be stated by the expert.

Thus the response would be how much important is the accessibility relative to location and geography or heritage potential likewise from the strength standpoint.

### 2.3.2. Eisenhower Matrix

The Eisenhower Matrix also known as the Time Management Matrix is used to know the prioritizing area for the heritage conservation by depicting important-urgent scenario, while the important can never be urgent and the urgent may not be important (Maric, 2021). Thus, Eisenhower Matrix identify the conservation task classifying relatively important and urgent into four descending priorities (Vicotorino, 2020). Here, important and urgent quadrant depict the utmost priority level that ought to be complete immediately. On the other hand, important but not urgent tasks refer to the long-term tasks having no rigid deadline yet. Not Important but urgent goals these tasks may delegated to other professionals for its insignificant than the two above. Lastly, most distractive and negligible tasks is not Important and not Urgent quadrant where its completion supposed to be waste of time.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Personal characteristics of respondents

Among the entire respondents, 62% were male, and the rest were female (38%) (Table 4). The survey was dominated by the respondents who studied HSC (Higher Secondary Certificate) (34.63%), while 8.29% of the respondents had no formal education background. Also, the lion’s share of the survey respondents were employed (74.63%) while the remaining were students (9.76%), unemployed (13.17%) and retired people (2.44%).

### 3.2. Appraisement of heritage: passions and feelings of locality

In the case of people's perceptions and feelings about expressing the identity of Rajshahi and the relationship between heritage and their family, a total of 95% of the respondents thought that all the heritage expresses the identity of Rajshahi, where 65% of the respondents agreed with their statement strongly (Figure 3). Respondents revealed that local heritage expresses their historical, cultural values. From the traditional sight, those inherit also keep their family customs that may distinct them from other parts of the world. Around 30% of people said some heritages are directly or indirectly related to their family by the source of religious and family culture that strengthen their family bonding and social attachment, while 6% did not give strong expression. It is very labyrinth that 36.67% do not know if there is a relationship or kinship of heritage with their family, while 25.50% totally refuse. This is why due to probably the lack of family education regarding heritage or respondents are non-resident.

Besides, based on the qualitative findings, people generally used to utilize some of their heritages, such as cultural, natural, and religious for celebration purposes from ancient to the present. They celebrate cultural heritage while talking, dancing, singing and doing other activities through their own culture, which is part of their intangible heritage like having and offering sweet bettel leaf to others (in Bengali known as “Misti Paan”), address each other by calling “Baabe” (which means brother). These activities enhance socio personal nexus and robust idiosyncratic relationship inside the community. Among all the natural heritage, the “Padma garden” is the most commonly used. People inside and outside of the city intend to gather here with their friends and family members as meeting, chatting or bantering place. Religious heritage such as “Shah Mokhumd Durga Majhar and the Mosque” (Religious place for Muslims), “Kajihata Shib Mondir” (Religious place for Hindu), and “East Horogram Eid-gah” (Basically used for saying Eid prayers) are more popular to celebrate religious festivals (Source: FGDs and KIIs).

### 3.3. Local response: from participation to decision making regarding antiquity authority

In the case of people's knowledge, around 80% raised an objection whether their heritage is conserved in the development process. In this

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### Table 3. AHP importance score of the study.

| Score | Level of importance |
|-------|---------------------|
| 1     | Equipotential       |
| 3     | Mediocre            |
| 5     | strong              |
| 7     | very strong         |
| 9     | Utmost importance   |

Even numbers Elicit in-between standards

| Aspects | Total (%) | Based on gender (%) |
|---------|-----------|---------------------|
| Gender  |           |                     |
| Male    | 62.00     | 100.0               |
| Female  | 38.00     |                     |
| Age (Years) |       |                     |
| 18-30   | 23.42     | 62.50               |
| 31-40   | 19.00     | 48.72               |
| 41-50   | 21.00     | 62.79               |
| Over 50 | 36.59     | 68.00               |
| Education status |       |                     |
| No formal education | 8.29 | 64.71               | 35.29 |
| Primary (Class of 5) | 11.71 | 37.50               | 62.50 |
| Secondary School Certificate (SSC) (Class of 10) | 31.71 | 40       | 60    |
| Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) (Class of 12) | 34.63 | 71.83               | 28.17 |
| Graduation and more | 13.66 | 85.71               | 14.29 |
| Employment status |       |                     |
| Employed | 76.63     | 71.24               | 28.76 |
| Students | 9.76      | 55.00               | 45.00 |
| Unemployed | 13.17     | 11.11               | 88.89 |
| Retired | 2.44      | 80.00               | 20.00 |

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regard, respondents revealed that they are not involved in any activities or actions that the authorities or local government have taken. Besides, 73.33% of the localities negatively take into consideration about the consciousness of local government and antiquity authorities as a concern body (Table 5). Because, it seems to the local government and antiquities authorities as a barrier whenever community participation comes up as it doesn’t fetch any monetary gain. Also, Heritages are being annihilated day by day due to the unplanned development process though 86.67% of respondents concerned about the conservation of public property whether people visit it or not. Development authorities do not hesitate to demolish architectural settings during development activities, though the RCC masterplan’s discourse is different (Source: FGDs and KIs; Lima, 2003). Besides, 56.67% of people have strongly revealed their views that they want to conserve their heritage through the development process, while 34.17% accept this argument normally. Besides, very few of the people (close to 1%) disagreed with the assertion. Focusing on the issue of community participation, one of the participants from FGD mentioned that,

“Authority should invite the community for involving and contributing in the decision making or other activities like development of a new building or reconstruction of local inheritance. But it’s hard to surmise the blueprint of the authority because they do not want to share and involve locality as they want only economic benefit within the system.”

3.4. Heritage conservation and ambience of architectural education at community level

From the best understanding and awareness of community people and experts, this research focused on tools for educating the community to increase local awareness and enhance stakeholders’ understanding. Chance to participation of peoples or communities to decision making process is not only component to ensure sustainable heritage conservation, but also enhancement of education and knowledge of community should be prioritized (Figure 4). Besides, community participation of all types of peoples, increase awareness of the community, and relationships between community people and concerned authorities should be ensured to promote sustainable heritage conservation (Source: FGDs and KIs).

From the field finding, highest respondents stated that heritage conservation could create jobs (71%) and help their economy (93%) though they consented about their improper knowledge on how to benefit economically (Figure 5a). They also argued that the heritage of Rajshahi would boost the economy of Rajshahi if the heritage is appropriately protected and there is a positive eyewink about the heritage. But access to knowledge on how to economical benefit will happen from heritage conservation is not available for local people (Source: FGDs and KIs).

Besides, 71% of the community people agree with the statement that ‘heritage helps to create jobs’, 59% of the respondents strongly agreed, whereas 12% could not give a strong expression of this statement (Figure 5b). As, a lot of people directly or indirectly lead their livelihood based of heritages; Silk industry, Padma Garden, T Embankment (locally name as T badh) are one of the vital examples of this. Though, 22% of the respondents said that they had no clear idea about that. Few people opposed the statement that there would be no influence on the economy if the heritage of Rajshahi will be conserved. Moreover, the majority of people described that there would be opportunities for day labourers, hawkers, business minds, etc., including women (handicrafts), to give their effort if a number of infrastructures were established to establish the surrounding heritage. Also, to gain these economic opportunities, a sense of ownership, awareness and a clear idea about their heritage need to grow. Understanding and knowing the

| Statement                  | Heritage Conserving with development (%) | Consciousness of local Government (%) | Possibility of conservation if one not visit (%) | Keep heritage when town improvement (%) |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Agree                      | 6.67                                     | 5.83                                  | 27.5                                         | 34.17                                   |
| Strongly agree             | 0.83                                     | 0.00                                  | 59.17                                        | 56.67                                   |
| Neither agree or disagree  | 13.33                                    | 20.83                                 | 10.83                                        | 8.33                                    |
| Disagree                   | 37.50                                    | 35.00                                 | 2.50                                         | 0.83                                    |
| Strongly disagree          | 41.67                                    | 38.33                                 | -                                            | -                                       |
inherent, clear ideas, the capacity to grasp opportunities, and learning about their exact responsibilities are critical in this context. For instance, for understanding and knowledge sharing, the best way is to announce information through religious places like mosques, especially on Friday after prayer. Short Message Service (SMS) through mobile phones, radio, and road campaigns are also effective in educating community people. Training to a local community group like silk industry groups seems to be effective in this instance (Source: FGDs and KIs).
On the other hand, creating a tourism spot is acceptable by the community, as the Padma garden is a timely example. Tourism creates job opportunities and places of recreation on the one hand, and heritage will be conserved on the other (Source: FGDs and KIIs).

3.5. SWOT analysis and Eisenhower Matrix

Among the several strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, the high potential of heritage value and the availability of adequate land for further planning regarding heritage in Rajshahi are identified as strengths, where the absence of a heritage priority map and accommodation problems are considered as weaknesses (Table 6). Although several weaknesses, employment opportunities, and the prominent tourism industry are identified as probable opportunities, increasing crime and non-protective measures may emerge as threats in the future.

Based on the priority and decision matrix of SWOT criteria’s for heritage conservation (division of all sub-criteria under major criteria of SWOT is presented above, in Table 2), contribution aspects regarding conservation were highest for weakness (37.50%), where 29.17% were for strength (Table 7). Besides, the maximum percent contribution to conservation was 15.44% for heritage potential under strength, where under weakness, coordination and perception were identified as the most contributing factors to conservation (1.98%).

Furthermore, the economy and tourism aspects were identified as the highest contributing aspects to conservation, where both of the aspects under opportunity achieved 8.33%.

4. Discussion

The heritage of a locality represents social, historical, cultural, economic, and traditional values, where conflicting aspects between conservation and development are derived (Yung and Chan, 2015). Also, values of heritage facilitate communication and connection related features among societies as well as community attachment and identity, where community participation, development of literacy in society, and social cohesion are important to ensure sustainable conservation of heritage (Lees et al., 2008). Recent decades, architectural sites and historical settings are given priority to protect and preserve for the future generation (De la Torre, 2013). Being part of adopting historical and important Heritages, Government of Bangladesh have taken initiatives and imposing different regulations (BNBC, 2012), as the nation have a lot of tangible and intangible patrimonies (Khalid and Chowdhury, 2018; Horaira and Devi, 2021). But, at the local level in Bangladesh, the knowledge and conservation practice are nonetheless poor than other nations, for example India, Egypt, UK, USA, Brazil etc. (Strange and Whitney, 2005; Poulios, 2010; Osman, 2018; Kukreja, 2019; Wells et al., 2015).

Table 6. SWOT-TOWS matrix regarding heritage management.

| SWOT-TOWS Matrix | Strength                                                                 | Weakness                                                                 |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Opportunity       | 1. Land value                                                             | 1. Amplify as a comprehensive tourism place                              |
|                   | 2. Employment opportunity                                                 | 1. Conservation of inheritance along with infrastructural (both structural and nonstructural) advancement |
|                   | 3. Prominent tourism industry                                             | 2. Enhance heritage value with economic prosperity                        |
|                   | 4. Potential of Silk industry as an industrial tourism sector             | 2. Multiplication of monetary value with resource mobilization            |
|                   | 5. Forster local economic activity                                         |                                                                         |
|                   | 6. Social stability                                                       |                                                                         |
|                   | 7. Environmental sustainability                                           |                                                                         |
|                   | 8. Hotel industry                                                         |                                                                         |
| Threat            | 1. Crime prone area                                                       | 1. Unabridged blueprint with attractive tourism sector                    |
|                   | 2. Immature master plan                                                   | 1. Batter accessibility with protective heritage and environment          |
|                   | 3. Reluctance of private sectors                                          | 2. Strong institutional coordination with appropriate investment          |
|                   | 4. High operation and maintenance cost                                    |                                                                         |
|                   | 5. Difficult to acknowledge and raise fund or manage potential investors. |                                                                         |
|                   | 6. Non protective resources                                               |                                                                         |
|                   | 7. Political instability                                                  |                                                                         |
|                   | 8. Relatively less economically impoverished area                          |                                                                         |

| Opportunity       | O-W                                                                    | W-O                                                                        |
|                   | 1. Absence/Less community participation                                 | 1. Conservation of inheritance along with infrastructural (both structural and nonstructural) advancement |
|                   | 2. No accessibility for disable people                                  | 2. Multiplication of monetary value with resource mobilization             |
|                   | 3. Less research and development on heritage                            |                                                                         |
|                   | 4. Less publicity                                                       |                                                                         |
|                   | 5. Accommodation problem for the foreign tourists (absence of quality hotel) |                                                                         |
|                   | 6. No accessibility map for heritages                                   |                                                                         |
|                   | 7. Loss of functionality due to less exercise of inherits               |                                                                         |
|                   | 8. No or less Operation and maintenance                                 |                                                                         |
|                   | 9. No guided tour for the present situation                             |                                                                         |
|                   | 10. Some resources under seized                                         |                                                                         |
|                   | 11. Need extensive and time consuming restoration work                  |                                                                         |
|                   | 12. Absence of heritage priority map                                    |                                                                         |
|                   | 13. Less coordination among govt. authorities, private sectors and locality. |                                                                         |
|                   | 14. Scarcity of tourism expertise                                       |                                                                         |

Here, S= Strength, W= Weakness, O= Opportunity, T = Threat.
Kukreja (2019) conducted a study in India where he compared heritage with human health that requires discretion and time to time check-up. He also revealed that heritage sites are the witness and reflection of civilization, remnant of predecessors that demand conservation. Authors in this case have ascertained potential community engagement and heritage education of conserving archaeological inherits by using survey, PRA tools, SWOT analysis, Analytic Hierarchy Process, where Eisenhower Matrix have been used to prioritize area of heritage conservation, preservation and possible restoration. From the perspective of heritage management, every person's feelings and thoughts toward something are somewhat controlled by the surrounding environment and their traditions (Smith and Campbell, 2016), where Rajshahi is not an exception to this paradigm. The traditional elements of Rajshahi extend a social insight into the life of a previous era and give a sense of identity and of belonging within physical surroundings (Rahman, 2012).

Furthermore, assurance of sustainable management of heritage sites is highly related to community participation (Li et al., 2020), which coincides with the present study's findings. To have community participation, the development of sense of ownership among community people is very crucial. From the field observation, e.g. interaction with people in the community level, it is realized that, majority of the people are perturbed about the identity of their city and culture that how

### Table 7. Priority and decision matrix of SWOT criteria's for heritage conservation.

| SWOT | Weight at level 1 | Contribute in conservation (%) | Criteria | Weight at level 2 | Contribute in conservation (%) |
|------|-------------------|--------------------------------|----------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| **Strength** | 7 | 29.17 | Accessibility | 5 | 8.58 |
| | | | Location and geography | 3 | 5.15 |
| | | | Heritage potential | 9 | 15.44 |
| **weakness** | 9 | 37.50 | Coordination and perception | 9 | 12.98 |
| | | | Research and development | 6 | 8.65 |
| | | | O&M ability | 7 | 10.10 |
| | | | Resource | 4 | 5.77 |
| **Opportunity** | 5 | 20.83 | Economy | 8 | 8.33 |
| | | | Tourism | 8 | 8.33 |
| | | | Competitive mechanism | 2 | 2.08 |
| | | | Socio-environmental sustainability | 2 | 2.08 |
| **Threat** | 3 | 12.50 | Financial context | 8 | 4.76 |
| | | | Socio-political context | 3 | 1.79 |
| | | | Market acceptance | 5 | 2.98 |
| | | | Immature policy/master plan | 5 | 2.98 |
| **Total** | | 100 | **Total** | | 100 |

**Figure 6.** Urgent and not urgent actions focusing the important and not important classes following the Eisenhower Matrix.

- Find potential of multi variety of heritage value
- Develop and modernize existing Museums, places and heritage establishments
- Coordinating local, national and international organizations associated with heritage
- Increase community participation
- Train women group
- Develop water way (as Ganges river beside Rajshahi city)
- O&M of existent heritages
- Prepare guided
- Tourism expertise
- Increase prominent tourism industry (Silk industry as an industrial tourism sector, Hotel industry)

- Increase research and development on heritage
- Increase publicity
- Accessibility map for heritages
- Prepare heritage priority map
- Address Crime prone area
- Provide accessibility for disable people
- Adequate land for further planning
- Raise fund or manage potential investors
- Political stability

2019). Kukreja (2019) conducted a study in India where he compared heritage with human health that requires discretion and time to time check-up. He also revealed that heritage sites are the witness and reflection of civilization, remnant of predecessors that demand conservation. Authors in this case have ascertained potential community engagement and heritage education of conserving archaeological inherits by using survey, PRA tools, SWOT analysis, Analytic Hierarchy Process, where Eisenhower Matrix have been used to prioritize area of heritage conservation, preservation and possible restoration. From the perspective of heritage management, every person's feelings and thoughts toward something are somewhat controlled by the surrounding environment and
artifacts changes concurrently. Rajshahi has an old history from the past as it was the place of ‘Royal family’ because the history of many land-lords (in Bengali ‘Zamindars’) is found here. Also, the cultural history and behavior of Rajshahi, for example, the Varendra museum carries a lot of artifacts not only of this city but also for the northern part of Bangladesh, where this collection of museum inspires people to practice their culture.

People in Rajshahi used to share their feelings by using the native language that they got from their ancestors. They believe that expression using local language builds their feelings as strong and improve their social bond. Different types of family events like weddings are happening here following the local cultures of Rajshahi, which is also valid for religious festivals for Hindu communities. Having cultural and religious inherit is sometimes fetch blessing for that particular locality, which makes them distinct from others and works as one of the main celebration and recreational purpose, and also income generating source as well, where stunning silk and “Khetur dham festival” (festival for the Hindus usually happens at Premtoli in Rajshahi) are best identical examples. Besides, the Muslim community celebrates “Muhraram” with own practices.

Moreover, customs and traditions make the local community more aware of thinking about the importance of the heritage of Rajshahi. Some peoples believe that tourism can create employments, for instance, “Oddvar Munksgaard Park” locally named “Padmina garden” is now an important tourist place of recreation that has been developed recently. However, both the elderly and young are engrossing regarding this issue with different motives. But young are gradually being demotivated from their local culture and lose their feeling of ownership, while the elderly are trying to conserve their own culture and practices. But, nowadays, younger groups are attracted to ‘Gomvira song’ by performing on stage spatially during different events in educational institutions.

Conservation of heritage may get a new path with the participation of women in all spheres of heritage management related activities. For instance, a significant number of women are working in the silk industry, where fewer facilities hinder sustainable management. Here, about 100,000 people are directly or indirectly engaged with the silk industry, highlighting its incredible value to our country (TDS, 2012). The silk production area in Rajshahi may preserve all elements in such a way, where tourists may enjoy the entire process and evolution that happened over time. This approach may foster the economy, boost employment, and enhance income opportunities for all, including women, men, and persons with disabilities. But, despite having high economic potentiality and international recognition, the silk industry (locally named silk potti) of Rajshahi do not get public attention and is being neglected for so long.

Besides, most of the heritage places in Rajshahi have the potentiality to be a place of tourism, though some are being designated as tourist places like Varendra museum, Khetur mela, and Padma garden beside the Ganges River. The number of shops for different kinds of business like handicrafts, silk cloths, foods, and hotels is increasing, ultimately creating income opportunities for local people. Proper investment, high-quality service, infrastructural development, proper training and private initiatives, and dissemination of information at national and international levels may significantly promote heritage management.

Regarding the management of heritage, the master plan of Rajshahi that was prepared by the Urban Development Directorate (UDD) was not prepared with the proper participation of people from all steps (Lima, 2003). Also, although the master plan addressed different issues related to the management of heritage places, implementation is not maintained properly (Lima, 2003; RDA, 2004). Demolition of Lalkuthir done by the authority is one of the spiffy paradigms that express present attitude and the archaeological future (TDS, 2019). On the other hand, concerning authority seems that public involvement does take time and is often motivated politically illustrated by the planner of Rajshahi Development Authority (RDA), exactly similar with the observations of (Lima, 2003).

Because of less investment in programmes and projects, acting authorities and organizations have little opportunity to interact with the locality. Some of the local institutions named Adibashi Unnayon Shongstha, Bachar Asa Cultural Organization try to do some social programs to educate and sentient community about their inherent but cannot go a long run due to the lack of funds (NGOs, 2020).

Bottom-up and top-down processes should be ensured by integrating all the concern bodies like, UDD, RDA, RCC, Antiquities authorities with local and national organizations like Adibashi Unnayon Shongstha, Varendra Economic Development Organization, Bachar Asa Cultural Organization, Resource Integrated Centre, Sachetan Society, Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) etc. that are in Rajshahi (NGOs, 2020). Those organizations are working to aware people to enhance comprehensibility on heritage, not merely a lesson or learning but an asset facilitating public participation regarding heritage conservation. E system, for instance, e-governance may also unveil the new horizon in heritage conservation by putting authorities and communities’ activity or ideas about heritage, map updating, providing database, or to reveal present conditions, which also helps in decision making and while intervention priorities.

Furthermore, SWOT analysis can be applied to ensure suitable and sustainable management of policies and plans for tourism in Rajshahi city, where Ataose (2020) and Scolozzi et al. (2014) suggested using digital map indicating cost-friendly and time-effective tourism plan. Cultural and structural heritages can be encouraged in this area, highlighting proper cultural experiences, where visual and performing pieces, buildings, lifestyles, traditions, and other events (Nega, 2018a; 2018b). To ensure sustainable practice and management of tourism, collaborations of all stakeholders is important, which will minimize the obstacles and emerging challenges in future (Donald, 2009), where findings of the research regarding SWOT can be considered.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

Heritage conservation is a prerequisite to ensure proper management of culture, tradition, history from generation to generation, where Rajshahi city is rich with various forms of cultural, natural, religious forms of heritage. Urbanization and increasing population expose a risk of demolition of heritages, where aggression of foreign cultures is also encroaching the native tradition. People in Rajshahi were mostly aware of heritage damage during construction development, where local government roles were identified as very weak. Despite having several strengths, less research and development on heritage and lack of proper heritage priority map are identified as weaknesses.

Promoting heritage conservation, especially in urban areas, is a challenging task. Because it doesn't only mean preserving heritage structures, but promoting awareness, raising the sense of ownership, spontaneous participation, and leaving traditions and their heritages for the future generation, coordination and integrated decision-making is essential. Engagement of local and national NGOs with local government institutions can enhance community awareness and participation. Furthermore, tourism-based heritage conservation, the establishment of heritage archives can contribute to heritage promotion and conservation. On the other hand, the revised master plan for Rajshahi City Corporation prioritizing heritage and community-based monitoring cells may help protect heritage structures and areas from illegal embezzlement.

Besides, writing competitions among school/college students to promote their heritage, impel heritage rated research at university level, and knowledge dissemination through social campaigns will overcome the knowledge gap and help the upcoming generation learn about their inherent. Besides, this study will help policymakers from different sectors, including government, NGOs, and civil society, take proper initiatives regarding sustainable heritage management in Rajshahi and Bangladesh. Further study can be conducted to understand the perception of policymakers, including governance analysis regarding heritage conservation in Bangladesh.
Declarations

Author contribution statement

Md. Hasibul Hasan: Conceived and designed the experiments; Performed the experiments; Analyzed and interpreted the data; Contributed reagents, materials, analysis tools or data; Wrote the paper.

Md. Abdul Wakil: Conceived and designed the experiments; Analyzed and interpreted the data; Wrote the paper.

Md. Arif Chowdhury: Analyzed and interpreted the data; Contributed reagents, materials, analysis tools or data; Wrote the paper.

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Data will be made available on request.

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