



# 05. Tangibility and/or Materiality of Heritage Resources.

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*Kalpa, Vol.04, 2023, pp. 22-25*

## Abstract :

This paper aims to explore the tangible/physical aspects of heritage resources. Heritage resource is a combination of numerous tangible and intangible values, these values have been delineated by heritage scholars and practitioners. Institutions such as UNESCO<sup>1</sup>, ICOMOS<sup>2</sup> and ICCROM<sup>3</sup> are continuously involved in broadening the scope of values associated with heritage properties.

When it comes to tangible/physical aspects of the values associated with heritage resources, the economic values take the central stage. Based upon existing economic theories, several scholars have developed valuation frameworks for historical properties. The Applicability of these frameworks depends upon the nature and context of the heritage resources. This article reviews existing literature and compiles a list of the most common economic valuation methods. The basic introduction, methodology and application process of these valuation methods are demonstrated. By highlighting the strength and weakness of these valuation methods, the article proposes a list of conditions for the selection of appropriate methods.

The extension of this paper would involve various case studies based upon different methodologies and testing through selection of a heritage site and application of appropriate methods. The future significance of this study is to develop a holistic understanding of these quantitative methods for evaluation of both, intangible as well as tangible aspects of heritage resources.

## Keywords:

Heritage Resource, Tangible, Valuation method, Intangible, Institutions.

## Introduction

Heritage resources serve as a connecting thread between the past, present and the future; it contains the tangible as well as intangible aspects of human development.

Over the past thirty years, the concept of cultural heritage has been continually broadened. The Venice Charter (1964) made reference to “monuments and sites” and dealt with architectural heritage. The question rapidly expanded to cover groups of buildings, vernacular architecture, and industrial and 20th century built heritage. Over and above the study of historic gardens, the concept of “cultural landscape” highlighted the interpenetration of culture and nature (Bouchenaki, 2003).

Cultural heritage is a complex relationship between person, society (a group of people exchanging ideas), norms and values (faith, belief systems, rituals). The cultural products frame the tangible/material evidences of social values. These products establish a relationship between tangible and intangible, where, intangible aspects are the main driving force behind tangible manifestation and this should be regarded as having high value. The tangible/physical heritage resources take shape within these undefined boundaries of intangibility. The Istanbul Declaration, adopted at a round table of 71 Ministers of Culture, organized by UNESCO in Istanbul in September 2002, stresses that “an all-encompassing approach to cultural heritage should prevail, taking into

account the dynamic link between the tangible and intangible heritage and their close interaction.” This dialectic may prove particularly fruitful in providing greater representation for those cultures of the world that attach more importance to the oral tradition than to the written one (Bouchenaki, 2003).

The conflict between tangible and intangible aspects of the heritage resources arrives at an interesting junction, when it pertains to the practical aspects of heritage conservation. The physicality of heritage resources participates in the process; hence the projection of tangible aspects takes the central stage. In the real world the physicality of heritage resources needs to be evaluated, its association with the context also needs to be measured within the subjective framework.

It is probably apt to presume here that, a world in which that which is visible, and concrete takes precedence over that which is immaterial. Central to all is the issue of values and valorisation: what qualified as cultural heritage was deemed to be stable and static and having ‘intrinsic values’ as well as qualities of ‘authenticity’. In the real world, *ceteris paribus* the cart does not pull the horse. Cultural heritage should speak through the values that people give it and not the other way round. Objects, collections, buildings, etc. become recognized as heritage when they express the value of society and so the tangible can only be understood and interpreted

<sup>1</sup>UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

<sup>2</sup>ICOMOS: The International Council on Monuments and Sites

<sup>3</sup>ICCROM: International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property

through the intangible. Society and values are thus intrinsically linked (Munjeri, 2004).

The concept of tangibility in heritage resources refers to its physical nature, which allows us to experience the past at a non-instinctive level. This also enhances our understanding of cultural evolution, societal development and the intricate manifestation of human skill. The tangibility of heritage resources is a material evidence of craftsmanship, creativity, and innovation of the past generation. It covers a wide range of artifacts, objects, structures and architectural marvels, which has travelled through the test of time and reflects the associated values and aspirations of the society that created them. This physical manifestation holds the same frequencies that resonate with a contemporary observer. The materiality of heritage resources has the ability to evoke emotional responses, which ultimately bridges the gap between generations. It allows people to touch, see, and sometimes even smell and hear the elements from the past. This multidimensional relationship creates a deeper understanding of the past.

The road to that truth was opened up by those involved in the conservation of the tangible heritage. How tangible was the tangible heritage? This is a question that constantly confronts conservators when dealing with material heritage. If cultural heritage was to be passed on to posterity (as indeed the World Heritage Convention stipulated), what values were to be transmitted to future generations? If values were in the physical property per se, what message was being passed on and why? The dilemma raised by the definition of 'authenticity' was to open a Pandora's Box. This ultimately led to a conference on authenticity held in Nara, Japan in 1994. Conservation policies were supposed to be based on a critical process starting with 'intrinsic cultural resources and values' related to it. What were these intrinsic values? All along they were considered to be four i.e.: 'material', 'workmanship', 'design' and 'setting'. The primary aim of conservation was to 'safeguard the quality and values of the resource, protect material substance and ensure integrity for posterity'. But could that be all? (Munjeri, 2004).

### Methods

This paper will try to explore all the used frameworks to convert both tangible and intangible assets into other forms of negotiable values, which is ultimately the primary objective of the current integrated approach towards heritage resources. In future one may explore for a hands-on case study for the valuation of heritage resources.

Exploration of the dynamic and complex nature of value conversion requires a paradigm shift in the current traditional approach towards heritage resources. In this process we try to explore the heritage resources from asset view to negotiable goods and in the form of deliverables. The most common way a heritage resource comes into the market is when it gets converted to goods

and services having some kind of financial value. Value conversion is the act of converting or transforming financial to non-financial value or transforming an intangible input or asset into a financial value or asset. The theme of value conversion runs through social exchange theory and is a key question in the field of socio-economics (Allee, 2008). When heritage comes into business and economic activities, the premise becomes much more complex. Business and economic activities often entail a sophisticated barter system involving heritage resources that plays a vital economic activity in terms of business transactions, in terms of business relationships, creating value and making sure that the transactions run smoothly. The heritage resources must be taken as multiplication of tangible and intangibles and how they are converted into other negotiable forms of value.

Historic properties contain a wide range of values which are almost impossible to measure in monetary terms. In particular, social and cultural values have an important effect on society's well-being and quality of life (Throsby, 2001). Like environmental goods, cultural heritage can be seen as non-tradable goods which contain non-market values (Mazzanti, 2002). Cultural heritage consists of both tangible goods such as historic buildings or archaeological sites, art works and intangible goods such as local traditions, customs and cultural landscape (Yung et al., 2013). In terms of the heritage resource valuation framework, there are many different economic methods which have been used. The entire process entails two categories – Monetary and Non-Monetary Methods. Below is the list of economic models which have been used for the valuation of heritage resources around the world.

#### Monetary Method:

##### *Revealed Preference Method*

- Market Price Method.
- Travel Cost Method.
- Hedonic Pricing Method

##### *Stated Preference Method*

- Deliberative Valuation Method
- Contingent Valuation Methods
- Choice Experiment Method.
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#### Non- Monetary Method:

##### *Revealed Preference Method*

- Observation method
- Document method
- Social media-based method

##### *Stated Preference Method*

- Interview method
- Questionnaire method
- Narrative method
- Focus group method
- Expert based method
- Q-method
- Participatory mapping method
- Participatory GIS method
- Public participation GIS method

Empirical studies applying stated preference and revealed preference techniques in case of heritage resource							
S N o	Studies	Countries	Type of Heritage Resource	No of Heritage Resources	No of subject Variables	Statistical Model Used	Sample Size
	<b>Travel Cost Method 2002</b>						
	Boxall	Canada	Cultural Heritage (Park)	1	6	Quantity Demand	661
1	Poor & Smith	UK	Heritage Site	1	4	Quantity Demand Zonal Model	328
	<b>Contingent Valuation 1994</b>						
	Wills	UK	Historic Site	1	5	open ended	92
1	Grosclaude & Soguel	Switzerland	Historic Site	1	5	open ended	200
2	Powe & Wills 1996	UK	Historic Site	1	6	open ended	201
3	Lockwood 1996	Australia	Natural Heritage	1	5	Dichotomous Choice	702
4	Garrod 1996	UK	Historic Site	1	7	Dichotomous Choice	217
5	Beltran & Marino 1996	Mexico	Archeological Sites	3 zones / 7 cities	9	open ended WTP	6503
6	Hansen 1997	Denmark	Theatre	1	5	open ended WTP	1843
7	Morey 1997	USA	Marble Monuments	3	4	Dichotomous Choice	272
8	Riganti & Scrap 1998	Italy	Archeological Sites	1	1	Dichotomous Choice	448
9	Scrap	Italy	Heritage Site	1	1	Dichotomous Choice	1323
10	Chambers 1998	USA	Historic Site	1	9	Payment Card	306
11	Santagata & Signorello	Italy	Museum	1	8	Single Bounded Dichotomous Choice	468
12	Maddisson & Mourato	England	Archeological Sites	2	24 WTP level		357
13	Bravi 2002	Italy	cultural service	2		Dichotomous Choice	1323, 854
14	Tohmo 2004	Finland	Museum	1	8	open ended	800
	<b>Conjoint Analysis</b>						
1	Colombino 2005	Italy	Archeological Sites	3	10	open ended	552
2	Laplante 2005	USA	Natural Heritage	1	27	Dichotomous Choice	6900
3	Dutta M 2007	India	Historic Site	1	12	Iterative Bidding	203
4	Multinomial Logit						
5	Alberini 2003	Ireland	Historic Site	2	4	Iterative Bidding	705
	<b>Discrete Choice Analysis</b>						
1	Louviere & Hensher 1983	Australia	cultural event	8	16	Dichotomous Choice	550
	<b>Combined Model</b>						
1	Boxall 2003	Canada	cultural Artefacts	8	na	travel cost	386
	<b>Analytical Network Process</b>						

Source : Author

## Results

The next step was to prepare a matrix of Empirical studies applying stated preference and revealed preference techniques. The matrix is combination of several parameters such as – studies, country of performance, type of heritage resource, no of heritage resources used, number of subject variables, statistical model used for analysis and the sample size used for analysis.

Here we can see various case studies where different economic models have been used with different statistical analysis tools. Few cases adopt mixed models. The striking part here is that there is only one case study in the Indian context, but when we see the amount of heritage resources available in India, we can simply conclude that there is huge scope and potential for similar case studies which can guide the decision making process and transform the heritage sector for sustainable development.

## Discussion

Valuation of heritage properties and resources is a multidimensional process which combines the tangible (economic) and intangible (cultural) dimensions. This process reveals the quantitative aspects of heritage resources. However it is acknowledged by all economic experts and scholars that heritage resources are not simply commodities but they embrace a synthesised manifestation of our historical, cultural, social and technological significance.

Here we can see that there is no single economic model which can fully translate all the values associated with a heritage resource. Instead these models should be taken as a tool to analyse the one aspect of the multidimensional framework of heritage conservation. Following are the observations drawn from the findings/results on the use of economic models in heritage valuation.

**Dynamic nature of heritage:** Heritage resources are the repository of time, place and people. Hence any economic model to analyse such resources must accommodate all three dynamic/changing parameters i.e., time, place and people into its account. Recognising heritage value as a non-static entity and having flexibility in its valuation method is the most crucial observation.

**Balancing economic and cultural properties:** We must accept the fact that economic valuation is an important factor for any decision making process, however, it is not the holistic reflection of all the values associated with heritage resources. The cultural values associated within a heritage resource are its soul, hence a fine balance between economic development and heritage conservation is required.

**Interdisciplinary approach:** As we have seen, heritage resources are dynamic in nature, therefore its historical, cultural, social and technological significance should also be considered. Collaboration of experts of different disciplines such as economists, conservationists, historians, engineers, and community stakeholders must be ensured before taking decisions of the valuation process. We must accept the valuation process as a multidisciplinary subject.

**Community engagement:** When we look at any heritage precinct, it is the immediate community which is having the strongest association with it; hence ignoring such profound stakeholders would lead to a truncated approach towards the valuation process.

**Sustainability:** Conservation and preservation of heritage resources should not aim only for economic/monetary benefit but also for long-term sustainable development. Recognition and harvesting the economic potential of a heritage resource gives us an edge for self-management and self-reliance.

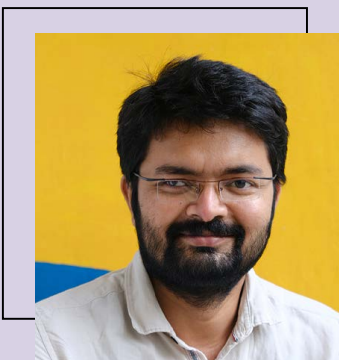
In conclusion, economic models are valuable tools for the analysis and valuation of heritage properties, providing important quantitative data that can help the decision-making process. However, they should always be used hand in hand with a deep appreciation for the cultural and social significance of these resources. Heritage is a non-renewable asset that connects deeply with our identity/memory; hence its value extends beyond money. Thus a thoughtful, inclusive, participatory and dynamic

approach is required for the conservation of heritage resources.

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