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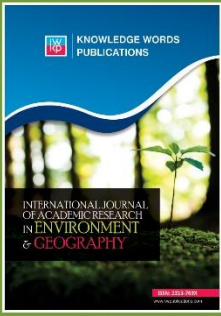
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Cemeteries Role in the Development of Religious Tourism in Islamic Cities. Case Study: Takhete Foolad Cemetery of Isfahan

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Abstract

Shia religion is the apex of the development of cemetery spaces. Throughout history the holy places, shrines of imams and their relatives in Karbala, Najaf, Mashhad, Qom and Samarra are Spontaneous associations of religious tendencies in the Shia population and this causes was the cemeteries spaces development. As a result early tomb building known as a symbol of Shia religious and political demands. For example Takhte Foolad Cemetery in Isfahan can be regarded as a prominent cemetery space. Although Takhte Foolad is a cemetery environment and associated the meaning of death and grief but its appearance is along with architectural and urban decorations and coordinated with the meaning of life. This cemetery is due to a variety of urban and architectural works such as the monument and Tekie, cisterns, carvansaraa, mosques, museums, libraries and art works such as reliefs and carvings there are three levels of sensory, form and symbolic beauty. In fact Takhte Foolad is index symbol of Iranian identity in Isfahan that displays share of past achievements, cultural, scientific and even urbanism and architecture from the past. So it is essential that this cemetery protected from modern urban changes to be able enrichment esthetic sense of disoriented man in modern time.

Keywords: Religious Tourism, Takhete Foolad Cemetery, Isfahan, Islamic City.

Introduction

While we are in the second decade of the twenty-first century that still development in developing countries faced with many challenges. Last strategies in the field of development was not successful and have failed to supply problems such as poverty, employment, health, food security and environmental sustainability. This problem has led in recent years tourism development is taken into considerations a development strategy and planners and managers are working to provide new solutions and methods to reduce from the problems and issues facing these areas are engaging.

The tourism industry has different results and achievements; including economic benefits, creating employment, publicizing the culture and identity of a nation to others and create comfort and psychological comfort. Religious tourism such as visiting the cemetery considered to be a manifestation of religious publishing and publicizing the identity and culture of a place in the same places and other places and is essential because of its spiritual and mental relaxation and reduce social ills.

In a deep look to cemeteries can be seen that they are indicative of the history of every nation and city. Literary and scientific history of the city can be totally achieved from the shrines the city. If vanished tombs of clerics, scholars and philosophers and other scientific luminaries of a city, Other they works whether or not will be lost. Value of each community is to sublime humans that provide services into the community and must stay forever remember, works, books, art, poetry, script and finally grave monuments so that future generations be proud to their existence and its way will continue. Takhte Foolad Cemetery that is graves of men and women of thinker; is a treasure trove of art and science this country which can be a place for attracting interested tourists.

Results and Discussion

The Problem

Tourism is one of the largest and most rapidly growing activities in the world. Today tourism industry after oil and automobile industry is the world's third; and no doubt will be the most profitable trade in the twenty-first century (Fennel, 2003: 12). So Today the tourism sector is one of the most important factors affecting the world economy and for many countries one of the biggest benefits of creating jobs and growth is the service sector of export (Balaguer & Cantavella, 2002).

Tourism on a global scale make up, restore spaces of cultural, social and geographical. This cannot be denied that tourism is a tremendous force for change. Thousands of visitors who come for recreation, not only with provide money but also, for better or worse alter local life (Rossana, 2007: 95).

Because of the socio-religious situations of Iran among other countries, religious tourism can be position of considerable development in Iran. Diversity of centers, historical monuments and buildings and places of worship of different religions has done Iran's position unique in all the world. Religious places that showcase Combination of religion, thought, art and Iranian life as one of the priorities of foreign tourists for travel to Iran. Religious tourism in addition to the economic benefits be considered as a symbol of cultural - religion identity at the national, regional and international.

Thus importance and need to develop religious tourism especially about Takhte Foolad Cemetery with the functions such as income opportunities, growth in the economy and more importantly its effects on the development of religious values and Islamic – the Iranian culture at the local, national and international could be considered by planners and policy-makers.

What do the necessary research unknown old cemetery of Takhte Foolad for tourists. Bravely it is take into account of country's unique cemeteries. Takhte Foolad is one of the most important cemeteries in Iran and the Islamic world including the historic cemetery of the holy city of Qom, Baqi Cemetery in Medina, Abu Talib Cemetery in Mecca, the Bab al-Saghir Cemetery in Damascus and Wadi al-Salam Cemetery in Najaf.

History of Subject

Religious Tourism is one of the oldest and most prosperous past and present tourism worldwide (Shinder, 2004: 2) and arrives it is history of religious culture. If you look at the history of religious trips and outings as sacred ceremony in the temple of Apollo in ancient Greeks, Egyptians trips to visit the Pharaohs (Durant, 1991: 205) sacred ceremony of ancient Iranians at Kangavar temple etc. (Christiansen, 1990: 232) you will see that each of tapes show dating and promote this type of tourism among the various nations.

Egyptian pyramids, Roman Catacomb¹, Medians graves, tombs rock of Achaemenid and Sasanian ossuaries² show the diversity of cemeteries architecture. In the same issue is important religious great shrines pilgrimages in Iran such as the shrine of Imam Reza (AS).



Figure 1. Example of ossuary in Fars Province

The Definition of Religious Tourism

In fact among the religious tourism are faced with two groups (Momeni et al, 2008: 14):

1. Pilgrim: Pilgrim refers to people who are travel purely motivated by religious (single-purpose trips). These people are religious believers who to practice different religions to travel.
2. Religious tourism: these are passengers in addition to participation in religious activities visit other cultural and entertainment venues and is multifunctional objectives of their trips with a religious preference. So occur divide in different views on the causes of trips.

According to Russell religious tourism is different with tourist who goes to visit religious heritage; a person who is visiting religious places for respond to their historical and cultural interests and not to seek spiritual meaning in it.

In Islam special attention be man and his needs and in fact recognizes what make life enjoyable and easy and is good for body and soul. In Islamic culture sightseeing as concern for the environment is considered in addition to attention to self.

¹- Catacomb: clandestine temples and tombs of Christians in early Christianity.

²- Ossuary: holes that created regularly and quadrilateral or unordered and simple inside mountain where were laid the deads and their bones have been collected. Some of the Sassanian dynasty ossuaries in past contains religious writings and call. This drawing is one of the Zoroastrian traditions and remnants of ancient ossuaries can be found in Shushtar, Naqsh-e Rostam, Shahre Rey and Yazd of Iran(Ushidri, 1992).

Islam always encourages people to travel but Islam never not encourage people to take some trips like common travel wealthy individuals in the Middle East to Thailand and Turkey. In Islam the purpose of travel for the expansion of God's spiritual understanding through seeing landmarks in the history and natural events and man-made. So aim from encourage the muslims to travel is spiritual elevation.

Some consider tourism different with pilgrimage. From their perspective tourism if done properly may be able to rest the human body but cannot provide the deep need him to psychological rest. Perhaps one of the essential differences tourism with pilgrimage is that if the pilgrimage to be performed for pilgrimage (not business and leisure) cause physical rest and mental relaxation but capitalism tries that change tourist to pilgrimage. So that at the beginning of the twenty-first century most pilgrims are pilgrimage tourists and this is determined from effort that visitors buy souvenirs and when to engage pilgrimage (Papoli; 2006: 173).

Pilgrimage and religious tourism have rooted in religious beliefs-religious in world technical means and beyond the dependence on time and leisure is an important factor of human geography in the formation the travel, concentration and cultural landscape (Momeni and others, 2008: 14).

On the other hand religious tourism is one of the solutions presented history, culture and beliefs values, religious and peaceful coexistence between countries. Moreover holy shrines and religious sites in addition to its unique sanctity and spirituality shows customs, beliefs and ideas of the people (World Tourism Organization, 2002: 97).

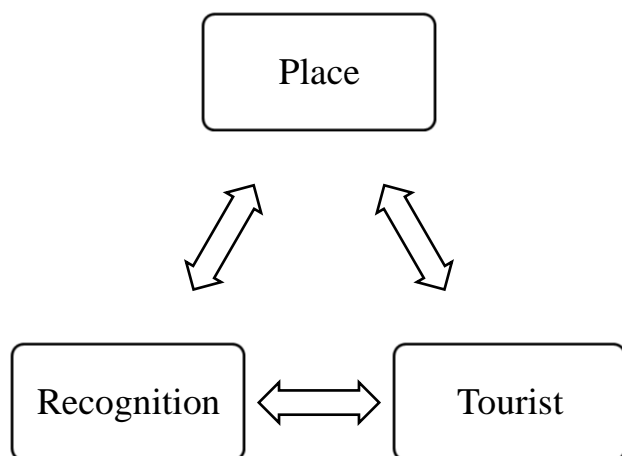


Figure 2. Elements of Religious Tourism

Cemetery of Takhte Foolad

Isfahan is as a history city and from Iran's major urban centers and has been space living elders of religious, scientific, artistic and literary hence the Cemetery of Takhte Foolad, located in the south of the city has a special position in terms of spiritual and cultural heritage. Takhte Foolad Cemetery is the most noble and glorious tha Shiite world cemetery after Wadi al-Salam cemetery in Najaf. Holy land for many centuries is the tomb of countless scholars and righteous people, mystics, artists and poets, believers and pious and especially grave for thousands of

martyr of sacred defense. Takhte Foolad is ancient treasures of various styles of art and literature that the necessity of protecting and presenting it is obvious to everyone.



Figure 3. The Takhte Foolad Cemetery position in Isfahan

It looks Takhte Foolad has been in the centuries ninth to the fifth one of the important places of worship and austerity the mystics that existed bethel and Sufis and monastery. One of the mystics, mystic exalted, Masoud ebne Abdullah Beizavy is known as Babaroknodin. Likely range of Takhte Foolad in the Safavid Shah Suleiman rose to the highest breadth and during this period there were about 400 Tekieh³ and hospice in Takhte Foolad but in later periods, particularly during the Afghan invasion, Afsharieh and Zandieh periods to witness the destruction of a large part of Tekiehes.



Figure 3. The Tomb of Baba Roknodin in the Cemetery of Takhte Foolad

Source: www.google.com

³. Tekieh in past said to have been to places with different functions such as residence Sufis, poor as well as the venue of the Taziye ceremony.

Now there are about fifty Tekieh and building in Takhte Foolad and so what comes from the sayings and writings in the past have been very great the number of Tekiehes and said the names of some of Tekiehes that disappeared in historical sources. In fact Takhte Foolad is a symbol of Iranian identity index that exhibits share of the most significant achievements of former cultural, scientific and literary. This cemetery that in its place is the grave of hundreds poet, scholar, mystic, philosopher, artist and champion is museum in all senses of variety of architectural, artistic, literary and cultural and is a treasure trove That is worthy of investigation. Firmly said Takhte Foolad is treasure that must be known before the destruction of his work anew.

Elements of Urbanity The Cemetery of Takhte Foolad

Although Takhte Foolad is a cemetery environment and associated with meaning of death and grief but makes his appearance along with of urban architecture and decoration and coordinated with the meaning of life. Pilgrim in dealing with some ceremony Tekiehes feel step into the equipped house and as life home, not death house.

Of elements in the Takhte Foolad cemetery can be mentioned to Tekiehes, mosques, Water reservoir, Saqakhaneh and trough, refrigerators, banquet house, inn, mortuary, sacrifice, austerity house, Cheleh khaneh and monastery.

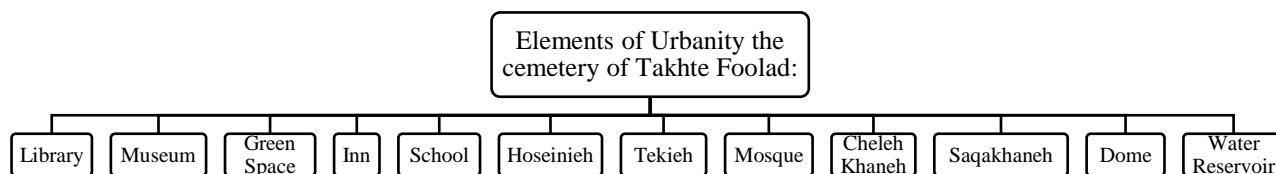


Figure 4. Elements of Urbanity the Cemetery of Takhte Foolad

Connect to the world beyond and believe in the unseen is an integral part of Islamic culture and civilization. Accordingly, a plurality of the universe is moving toward unity and it is image of God. Islamic Urbanity also lies at the heart of this process and tries to put together the elements of architecture and urbanism manifest divine and heavenly meanings, a concept that is remembered as "Islamic utopia". Islamic city has principles of diversity, unity, focus, connection, association, balance, proportion, continuity etc. within it is own that these principles there is so beautiful from the Safavid period to contemporary in Takhte Foolad architecture. Each of Tekiehes of Takhteh Foolad for themselves individual components; because each Tekiehes related to historical period with its own architecture and decoration and with other periods is vary and therefore shows a plurality.

This architectural diversity of Takhte Foolad from other aspects can also be considered and its different functions of the monuments such mosques, inn, religious schools, Saqakhaneh, water reservoirs and etc. This diversity of architecture in styles and functions to make musical rhythm and in total goes toward unity. This valuable collection of cemetery where his body has many of the characteristics of Islamic urbanity, if protected from modern urban changes, Like other tissues of the traditional city, has enrichment esthetic sense of man lost in modern times

and will be alive attention to the life and memory of buried mystics and celebrities and will be a model for tomb architecture in Iran and Islamic world.

The impact of Takhteh Foolad Cemetery in the Islamic city

Certainly tomb been considered more than any architectural monument (except mosques) in the Iranian-Islamic urbanity. Tomb rooted in Iranian society and culture and less a city in the country that does not share a valuable building of mausoleum. Takhte Foolad is one of most significant the urban elements with land use of cultural-religious in Isfahan and is of important poles the religious and historical Shia. Thus Takhteh Foolad has high strength for promotion of cultural and social level of city and region.

John Lang on the meaning of beauty considered the three level of beauty: sensory beauty, form beauty and symbolic beauty. In his opinion the beauty of sensory get a pleasure sense that the is achieved from environment and colors, sounds and textures that exist in the environment. Lang in defining of form beauty primarily aimed at shape, rhythm, visual complexity and decoration of surrounding environment and the beauty of symbolic is in concepts of association that recognized by the elements of environment that means to environment and for the people are pleasant. Lang's aesthetic divisions has two major part: structure of form and other is content of form. He called Structure of form is form aesthetic and study human responses to content of form and aesthetic of symbolic (Lang, 2002).

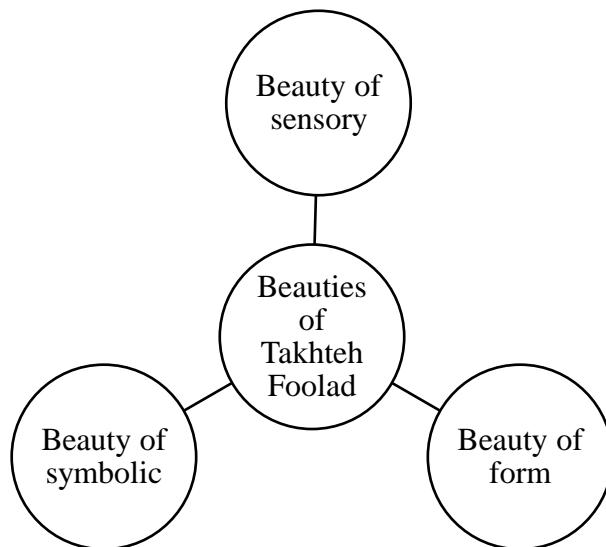


Figure 4. Types of beauty in Cemetery of Takhteh Foolad

Cemetery of Takhte Foolad has all three levels of beauty due having variety of urbanity and architectural works such as the monument and Tekiehes, cisterns, Inn, mosques and artwork such as designs and carvings, Chronogram and makes special sense their environment.

Conclusions

Growth of Shiite ceremony is the climax of development of mausoleum spaces. Cities such as Mashhad, Najaf and Karbala their reputation are Owe to built around the holy shrine of Imam. Throughout history among the holy places, shrines of imams and their relatives in

Karbala, Najaf, Mashhad, Qom and Samarra are naturally religious centers of Shiite inclinations. The rapid growth of the culture the pilgrimage tombs of Imams and prayer and supplications and Quran recitation in these places and increasing competition in the dead buried near the grave of the holy tomb were the causes that led to development of Mausoleum spaces. As a result very soon mausoleum building known as a symbol of religious and political demands of Shiite and attracted abundant gifts of money and estate and endowments for their future development. Faith of local people and perpetual motion of pilgrims from afar, not only results in progress tombs, but their role in political, cultural, social and economic life of society was more.

For example Cemetery of Takhte Foolad can be regarded as a prominent Mausoleum space and is spiritual resort that presence and explore where moreover that defines history the people of this land creates spiritual peace and security in the person. These characteristics together with other unique features including elements of Iranian - Islam urbanity, museum, library and recreational spaces in Takhte Foolad caused this cemetery become a center of artistic and cultural and tourist attractions and link today's citizens with religious identity and history. Takhreh Foolad with preservation the historic heritage of Isfahan, in addition to translocation the concepts of tradition and identity, along with other elements of urban architecture has made a significant contribution to sustainable development in Isfahan.

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