

## Urban Cultural Tourism As A Creative Approach For Natural Heritage Values Towards Sustainable Tourism At Misfat Al Abriyeen: A Systematic Literature Review

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### Abstract

*Most of the tourists and foreigner, visiting often to the customised village later called as Misfat by the Al Abri tribe, was very much potential for agricultural soil possessing sustainable growth. Tourism destination and natural heritage plays in a vital role in tourist's assessment, it means visiting place attractiveness, and sightseeing, images, and satisfaction of a particular destination etc., Based on these circumstances tourist must visit more times for the particular place. This research topic is significant for national heritage and cultural heritage that foster a positive impact on rural tourism in the Sultanate of Oman. This research is incredibly significant for the Ministry of Tourism, promotes the standard of living, and improve the socio-economic development of the Al Hamra and Misfat Al-Abriyeen peoples. Increasing attraction of the tourists from the residents without compromising ethos is noteworthy as a part of socio-economic element for the growth. It is important to provide success stories and counselling, orientation programmes from ministerial sector to motivate the different users of tourism and related activities for the growth and development of residents and economic development ensuring sustainable tourism development (Chambers 2009). Researchers have used PRISMA flow chart that describes the step by step procedure to identify and interpret the related articles published in quality journals in an operative and secured approach.*

**Key words:** Heritage, Urban, sustainable, tourism and.

### Introduction

Misfat Al Abriyeen is one of the reliable traditional tourism villages possessing birth right site in Sultanate of Oman towards the sustainability, assuring better living condition without compromising for the future benefit. Al Hamra possess Al Hajar hills along with a beautiful heritage village called Misfat Al Abriyeen constructing with mud above the ocean level around hundred meters along with human living for more than three hundred years. Sustainable Tourism has incredible strategy of Misfat Al Abriyeen consist of agricultural and tourism activities that ensured the villagers and local people to stay back in the location along with their ancestors for the safe survival of the families (Rumpa Mitra 2021). Natural heritage and tourism development has always been a key factor for development attributes of the country. The major positive economic contribution of the country is rural tourism development; it can create predominate income generator of a nation (Guangyu Fei et al 2023).

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The rural tourism development influencing the growth of the country and sustainable development in macro environmental factors. In general, rural tourism can serve as a main tool for alteration of rural economic development and it helps to create the establishment of new markets and provide the new employment opportunity of the local regions (Vytautas Barkauskas et al 2015). The researchers observed that the government role is also very dynamic to encourage the tourism sector and different destinations have different intrinsic attributes, essential attributes of destinations are different which significantly influence the visitor satisfaction (Sharmiladevi and Rameshraj 2017).

Sultanate of Oman is one of the rich in historical background especially having their own natural heritages and old Arab culture values and independent country in the GCC or Arab World. A country with a wealth of history, heritage and culture and the oldest independent state in the Arab World, the Sultanate of Oman is one of the eldest human-inhabited countries on the earth. According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Oman has had an exploration of the five sites that are most beautiful mosques, natural wildlife, stunning beaches covering 3,165 kilometres coastline, huge levels of mountains and wide desert areas (Asad Rehman 2020). Dynamic growth of the tourism industry is purely dependent upon the political policy, strategic planning, and formulation of policies for achieving the success of the tourism sector (Amitabh Upadhyia 2017). Oman is rich in natural heritage and good in culture heritages, even though they are behind in tourism sector especially in rural tourism, this research work is very vibrant to identify the potential national heritage contribution to sustainable tourism development in Al Hamra and Misfah Al-Arbiyeen regions. The researchers have used preferred reporting items for systematic review and meta-analysis method to have accurate specification and its extension make sure quality of the studies. This also accelerates effective peer study activity which is transparent by identifying strengths and weaknesses of reviews and easy access of quality studies in a systematic approach. Complete review approach in PRISMA approach create standard form and structure that generates smooth review. Moreover the system ensure regulation and transparency, fast and effective and efficiency and documents maintenance and upcoming proofing.

### **Significance of the study**

Natural heritage plays an essential role in all economic and development aspects of a country. Cultural heritage and tourism sector both have a growth facet and based on tourism development, it can create a positive development of rural societies (Maryam Pourzakarya 2022). The role of heritage tourism in rural regions can bring about a constructive response to regional competitiveness on regional employment and urban cultural tourism with optimistic approach for heritage-based sustainable development (Alessio D'Auria 2010). Tourism sectors are highly connected with culture and heritage in multiethnic societies where governments are motivated to establish a national identity (Joan. C. Henderson 2009). Many historical events and cultural heritage function as one of the best ways for promoting the tourism development of some global towns. During the last two decades, these cultural and historical events can create more fun and festival tourist movements for their region (Antonio Rojas-Rabaneda 2012).

The major economic growth of the country is rural tourism as a main backbone for the country's development and rural employment opportunity. Now-a-days most of the world's countries are turning towards a flourishing the tourism sector because most of the country's national income increased by natural heritage development and tourism (Oman Observer 2013). Heritage embraces a wide range of implications that may range from historical significances, political and cultural implications, intellectual and spiritual implications. In the state of instability, the topic culture turns into a transient and unclear concept (Park 2014). Misfat Al Abriyeen located in the Hamra of Sultanate of Oman, has probable prospects to demonstrate about the legacy to the various stakeholders around the world. Ministry of tourism has initiated strategies to construct and execute towards the sustainable development to protect bequest of the Misfat's ancient culture (Archiam 2016)

An approach of the government along with the local resident's combination leading to social aspects, economic elements, and cultural advantages to empower the neighbourhoods. The idea behind the project selection is to enhance the sustainability in local growth and expansion of idle assets at Misfat Al Abriyeen, Al Hamra, Oman and to develop trekking experience to attract new guests around the world, customised elements of the local villages, creating different business venture to residents of the village, and to encourage for foreign visitors (Rogelio Policarpio Flores et. a., 2019). The current research will explore the various potential areas of natural heritage and tourism development in surrounded regions. Based on this research, it helps to identify that the national economy and flourish and growth in per capita income, employment opportunities, living standard, rural development and improve the self-efficacy of the people in the regions (Asad Rehman 2020).

### **Statement of the problem**

Forty years of traditional lifespan of very few dwellings in Misfat Al Abriyeen has great values proving and saving Oman's heritage and cultural atmosphere. Hamra Village namely Misfat Al Abriyeen in Sultanate of Oman targets to protect the culture and custom of traditional villages through the ministry of tourism, ensuring the construction and execution of sustainable growth approach. Ministry of Tourism in sultanate concentrate in an active moral of infrastructural up gradation (Soumyen Bandyopadhyay et. al., 2014). Heritage villages have few challenges without having awareness for the residents, less knowledge about the tourism facilities and less capabilities. Misfat Al Abriyeen which is very tiny size society in the city of Al Hamra banks potentials of tourism facilities, empowering cultural advantages, ensuring income to the residents through tourism facilities of cultural collaborations (Rogelio Policarpio Flores et. al., 2019)

Based on this research work, researchers would find the national heritage values and cultural values in those particular areas. This study explores more level of dynamic change that future emerging the recent places of tourism sector in those regions, equip more economic strengthening of the citizens, growing employment opportunity, increase the per capita income of the people and well development of socio-economic activities of Al Hamra and Misfat Al Abriyeen regions. This research is imperative to the tourism development of the Sultanate of Oman. Oman is deficient in Unique Selling proposition for tourism development activities. It needs to indirectly distinguish tourism development from that of its competitors and derived with a solid brand image. However, compared to neighbourhood countries, Oman is not properly exploring their tourism spot, natural heritage, and cultural values hence there is no huge level of change in tourism development. In tourism, the development of the heritage has been classified into the categories of built heritage, scientific heritage, and cultural heritage. The built heritage is representing about the artistic heritage and historical heritage, like forts, relics, and current/latest cities. However, the aspect of scientific heritage embraces the plants, birds, animals, natural habitats and also rocks. The third classification is about the cultural heritage, the cultural heritage includes fine arts and folk, languages, and customs. (Park, 2014).

## **Literature review**

The objective of the proposed project is to create distinctive study in the tourism sector without disturbing atmosphere and customs in Sultanate of Oman to explore the cultural heritage by reviewing various literature relating to the natural heritage. German University for Technology in Oman has created a UNESCO approach on Tourism Management for global heritage and sustainability in Gulf Division along with the amalgamation of Arab Regional Centre for world heritage. Local and regional growth of heritage and values of the Misfat Al Abriyeen to plan and execute the approaches of the UNESCO on sustainable development. Socio-economic growth to enhance the most advantages to the localities and neighbourhood. Global legacy standard in the gulf region during 1972 consist of nineteen Arab nations in endorsing and administering values and environmental locations by safeguarding specialised validation and emphasizing the tradition through digital activities and socio-economic elements.

Kuwait is one of the richest gulf regions in GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) but when compared to other gulf countries little backward in their tourism development activities, if the country can concentrate more level in that tourism sector the economy will be more flourish, so the country policymakers and research scholars are represented to proposed mega-development projects for tourism development. In the modern scenario, all over the country, administration activities are highly related to boosting and developing their own heritage and culture values because it will give a positive impact on their economic growth (Cody Morris Paris et al 2017). Six GCC countries viz., KSA, UAE, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain are lacking in their tourism development activities, so the respective political system of a country can influences to restructure the tourism governance and tourism development policies for their own countries (Amitabh Upadhy 2017).

Halal tourism plays a significant role among the Muslim tourists; this is the new streamline in the tourism sector (Asad Rehman 2020). Some of the important Islamic nations like Malaysia, Indonesia, and Turkey show the new path of halal tourism industry to develop the new career development in tourism management, based on the impact of halal tourism while countries like Australia. U.K (United Kingdom) etc. are also entering into halal tourism business because too many global tourists are need in halal tourism (Al Hamra Health Centre 2017). The Sultanate of OMAN having all the supporting factors to provide destination for halal tourism is on its way out of the top rankings. It is imperative to identify the reasons behind Oman's decline in the field of halal tourism and to suggest useful guidelines for encouraging halal tourism in the Sultanate of Oman. The word Heritage intends about the communal, cultural, and constructed legacy and the antiquity of a particular people or place, which can be applied to create a uniqueness via telling tales. The word "Heritage" is frequently viewed as the choosy area and the representation of the elements of the past (Knox and Hannam, 2010, p. 192). Heritage is an influential topic, it has its own precise, it is extremely suggestable and philosophically charged but simultaneously it is not so clear to be functional with reference to the selected period of past. With this word Heritage, the consequence may change along with numerous designations, regulations, or invocations (DiGiovine, 2009).

The word Heritage is characterized as a social value, in explicit reference to the declaration of human rights (Faro Convention 2005). This convention gives a unique societal focused group to construct the heritage, this community of heritage contains the specific people who are valuing the specific facets of the cultural heritage as per their expectations. Through the context of the community activities, it is possible to them to transmit and sustain for the benefit of the coming generations (Dolff Bone kämper 2010). The convention of heritage is dealing with the landscape, heritage and expressing about the practical don'ts and do's (Van Londen and Fairclough 2010). Some other treaties are there before this convention and their aim is to connect human rights with heritage (Jukiletho,

2012). Bank Muscat and the Ministry of Tourism jointly proposed a venture to safeguard the culture and customs of Misfat Al Abriyeen as part of corporate social responsibility. The proposed scheme was to provide the advantage of residents to safeguard the milieu and social tradition with exceptional tourism practice towards justifiable progress and expansion.

Construction of the main front gate of Misfat Al Abriyeen village inviting the tourists and foreigners constructing coffee shops, restaurants, bakeries, souvenir activities, parking lots have been established attracting the neighbourhoods for establishing service prospects for residents and other business activities to the villagers contributing national growth and economy to improve small and medium scale entrepreneurs (TAS News Service 2019). Al Misfat Al Ahlia Company has amalgamated with Bank Muscat for the heritage project towards sustainable growth and development along with the support of residents of both private and public entities (Bureau 2019). Human resource expertise and abilities are the main reasons for appealing various tourists from around the globe. Training and counselling activities are crucial for the growth and development of the unskilled human resources who makes diversity and targets (Ritchie, J.R & Crouch, G.I (2003). Human capital is one of the significant factors that enforce sustainable impact on individuals' life, contribution to national growth and global effect feasible through inviting visitors and tourists, enhancing the earning levels of tourism industry and ensuring the unforgettable result for the benefit of people and communities (Macbeth, J., et. al., 2004).

An allied services from ministry, local community and other private personnel's shifting the old heritage villages into assets of tourism value that would benefit neighbourhoods of Misfat Al Abriyeen and Ertihal Trekking Place. Converting the assets and properties which are not used for long time related to antique kind helps to create supplementary income, formulating job, interface of culture, encouraging heritage and properties of community. Positive strategy is important from the government and community personnel for shifting the assets into more meaningful and usable in tourism and based activities (Aref, F., & Redzuan, M.B 2009). It is recognized the culture as the framework of human culture evolution. It is regarding the right to take part in the cultural life, and the right about the cultural heritage is rooted. For sure, it needs to connect with the essential needs like right to cloths, food, love, shelter, and finally security (Dolff Bone kämper, 2010).

Even though some of these relations are truly clear towards few things, but they are not broadly shared by heritage experts whomever are viewing the preservation work as the technical matter (Logan, 2012). Cultural heritage, diversity in culture and rights of the humans are three essential notions, which can be viewed as correlated. The inscription of heritage identification, monitoring and managing are assumed as a practices of the culture (Byrne 2008, Logan 2012). The main intention of connecting the heritage with human rights is to assure the wellbeing, freedom, and safety for the vulnerable groups as well as minorities (Sen, 1985). Civil and Political freedoms which contains peoples with the consideration of their opinions, is the contributory towards the human rights and democratic roles (Sen, 1999). The same awareness is also lead towards the connotation of the human rights with heritage, here people can be with different freedoms with many identities. That is why heritage is knotted with territory, identity and also politics. In various situations, it is also leads to raise the violence and conflict (Ruggles and Silverman, 2007).

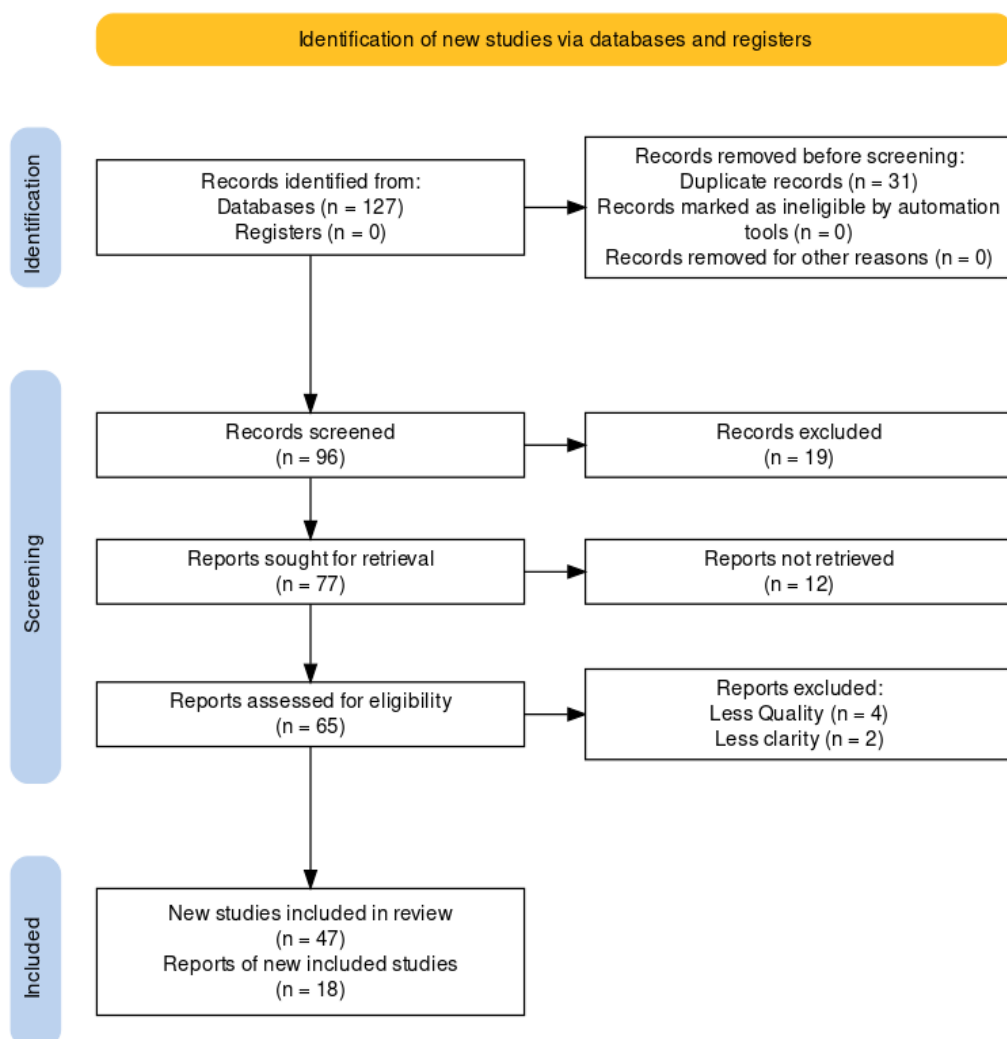
There are cases like, some of the minority groups and specific religious, ethnic groups are treated as outlasted, by the behaviour of the leading parties. It is especially to influence the particular identity to define their custom (Cooorm C 2006). Conventionally, cultural heritage is an expression of the numerous ways of living which was developed through a society, and it is to keep on passing through the generations, it covers the customs, practices, values, objects and also the artistic expressions. Cultural heritage is frequently expressed as either intangible or tangible. (ICOMOS, 2002). Natural heritage refers to geological, natural features, delineated areas and physiographical formations that creates the

environment of vulnerable types of plants, animals, and the value of the natural sites from the viewpoint of the conservation, natural beauty, or science. It contains public and privately protected natural areas, aquaria, zoos and natural habitat, botanical gardens, marine ecosystems, reservoirs, sanctuaries, etc. (United Nations World Tourism Organization 2004).

### Methodology

The researchers have chosen the topic and search engine has been utilized to find the related publications along with the key words and date of publication. Published research studies have been found in the Scopus indexed database, springer nature and emerald publications in the specified topic, thesaurus for the key words searched in the database of the topic. PRISMA flow chart depicts the summary of the screening procedure. In the beginning the study, records the total of studies retrieved, subsequently continued for the collection process which is apparent by the decision making process. PRISMA is a way of searching with the help of a server that helps to study and interpret various literature instinctually in an effective and protected mode. It is habitually an application programming interface that performs data mining through technologies. It ensures saving time and correcting the errors in compiling the studies by making database searches. This approach assists to retrieve several records along with programmed schematic migration.

### Discussion and Conclusion





Picture 1: Literature search protocol (Source: Authors)

The study is based on the heritage tourism which has different term that is used to experience the travelling sites and their antiquities, and other events which may genuinely reveals the stories and the interesting facts of the present and past of the focused location with its historic, cultural and the other resources which may naturally available (National Trust for Historic Preservation). Based on the usage of hereditary, socio-cultural, and environmental assets, heritage tourism is an economic activity, which is aimed to draw the attention of the visitors in long run (Oman official guide 2009). In domestic tourism, this activity is important, because it raises the honour in the history of the country. By extending the international tourism it is possible to raises the comprehension and respect about the other cultures. It also promotes the peace, awareness, and the understanding.

The flow diagram or flow chart is an outcome of the topic selected in the study. The flow chart supports the researchers to depict the different reviews of the researchers in determining the data related to the publication and its inclusion of related studies. Moreover, the PRISMA technique help to identify the review of different studies screened, the number of studies included, and the criteria of studies excluded. The records identified stage is significant in the systematic literature review derived from the search technique with the key words, title, heading of the topics and required limitations. The study shows one hundred and twenty seven records were identified and search engine depict thirty one files were removed with the duplication process. Records screened in the above flow chart as ninety six that are assessed by considering the records screened deducted the duplicate records. The duplicate records were excluded around nineteen those are irrelevant to the review process.

Seventy seven records were identified as sought for retrieval which are different from records screened and records excluded. Twelve records in the study have been identified as unavailable or inaccessible are treated as reports not retrieved. The difference between the reports sought for retrieval and reports not retrieved are treated as reports eligible and the study found sixty five records as reports assessed as eligible. Reports excluded in the study as four records due to less quality and two records due to less clarity on those comes under the ineligible criteria. The study also includes forty seven records those are eligible under the study category with the broad view and eighteen reports were found those are related to the topic in specific. The reason to exclude the study category are due to inappropriate to the topic selected, lack of the selected design, deficient data, or failure to connect restricted insertion standards.

## Conclusion

Systematic Literature review on the selected topic is justified in a systematic way by using PRISMA methodological approach to determine the studies with the help of flow diagram. The study also benefits to construct concrete evidence on the review of quality studies by following a systematic process on the topic chosen to support the objective of the selected study. Mountains and hills in Sultanate of Oman has potentials, possessing cultural heritage preserving environment regarding viable progress having significant exceptional topography, natural narration, biological assortment, and natural attraction. Heritage villages occupy two significant factors protecting and preserving exceptional sites, secondly conserving the incomparable natural spots, maintaining natural communities based on the growth of the localities. Sustainable Growth and advancement importantly depend on clearing the human commitments, concentrating on economic enhancement and recreation facilities (Urs Wiesmann and Mme Karina Liechti 2004). From the last few decades tourism has raised expressively and it is assumed that in near future it will grow with a much faster rate. In general, the term tourism is indicating about an activity which is connected to the short-term or the temporary visit of the people towards the other landing

places from their current living and working places. It also describes the tourist's interest and hobbies during the period of stay in the destinations of the tourism (Joppe, M 1996). Since 1975, the Government of Oman have developed a five-year tourism project. In all the five-year plans, all the essential goals have been accomplished effectively. During the time period of first ten years, they are allotted the essential funds to organize the infrastructures and the basic structures, but the tourism importance was not identified as a vital facet in the country's economy. By the time of nineties, a vast improvement has been made, general tourism directorate and the rules to be followed by the tourists were created. Then visa for the tourist were introduced and the first plan about the real tourism development was began (Chambers 2009).

During the year 2004, the Omani government established the Ministry of Tourism, and the actual tourist boom was started raised by the time around 2010. Tourism in the country was reached to its peak during 2013 and it started playing a significant role in the economic sector of the country. Unfortunately, the successive and the repetitive attacks of terrorist in Europe are destructively obstructed this tourism sector, as a result number of tourist from Europe are dropped to the entire Middle East countries and also in the Arabian Gulf between the time period of 2014-2016. Due to this experience, from the starting period of 2017, the Ministry of Omani Tourism is particularly focused about the further development of the tourism sector and the further investment has been poured to create the new structures. (Beatrice Bizzaro (2020). UNESCO 1972 has legally accepted in the seventeenth sitting of the world heritage and cultural villages around the globe by the selection criteria to include in the world heritage societies. During the year 2003 the UNESCO has authorized that there were one hundred and seventy-two villages against five hundred and eighty two estimated villages (UNESCO 1972). The estimation has predicted around one lakh heritage sites worldwide (WHC, 2003).

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