

Revitalization of Cultural Landscape: Barsana in Braj Mandal

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Abstract— The cultural Landscape of Braj region is an interesting case of the close symbiosis between its sacred geography, environmental values and religious pilgrimage. The 84 kosi braj mandal parikrama initiating at Mathura, includes various sacred sites associated with Lord Krishna's life. Barsana, being the birthplace of Radha Rani, holds special importance in this parikrama. It is closely linked with the divine pastimes of Radha and Krishna allowing pilgrims to spiritually connect with their love and devotion. Numerous devotees flock to Barsana and complete its parikrama sometimes on foot to witness the divinity and spirituality associated with the place. Over time an unprecedented influx of pilgrims/tourists coupled with manifold urban growth patterns have impacted the ethos of the place. The need for revitalization of Barsana's Sacred Landscape is to help restore them to their former health at least, while amalgamating ways to strengthen the way to prosperity through holistic mechanisms and fostered cooperation.

Index Terms— Cultural landscape; Heritage; Holistic development; Braj Mandal; Barsana; Parikrama

I. INTRODUCTION

The sacred landscape of the Indian subcontinent can be visualized as network of pilgrimage sites intertwined with nature. The interaction with the cultural landscape is reflected in the tradition of paying homage to the divine through nature which is at the foundation of faith.

At these sites, the natural landscape is intertwined with religious beliefs and practices, and rituals enacted in reverence to nature form an essential part of the local culture [1]. The motivations for pilgrimage are complex and can be classified into several types: devotional, healing, socially obligatory, ritual cycle - whether related to the calendar of stages of human life or 'wandering' [2] however, end up in the embrace of nature hoping to experience a connection with the divine [1].

The sacred landscape of Braj in Northern India presents an intriguing case study of the intimate relationship between pilgrimage, sacred geography, and environmental values.

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Although Braj shares many features with other pilgrimage sites across India, the region is unique in its religious-cultural ethos centered on pastoralism and includes many sacred sites located on the Yamuna riverbanks, Aravalli Hills, and other water bodies.

While nature and culture once coexisted in harmonious balance in this landscape, insensitive development and the continually increasing number of pilgrims today exceed the sites' carrying capacities. Remediating sacred rivers and hills and restoring sacred groves could rekindle a rapidly disappearing cultural landscape with the potential to spur a mass movement for environmental protection and conservation.

A. Braj Mandal and Parikrama

Braj Mandal is a region in India that holds great significance in Hindu mythology and culture. The term 'braj' is derived from Sanskrit word vraja which means 'an enclosure of herdsmen'. Vraja is also used to delineate a place where cows roam, hence the term was used to rename a place which is associated with early years of Krishna and where he grazed his cattle [3]. Many scholars believe that the Braj was designated as a territorial nomenclature by Chaitanya and his followers [4].

As for the extents of Braj or Braj Mandal, various religious texts such as Garga-samhita defines the boundary of the cultural landscape. The district gazetteer of Mathura states that Bara situated in the district of Aligarh marks the eastern boundary of Braj [5]; Sonhada in the district of Gurugram makes the north-western corner; and Jajaugan in the Dhaulpur district make the southern boundary. Hence, in today's context, Braj is divided into two regions - one of eastern part of Yamuna which encompasses Gokul, Baldeo, Mant, and Naujhil; and other on western part of Yamuna which includes parts of Mathura district (Vrindavan, Mathura, Govardhan, Chhata, Kosi, Nandgaon, and Barsana), Bharatpur (Kaman and Deeg tehsil), and Hodal tehsil of Palwal district.

Braj represents a region rich in natural and ecological resources with its most important elements being the holy river Yamuna, hilly terrain of Aravalli range, van and upvan (sacred groves), and water bodies. Earlier, these elements were the subject of worship while idols and shrines were secondary. To honour these elements as part of Krishna, the Chaurasi kos yatra was established in 16th century by Gosain Vitthalnath and Narayan Bhatt, both disciples of Sri Chaitanya [6]. It is a traditional pilgrimage route covering approximately 270 kilometres (or 168 miles) in Braj Mandal. The term "kos" refers to a unit of distance, and "parikrama" means circumambulation or pilgrimage.

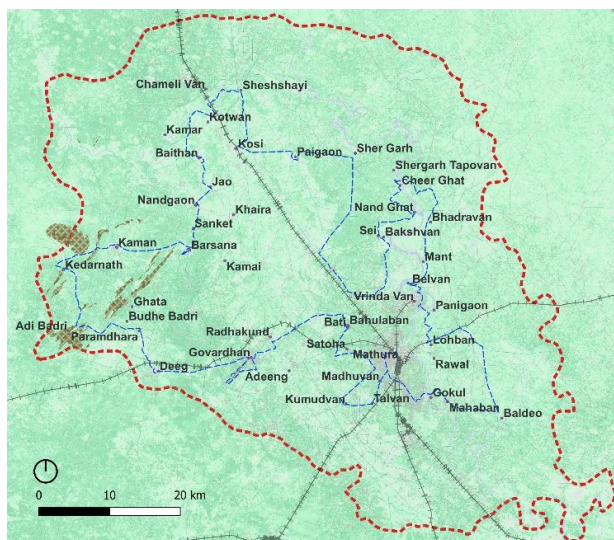


Figure 1. Map of Braj Mandal. (source: Author)

The pilgrimage typically starts and ends in Mathura and includes visits to various sacred sites associated with Lord Krishna's life, such as the Krishna Janmabhoomi (birthplace of Krishna) in Mathura, the Banke Bihari Temple in Vrindavan, Nandgaon, Barsana, the Govardhan Hill, and the Radha Kund in Govardhan, among others. Devotees undertake this pilgrimage as an act of devotion and to seek blessings. It's believed that completing the 84 Kos Parikrama brings spiritual merit and fulfilment. The journey is traditionally done on foot, and it can take several days to complete, with pilgrims observing various rituals and practices along the way.

B. Barsana: Significance and Lore

The focus of this study is on one of the highly significant cultural and historical pilgrimage towns in the western region of Braj mandal. The settlement of Barsana is a historical town and a Nagar panchayat in the Mathura District and lies at an approximate distance of 50 kilometers from Mathura City, in the north-western direction.

Barsana holds significance in the Braj Mandal Parikrama as it is intimately linked to the divine leelas (pastimes) of Radha and Krishna, allowing pilgrims to connect with the spiritual essence of their love and devotion as depicted in Fig.3. Barsana is believed to be the birthplace and residence of Radha Rani, Krishna's beloved consort.

The town is cradled at the foothill of two hills which rising from the plains near Bharatpur border. The western hill is known as Brahmagiri and the pass between the two hills is known as Sankri Khor. Brahmagiri has four prominent peaks which are linked with the life of Krishna and Radha. These



Figure 2. Aerial view of Radha Rani temple in Barsana (source: Brijmohan Brijwasi, YouTube [7])

peaks have been exemplified by temples such as Shri Radha Rani Mandir as visible in Fig.2, Maan Mandir, Daangarh, and Mor Kuti. The hills and terrain of the region have also resulted in the formation of several water bodies which still exist on fringes of the city. Some of these kundas such as Priya Kund and Pili Pokhar were commissioned by nobles of royal families of Bharatpur, Scindhia, and Holkar.



Figure 3. A fresco of Radha Krishna in Kushal Bihari temple, Barsana (source: magikindia.com)

Similarly, the town is rich in layers of history which is evident in the form of built heritage. There are various havelis and *dharamshalas* along with public sites such as temples, baoli, and *chaupal* that have stood against the onslaught of time. Most of these structures/sites were constructed in the 18th and 19th century.

The famous town square or the *Rangili Chowk* is highly regarded as the starting point of 'Lathmar Holi' of Barsana. According to the belief of the devotees on the day of Holi, Krishna and his friends would come from Nandgaon to Barsana and playfully tease Radha and her friends. She and her friends drove them away by hitting them with sticks. In line with that tradition, every year on Holi, men from Nandgaon come to Barsana and the women hit them with *lathis*, or sticks. During the parikrama, devotees stop at Barsana to seek blessings and immerse themselves in the divine atmosphere associated with Radha's birthplace. The two important festivals celebrated in the city are Lathmar holi and Radhashtami. Basant Panchami announces spring and Holi in Braj, and celebrations reach their peak a week before



Figure 4. Lathmar Holi at Rangeeli chowk, Barsana (source: punjabkesari.in)

Holi. Amidst showers of rainbow colors and rasiya songs, Gopis of Barsana chase Gwalas of Nandgaon with green bamboo sticks in good humor, as seen in Fig 4.

This festival is usually celebrated in March, typically days before the actual Holi in the neighboring towns of Barsana and Nandgaon near Mathura. People gather in Rangeeli gali then proceed to Sri Radha Rani Temple for the start of Lathmar holi celebration and then it is celebrated in the whole town along with neighboring villages. The celebration ends with Rang Panchmi, five days after Holi. Radhashtami celebration is observed after 15 days of Janmashtami, usually celebrated in September.

C. Importance and need of revitalization.

As a region with layers of rich cultural footprint and diverse history, Braj is revered as one of the most important cultural landscapes in the country. Its association with Krishna along with rich historical narrative commencing from age of Mauryan and Sunga empires to Jat and British empire, has led to the foundation of several historic sites. The land has been graced by several saints and scholars and it was also an important center of the Bhakti movement.

After the 16th century, with the establishment of the concept of Braj and Chaurasi Kos Yatra, the region has welcomed numerous devotees, pilgrims, saints, and scholars. This number has gradually increased over the years until the last few decades, when the region witnessed a spurt of visitors which has led to haphazard growth of the settlements. This has led to degradation of ecological resources, deterioration, and encroachment upon of built heritage, and overall downfall of the cultural landscape.

On the other hand, the economic impact of tourism-oriented development on local communities is among the major causes to bring changes in the economic structure of a destination. Pilgrimage and Tourism are a major driver of economic development in the Braj area with roughly 40% of the workforce engaged in tertiary jobs related to tourism [8]. The local community of a destination indulges in various occupations & services which are the major source of capital & income generation for them. Whereas due consideration must be given to the nature & type of tourism activities. Tourism is creating employment opportunities producing return on investment for emerging economies, improving standard of living, and bringing technology all together as a positive force for the local community. Local communities' survival is widely dependent on this basic income for a full week, even in Barsana a sizeable portion of the income is generated at the weekends time or during festivals.

In the current scenario, tourism has been steadily growing, up until the COVID 19 pandemic, post which we see a sharp rise as per the government tourism data in the Mathura district. In the specific case of Barsana, the data is scant and only shows up to 2021, however does show a steady growth post-pandemic [9]. The driving force behind all these events is the prosperity of the region, however, there is a silent cost being paid by the ecology and heritage of the region.

Furthermore, the census projections after 2011 place the local population at 15,700 in 2024 with a 40% growth rate when compared to 11,184 in 2011 [10]. The higher influx of pilgrims/tourists and growing local population is expected to have built up pressure on the current settlement which sees unprecedented urban growth patterns and impact on the built and natural fabric of the settlement. Thus, it is evident that the

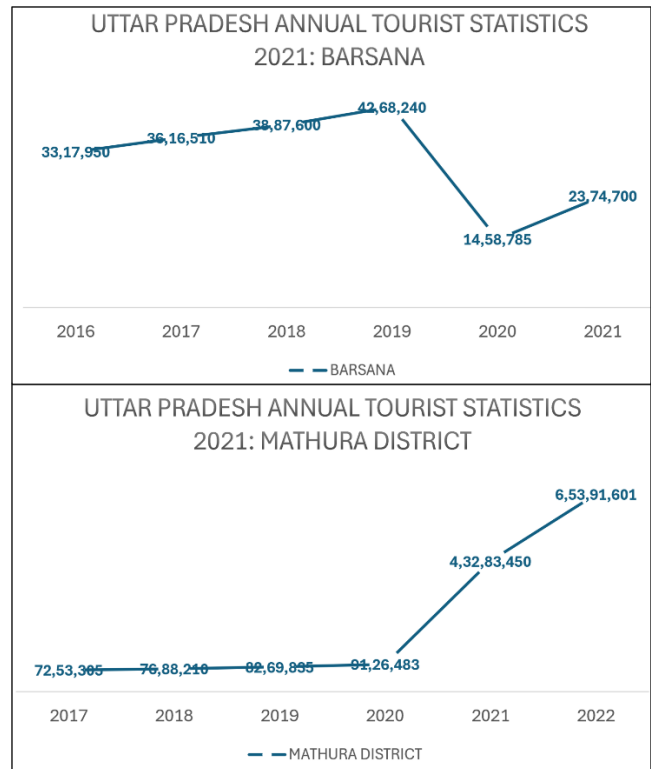


Figure 5. Tourist Statistics 2016-2022. (Source: Author, based on data from U.P. Tourism [9].)

settlement and its systems need to be updated and sensitively developed to cater to the new needs while safeguarding the ethos of the place. The need for revitalization is to help restore the sacred landscapes to their former health at least, while amalgamating ways to strengthen the way to prosperity through holistic mechanisms and fostered cooperation.

II. PROCESS

Framework of research

A. Preliminary stage:

Braj is one of the most studied cultural landscapes of India, which essentially means that there is no scarcity of information available on the region. This stage majorly includes secondary study of available data for the region and sorting information related to cultural mapping, parikrama routes, tangible and intangible cultural resources.

B. Primary survey and documentation:

Onsite data collection through urban and architectural study of the fabric of the settlement and its functions. First person experiences translated to tangible data layouts and maps which help to set perspectives and make decisions. A team of researchers and students of Faculty and Architecture and Planning, A.K.T.U, Lucknow were responsible for the collection and compilation of the data.

C. Analysis:

Systematic and holistic study based on the primary data, on the current conditions, ranging from urban to individual sites, thus, bring to surface target areas and possibilities in dealing with issues.

D. Proposal for interventions:

Suggestions and guidelines, post-identification of current dysfunctions, possibilities to rectify the issues can be explored at both macro and micro scales.

III. OUTCOME

A. Observations and Analysis:

To understand the settlement from a rationalized and scientific standpoint, surveys were conducted through site visits, photographic documentation, and measured documentations. This data was plotted using multiple platforms such as GIS and CAD to present a clear picture of urban settings and study its behavior.

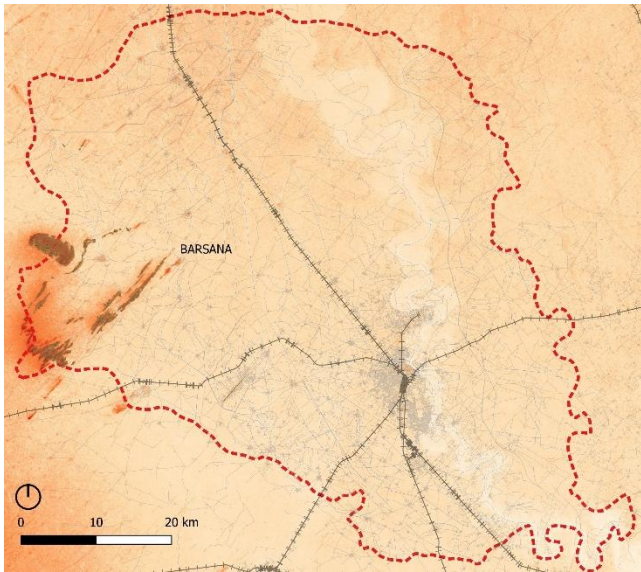


Figure 6. Relief map of Braj Mandal depicting the location of Barsana. (source: Author)

Barsana lies in a semi-arid region in the fringe of denudational and fluvial geo-morphological zones. This landscape is an extension of Aravali structure as in Fig.6, and Fig. 7, with two hills (depicted in red) in proximity. The hill landscape also features shallow soil depth with low water retention, alkalinity and higher porosity which makes it susceptible to erosion [11].

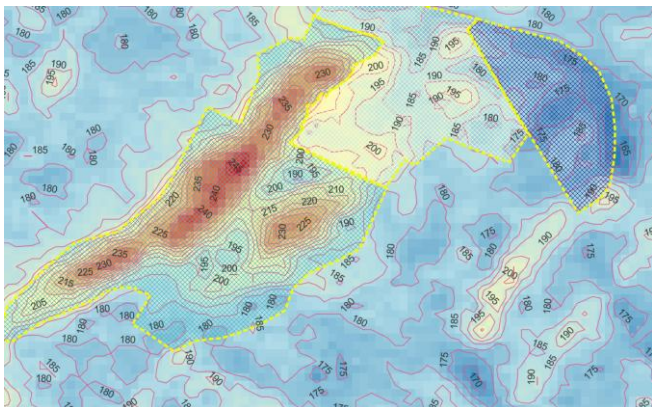


Figure 7. Relief and contour map of Barsana. (source: Author)

The landscape of Barsana consists of two distinct characters, namely the hill slopes and foothill plains with a variation of 70m in elevation, as depicted in the relief map in Fig.7 and Fig 8.

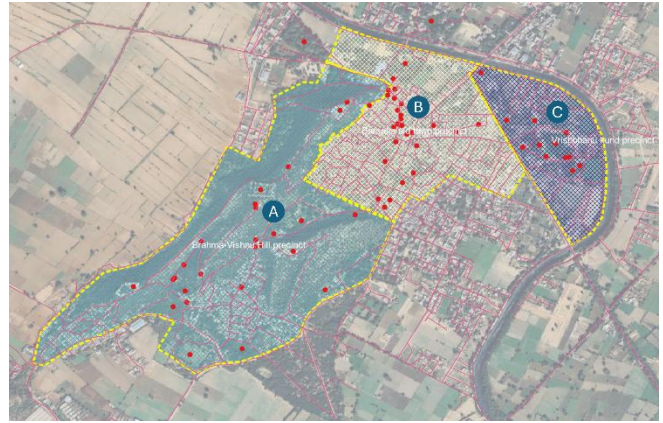


Figure 8. Map depicting various significant sites and zones in Barsana town. (source: Author)

As observed, the settlement based on its geo-morphology and layout can be divided into three zones, A. The hills, B. Settlement, and across the district major road, C. around Vrishbhanu kund as depicted in Fig. 8. The hill houses various sacred and ecologically relevant sites; and a larger portion of the parikrama.

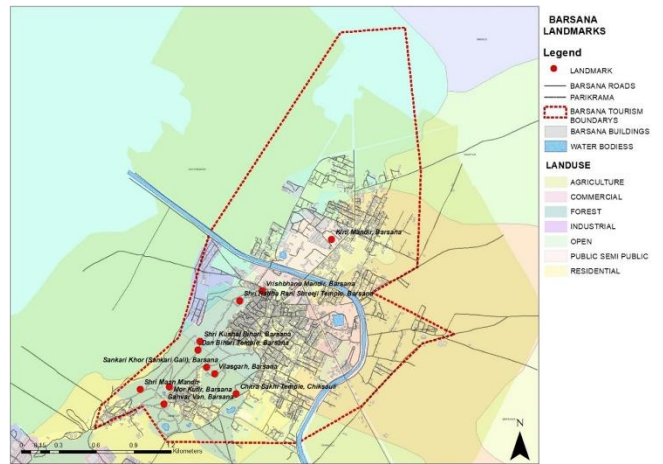


Figure 9. Digitized GIS map of Barsana and peripherals. (Source: Author)

The settlement has various cultural sites such as streets, squares, and heritage structures like the third zone around the Vrishabhanu Kund. The settlement is majorly residential in land-use and has commercial streets on the entrance leading to the Radha Rani temple as an expected outcome of the tourism driven sector as evident in the land-use maps of Barsana town and Chiksauli village, see Fig.10. The built density in zone B is the highest given the fact that this was the historic urban part of Barsana with old havelis and mansions sporadically built with fortifications and narrow streets.

The Barsana parikrama is a cultural/spiritual trail connecting multiple sites with religious/spiritual value to the pilgrims and visitors. The parikrama majorly covers the sites on the hill of Brahmagiri with Temples, Vans and Kunds associated with religious beliefs connected to Leelas of Radha and Krishna which the pilgrims tread for a spiritual connect with the divine in a circumambulatory pattern. Parikrama of Barsana covers Brahmachal Parwat which constitutes four hill tops namely, Vrishabhanu/Bhan Garh, Dan Garh, Vilas Garh, Maan Garh, which extends to the surrounding settlements, as seen in Fig.11.

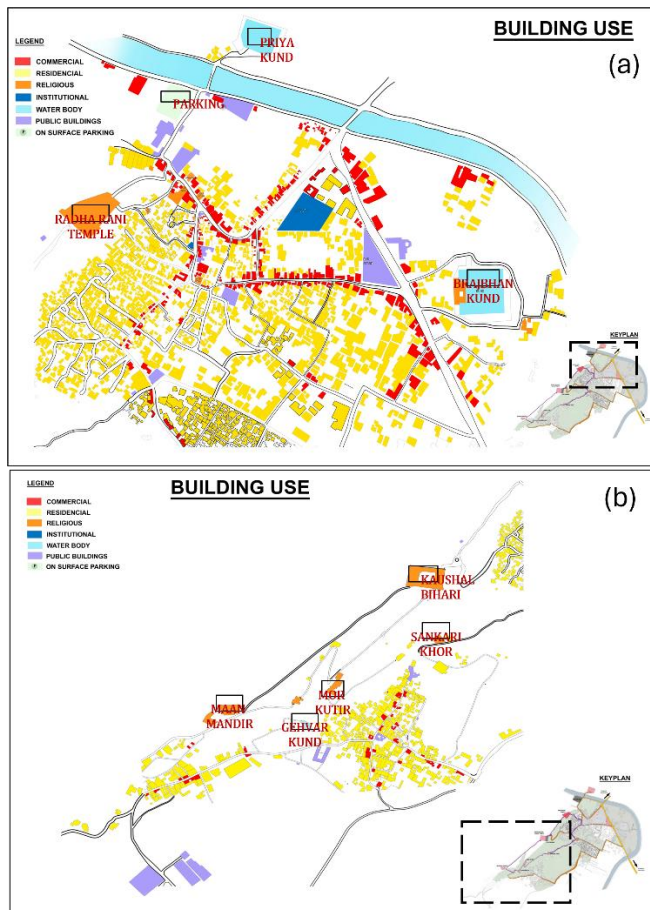


Figure 10. Urban built-use map of Barsana, a) Old town Barsana, b) Chiksauli village. (source: Author)

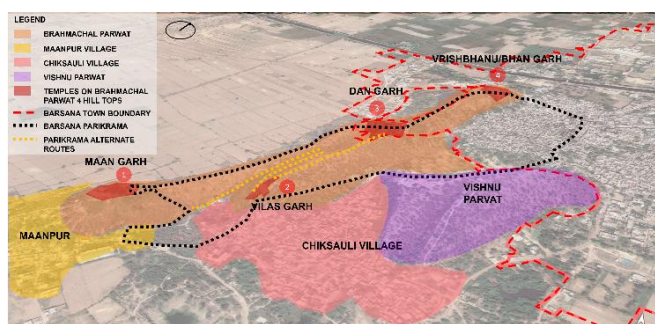


Figure 11. Barsana parikrama with the Garhs/forts on hill tops. (source: Author)

The settlement of Barsana has 64 sites which have socio-cultural importance and are significant for visitors and residents. The context of these sites does vary from their significance point of view ranging from sacredness to historical to ecological. The most popular of which is the Shri Radha rani temple as it is core of the religious beliefs that anchor the ethos of Barsana and provides with an opportunity of stunning views of the surrounding landscapes [12]. This is followed by spots which lie on the parikrama such as Man mandir, Jaipur mandir, Gahvar van and so on; as depicted in Fig.12. There are other sites in Barsana which are part of its built and ecological heritage and community which hold significance and are points of interest in the town. This town also has an array of old structures of architectural and cultural interest which are privately owned, however this study does not delve into their documentation. Sites with public or trust

ownership have been listed in Table I.

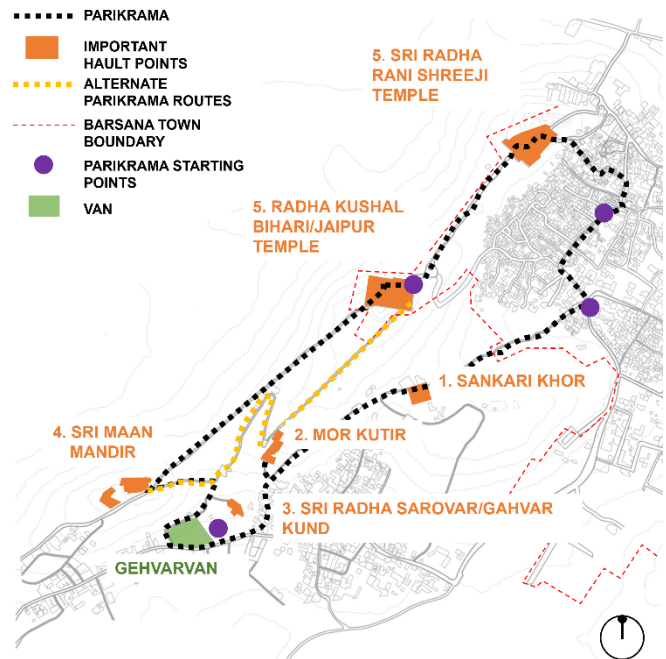


Figure 12. Barsana parikrama route with important sites. (source: Author)

Table I. List of significant sites in the three zones of Barsana. (source: Author)

ZONE A		ZONE B		ZONE C	
The twin hills of Barsana with four garhs on Brahma hill and one garh on the Vishnu hill and the forest land.		Heritage old town of Barsana with havelis, streets and squares.		Area around the Vrishabhanu Kund, separated by major district road 143W.	
1	Shri Radha Rani Temple	1	Pracheen Mahibhan Ji Temple	1	Vrishabhanu Kund
2	Lakha Banjara Mahal	2	Poddar Bhawan	2	Jal Mahal
3	Jaipur Mandir	3	Poddar Bagicha	3	Pillar with Sanskrit Inscription
4	Maan Mandir	4	Sudama Chowk	4	Stone Pillar
5	Gahvar Van	5	Kuan Chowk	5	Kirti Kund
6	Gahvar Chowk	6	Phool Gali Darwaza		
7	Krishna Kund	7	Rangili Chowk		
8	Dohani Kund	8	Chaupal		
9	Sankri Khor Chowk	9	Shri Radha Gopal Mandir		
10	Mahaprabhu Ji Ki Baithak	10	Bhumiya Baba Chowk		
11	Mor Kuti	11	Girdhar Gopal Temple		
12	Daangarh Baoli	12	Barsana Baoli		
13	Gopal Kuti				

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14	Krishna Kund				
15	Jal Vihar Kund				

Only a handful of these sites have received protected status, while others remain in a dangerously exploitable situation. With rapid urbanization and uncontrolled development, these sites constantly struggle to retain their sanctity, especially the ones with ecological characters.

B. Inferences

1) Zone A

Located on the hill, this zone is most popular among all visitors for its highly important cultural, sacred, and visually appealing sites. The Barsana parikrama also takes place in and around this zone and thus, makes it the area with the highest footfall in the settlement of Barsana. Ecological and natural water systems display strain due to lack of sensitivity in development and maintenance systems. Drainage and waste management systems are inadequate or non-existent.

The topography of the site poses a challenge in accessibility with most of the parikrama accessible on foot, however, not necessarily paved or easily walkable. Lack of wayfinding systems is another challenge which makes the experience quite challenging. With a busy footfall, public amenities were found to be inadequate and unevenly distributed. Structures like Lakha Banjara Mahal with historic significance have high potential for conservation and adaptive reuse interventions.

2) Zone B

This zone is better accessible on foot for visitors due to narrow streets, and thus it is important that the walking experience needs to be holistically envisioned. The streets of the old town need attention on their maintenance and are flanked by open drains which carry grey water from the buildings. Sanitation and waste management are a constantly challenged theme throughout the settlement.

Wayfinding signages, though can be found at some places as wall painted directions but a constant and even coverage through designed interpretation and guidance is far from adequate. Similarly, tourist amenities such as toilets, rest stops, drinking water etc. cannot be found at regular intervals. Due to rising tourism and increasing population, the developmental pressure is visible through various individualistic and encroached construction, which can choke a positive development in the future. The uncontrolled changes in the dense urban fabric threaten to deface the character of this zone.

3) Zone C

This zone has more open spaces and is accessible for vehicles due to its proximity to the district road. This zone has similar shortcomings as zone B, in terms of wayfinding and interpretation, however, does not have any public amenities. It houses the only state protected archaeological structure, the pillar with Sanskrit inscription. The low-density of built up and open -spaces with higher green-cover in this zone are a plus point for future development. In the case of Barsana, revitalization of the cultural and ecological landscape is only

possible once the basic infrastructural needs are provided to the residents as well as the visitors.

C. Proposals for interventions

Based on the study, some target areas have been identified where positive interventions can be a key to catalyze the revitalization of the settlement in a holistic fashion.

1) Shared and collaborative responsibilities for significant sites and precincts

Sites with significance need more effort in management and upkeep and thus, require active collaborations between Nagar panchayats with a dedicated body to oversee the development and maintenance of Barsana and the entire Braj region. The U.P.B.T.V.P. (Uttar Pradesh Braj Teerth Vikas Parishad) is such a body which has the role of preserving the cultural heritage and tourism of Mathura district. This can be an opportunity to spearhead the positive development and conservation of heritage while bringing together various urban local and state bodies such as ecology, tourism etc. to help bring into life a sensitive and holistic development system.

2) Developmental controls

It is observed that not more than a couple of sites are under protection from a cultural/ heritage standpoint. This is extremely dangerous, and its adverse effects have a fair share in the current degradation of these sites. Encroachments, insensitive and non-contextual repairs, and additions have been observed to be defacing the character of the cultural assets. Thus, the first step is to preserve the character and embolden the contextual development through declaration of protected precincts, and further establish controls and regulations to cull uncontrolled and disruptive development.

3) Capacity building through education and skill development for local communities

To invigorate the local economy, it is important to imbibe the new skill development and education. This not only helps the locals to better understand the details of a tourism-oriented approach but also sensitizes them towards their own heritage and environmental protection and its true value. The tourism sector of Barsana has further potential with guides and transportation services which would allow the visitors a guided tour of the settlement. The current situation with local 2-wheeler and e-rickshaw farers can be turned into a formalized business sector along with guided tours through the streets and generate income.

Strengthened by MNREGS scheme, the formalization of local services and economic activities can strengthen the economic backbone and lead to a self-sufficient system.

4) Investment in holistic infrastructural and services development.

Based on the expected growth of tourism and local population, it is evident that there is a serious need to address the issue of services in the town.



Figure 13. Streets of Barsana with open drain system. (source: Author)

As per observations, in its current state, the town lacks a sewage network, thus, relying on individual soak pit/STPs model with grey water from kitchen and other areas flowing into open drains on both side of the streets, as depicted in Fig.13. This system is not only inadequate but also poses a threat to nearby water bodies and the entire sacred landscape. Similar is the case of waste management, which also becomes a major concern in this context as depicted in Fig.14. Establishing a robust network for sewage and waste management is the primary need of the settlement which ensures a healthy growth of town and conservation of the local landscape.



Figure 14. Waste dump near Sankhri khor. (source: Author)

Given the topography, rocky terrain, and the fact that full scale urban sewage system might be unviable financially, however, community level decentralized sewage treatment systems can be a preferable choice. This would be a modular and robust system which has the potential to grow as the settlement grows.

5) Restoration and preservation of ecological connections.

The essence of Braj is its ecological sanctity with kund and vans which in the current scenario of infrastructural development and urban development are compromised due to insensitive built obstructions.



Figure 15. Dohani Kund in a dried-up state with the entrance culvert blocked with vegetation, April 2023. (Source: Author)

Dohani kund is one such case among others which runs dry today, where insensitive development has adverse effects and poses a threat to its existence, as seen in Fig.15. Insensitive construction of roads and built features, cutting off the natural drainage patterns and reducing permeability of the land are the key causes of the hydrological disruption, as in Fig.16.

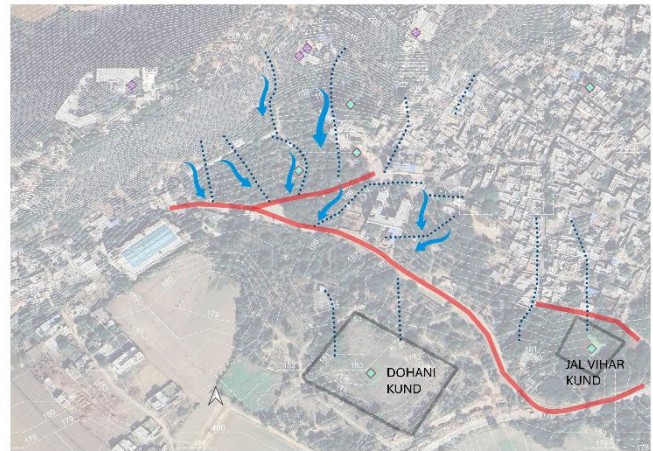


Figure 16. Hydrological study of Dohani Kund catchment from Vishnu hill, (Source: Author)

A Storm water management system is the immediate requirement here, which sensitively carries water as per the natural topography and watershed through robust drainage network and is retrofitted with necessary filtration mechanism to convey the storm runoff to water bodies and restores the ecological function of the landscape.

6) Pro- pedestrian development

Owing to the history of the region, it is observed that the settlement was built based on fortifiable design with narrow lanes and defensible gates. This and the sacredness have contributed to the fact that the hidden gems of settlement are largely accessible on foot. Though this might be an inconvenience to some, it is also a boon in disguise to showcase the cultural galleries of the settlement with carefully curated and maintained streetscapes, which make it a pleasant experience for the visitors.

The Barsana parikrama majorly has two distinct characters, a. Through the streets of the settlement, b. Trail on the hills and forest. The lanes and streets are narrow and paved which restricts vehicular access, which is a better condition for pedestrians. The pathways on the hill present themselves to be a challenge in terms of their built quality and lack of safety for the pedestrians as seen in Fig.17.

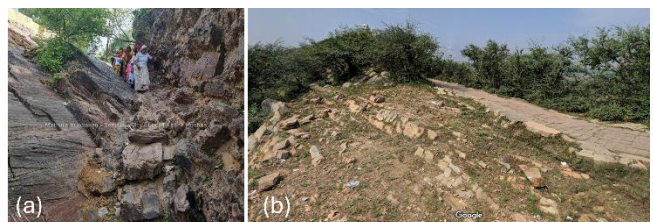


Figure 17. Trails in (a) Sankhri Khor, (b) Ridge on Brahmagiri. (Source: Google Street view)

Since the parikrama is one the most significant activities for Barsana and thousands of devotees' tread on it at times, it is important that these walkways accommodate their safety and

comfort. The pathways on the hill are constructed on the ridge with steep slopes on both sides which can become dangerous given the higher number of pedestrians.

Safety rails and resting places are important features which are missing and need to be in place on such pathways. The trail in Sankri Khor is made up of large boulders and is undulating, which can become dangerous and a challenge for those who walk on it.



Figure 18. Reference for safety rails and elevated walkways. (Multiple internet sources)

Given the geological and ecological significance of this hill pass, it is also important to sensitively reduce its wear and tear from this activity. Elevated paths and boardwalks can be a viable solution to ease the user experience and protect the natural features wherever necessary, see Fig.18.

7) Amenities

As observed, the location of public amenities is better in Barsana town as compared to the far end hill near Mangarh. As per existing national urban guidelines, amenities such as toilets and drinking water should be situated within fair walking distance or approx. 500m apart [13]. To uplift the tourist experience, these necessary services need to be provided, especially when on foot.

8) Interpretation and wayfinding

The existing signages are result of lack of structuring and investments which are hard to comprehend for visitors, as seen in Fig.19. Though some effort is visible on part of the Braj foundation and U.P.B.T.V.P., are limited to individual sites. A holistic and multilingual guidance system is non-existent, which holds back on ease of access for tourists.



Figure 19. Existing wayfinding and signage systems (a) Near Pili Kothi junction, (b) Rangeeli Chowk, (c) Sudama Chowk. (Source: Author)

The parikrama and the settlement of Barsana requires an interpretation center with a navigational signage layout which informs, educates, and enriches the experience.

Location and orientation signages to be at every junction of the entrance from the district roads and the parikrama path along with guidance and direction signages. Information and Amenities signages to be placed at points of significance.

9) Inclusion of façade control and maintenance for specific sacred/cultural/heritage routes.

Revival of indigenous architectural facades can help rejuvenate the visual and contextual experience of visitors. The ethos of the place should be reflected in its street experience as evident from the remaining few areas.



Figure 20. Difference in character of streets, (a) Towards Sudama Chowk from Pili Kothi, (b) Rangeeli Chowk and onwards

The rapidly declining/changing character of streets scape misleads into a false sense of the place, as seen in Fig.20. To preserve the sense and memory of the place, it is important to impose a designed façade guideline and preserve the existing significant ones through various urban design interventions. A similar approach is required for town squares and significant routes, such as the *Rangeeli gali*, *Rangeeli chowk*, *Sudama chowk* etc. which have significance and should be paid heed to and are mandated under HRIDAY [14] scheme of the Govt. of India.

IV. CONCLUSION

The settlement is currently in a state of steady decline, which through timely intervention has the potential to become a holistic tourism experience with inclusion for the local communities. Through placement of cooperative mechanisms and systems in place, it is expected that the attitude of the local and visitors will be restored to the original state where the respect for nature and the divine are intertwined with another, in both cultural and physical sense. The experience of Barsana and the Braj can be restored to its former glory and better, which would be interlinked with prosperous tourism, growth in economy and robust urban-rural infrastructure.

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