Strategies for Revitalization of the Old Urban Texture in Aran-va-Bidgol

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction
Old urban textures are among the most invaluable and precious cultural heritages, which attest to a grand and honorable civilization. Nowadays, historic and old areas are, mostly, afflicted with natural erosion resulting from the passage of time, presence of humans and its concomitant factors. Gradually, these textures are frayed and paying attention to the ancient structures of old cities, planning for keeping, reviving and organizing their fundamental framework can be conducive to the survival of a city. The first aim of the present study is to answer the question concerning the extant potentials and limitations of cultural, economic and physical development of old texture and the strategies and solutions leading to a comprehensive and sustainable development. The second aim of this study is to investigate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats from the settlers’ point of view. Finally, with regards to the mentioned standpoints and viewpoints, this study aims to propose proper solutions and strategies, using SWOT analysis for the purpose of targeted and effective utilization of points of strength and opportunities and reinforcing or removing limitations and threats.

2. Theoretical Framework
Paying attention to the urban texture in general, and old urban textures in particular, goes back to nearly half a century ago and this attention, throughout the world and during the past decades, has assumed various forms. The advent and emergence of sciences related to urban planning, has also led to circulation and dissemination of disparate theories concerning cities and physical development of urban textures. The present research deals with viewpoints concerning reviving, empowering, and sustainable development.

3. Method
With regards to the nature of the issue at hand and the factors under study, the research method of the study is based on documentary analysis and is an analytical descriptive one. Library research and scaling have been used in the study. In the scaling section, for general questions, descriptive analysis (descriptive statistics) was used to analyze the data using SWOT analysis. In addition, the current situation of the area under study was also analyzed. Then the outlooks and priorities on the basis of the strategic plan, utilizing advantages, limitations, opportunities and threats were evaluated and finally strategies for achieving the outlook were proposed. The research population consists of experts and specialists in the field of modernization and renovation of old urban textures, from which 30 people were selected and asked to fill in a questionnaire.

4. Discussion and Conclusion
In this section, with the aim of identifying the four-fold strategic criteria, first all the documents, records and books concerning old urban textures were studied. In the next step, the findings were refined, summarized, combined and added up, yielding a comprehensive list of strategic factors. Accordingly, 17 intrinsic strategic factors (including 9 advantages and 8 limitations) and 19 extrinsic strategic factors (including 9 opportunities and 10 threats) were identified and rated with respect to their importance and rank. After identifying and evaluating intrinsic and extrinsic factors and thus distinguishing key elements from tangential ones, it was time for proposing and selecting the strategies. This task
was accomplished using the “Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats” matrix, also called “the matrix for conflation of strategic elements”. Thus, materialization of social justice together with creation and formation of a secure, favorable environment for the purpose of citizen’s living and activities, in line with enjoyment of equal living opportunities, are among the major objectives in the perspective document for Iran and, undoubtedly, old urban textures, which are afflicted with physical, social, economic and other problems and challenges, have created environments discrepant with these objectives. The historical, old texture of Iranian cities, which mostly form the main and central kernel of the cities are considered as a part of their cultural and historic heritage, making their protection, physical renovation and operational improvement inevitable. The presence of distressed textures and illicit settlements in Iran is one of the urban ailments, begetting many of the anomalies economically, socially, culturally speaking and in terms of hygiene and safety. In order to rise to such challenges and to ensure the safety of citizens, vis-à-vis low-quality, old and worn out constructions, such districts should be renovated and modernized. Identifying the physical and operation status of such textures, for the purpose of planning and managing their preservation and maintenance, are among the most important, urgent measures to be adopted.

5. Suggestions
With regards to the proposed strategies, for the purpose of their implementation the following are recommended:
A) Competitive/offensive strategies (SO)
• Attracting tourists, creating income and jobs
• Utilizing public cooperation en route to empowerment
• Creating reviving and arranging organizations for every neighborhood

B) Review strategies/Intelligent shift in direction (WO)
• Managers’ and urban planners’ attentiveness to visual appearance and sidewalk via implementing proper designs in the texture
• Raising people’s social status in the texture through interactions in recreational spaces in the city and changing the neighborhood settlers’ viewpoint regarding the texture through cultural activities of reproducing
C) Diversity strategies (ST)
• Using the experience of other countries and cities for organizing and empowering
• Using arid lands for cultural purposes
• Reinforcing social cooperation
• Making the policies of municipality, Cultural heritage and Roads and Urban development convergent
• Providing subsidies for owners for the purpose of aggregating land parcels
• Improving the sense of the place and solidarity through convergence and integration of the settlers, using cultural commonalities, to prevent social harm
• Creating sidewalks in communication centers
D) Defensive strategies (WT)
• Humanitarian crisis in the case of earthquake
• Being attentive to social capital and attracting public cooperation
• Implementing reinforcement programs against environmental accidents
• Utilizing public spaces of shared programs together with spatial and physical connections for increasing interactions within the neighborhood

Key Words: Aran-va-Bidgol, Old town, Strategic planning, Urban revitalization.

References


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