

# Cultural Awareness: Facilitator for Sustainable Community Development- Case Study of Bahrain

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**Abstract:** Culture is a source of identity, innovation and creation for human being, which in turn forms a major component of his sustainable development. Values and belief connect people with their environment and help them to manage and interact with it. Hence, it is necessary that people are aware about those values and belief so that they can engineer their own development. The major focus of the paper is to search for new ingredients of sustainable development and growth for a particular community through its cultural approach. The objectives are to study the concepts of culture and development for a community; to understand the existence of sustainable development on account of culture; to discuss the issues of cultural awareness in the current context of Kingdom of Bahrain and to recommend the means to strengthen the relationship of culture and development at different levels. The methodology used to conduct the research is a qualitative survey method. The survey helped to understand the cultural awareness and its relationship to the community development. In conclusion, the author has commented that, culture is a facilitator in creating the sustainable communities and awareness of the culture nurtures the sustainability. Few recommendations in this regard have been added at the end.

**Keywords:** Cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, dynamics of culture, sustainable communities, community development

## 1. Introduction

Community is an ever changing organism; what it is today will be very different in future. In present context, no community can keep away from the forces of globalization and modernization. These forces are inevitable. These extraneous foreign forces created due to socioeconomic, technological and global changes, try to alter the shape and form of a host community and the way it is planned and developed. It is the responsibility of the community, that its people must understand their own identities and preserve it as their valuable assets. What gives this identity is its 'Culture'. Hence being firm to culture and its values will create sustainable healthy society. This is the major component of study discussed in the paper. It connects the link of culture to development and shows how the development can be made sustainable facilitated through culture.

'Public participation' discusses about the role and actions of people in their own development. The support and participation of public is essential to the achievement of sustainable development. The form and degree of their participation determines the rate at which the objectives of sustainable development are realized. Therefore, spreading cultural awareness and the sense of cultural responsibility among all is important. It will be useful if an educated group is targeted for spreading awareness who in turn can try to educate the remaining in the society. This sense of awareness and thereupon the required action will involve people in the making up of their own development.

The awareness study was done in the context of Bahrain, a small size country with long history, rich culture and heritage. It has been observed that Bahraini society is a resilient society which allows a healthy coexistence of many other nationalities and multiple cultures. The existence of many cultures and practices increase the risk of original culture of Bahrain from being attacked and influenced with new changes. Therefore, it is required to spread the

awareness on cultural values among the Bahrainis to protect the originality. It cannot be denied that the nation which can hold the base of its developments in the roots of its culture can achieve a sustainable development.

## 2. Research Objectives

The major objectives of the research are:

- To study the concepts and issues involved in sustainable development of a community.
- To understand the relationship of culture and sustainable development.
- To study the case of Bahrain – a small yet culturally rich country regarding its risk factors of losing the cultural values on account of providing a home to multiple foreign cultures
- To measure the existing level of awareness and interact with the community regarding the relationship of culture and development.
- To suggest recommendations for the society in the form of policies for culture, tourism, finance, business, environment and education facilities etc. to enhance the cultural awareness.

### Research questions

The author framed the following questions to target the research objectives:

- Can we think about the development of a community which has no roots in people's culture?
- Is it true that a nation with composition of multiple foreign cultures has a risk of losing its identity?
- If no, then, how can culture be turned as a facilitator in shaping our sustainable communities?
- How to raise cultural awareness among the architectural professional group of society so that in turn they shoulder the responsibility for the preservation of cultural fabric through culturally responsive architecture?

### 3. Literature Review

#### What is Culture?

Culture represents a community by describing the beliefs and practices of that community associated with its traditions. Culture, is like a fabric of society which gives it an identity through weaving its structure and morphology. It gives objectives to the society and also the ways to achieve the same. Hence, when culture shapes the society, it also defines the process of shaping it.

There are many definitions for culture given by sociologists that target the different objectives of culture, necessarily not all being consistent with one another. Some of these definitions and meanings of the term 'culture' are discussed here to widen the understanding of the readers on culture and its association, reflection and assimilation in a society.

Patricia Marshall defines culture as "Consistent ways in which people experience, interprets, and responds to the world around; it represents the "ways of being" of a collective population. "... Prosaic elements of culture are food, language, and music." [Marshall, 2002, p. 13]. On the similar lines, James Banks has defined culture as "The behavior, patterns, symbols, institutions, values, and other human made components of the society" [Banks, 1984, p. 52]. Culture is not a simple phenomena as Campbell mentions that "A culture is a complex web of information that a person learns, and which guides each person's actions, experiences, and perceptions" [Campbell, 2000, p. 38].

According to Kantilla 2002, 'culture remains a general concept that serves to draw our attention to the fact that humans develop social solutions to their individual and species problems'. He has also mentioned that humans have developed ways of doing things to survive and prosper and is nothing but the central idea of defining culture - culture is a set of human actions that define their identity.

Ayoade (1989) mentioned that some people consider culture as simply the act of playing music, singing and dancing. For people culture means to achieve entertainment. But Theodorosons (1969) opposes the views of people and adds the other aspects of culture which are not limited to material products only. According to him, culture also includes non material products belonging to a group of life which are transmitted from one generation to another. On this background the most accepted definition for culture is given by Andah (1982) which explains that 'culture embraces all the material and non material expression of people as well as the process with which expressions are communicated'. According to him culture deals with social, ethical, intellectual, scientific, artistic, and technological expressions of people living in a geographically contiguous area and these expressions are passed on from one generation to another.

According to Chamberlain (2005), culture represents "the values, norms, and traditions that affect how individuals of a particular group perceive, think, interact, behave, and make judgments about their world" (p. 197). Taylor (1996) defined culture as, "an integrated pattern of human behavior

including thought, communication, ways of interacting, roles and relationships, and expected behaviors, beliefs, values, practices and customs." Nine-Curt (1984) qualified culture as, "The bearer of human wisdom that includes a wealth of human behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, values and experiences of immense worth. It also carries things that are offensive to a person's dignity and well being, and certainly to others whose cultural framework is different."

The other terms with reference to culture and sustainability are 'Culture of Sustainability' and 'Community Cultural Development' '(CCD) [CCD - Community cultural development has come to be understood as a collective process, often involving creativity interpreted in the broadest sense. This contributes to changes in people's lives and long- term developmental benefits for a community.—Mills & Brown (2004, p. 6)]. The term culture of sustainability denotes people and their changing behavior towards consumption patterns to adapt to a more sustainability conscious life style. Whereas the term 'Community Cultural Development' is defined as a tool that promotes a sense of place, empowerment and public participation- all key components in the sustainable community development field.

Summarizing the above, it can be said that Culture is a way of living as well as a solution to cope up with one's own development and his community development as whole. Therefore, it is important for any society to understand their cultural identity; culture which defines them and their context. It will not be wrong to mention that gaining the cultural identity is irrespective of the education, physical setting or economic status. Culture stands important for an urban man as well as for a rural man: it is the attitude that marks a difference in resulting into his development further.

#### Dynamics of culture

Societies and their culture are not static. They are living entities; hence they grow, change, renew and reshape themselves. The growth of development will be positive or negative depends upon the flexibility and resiliency of culture that accepts the new and retains the old.

There are various factors responsible for cultural changes. These changes are sometimes must and unavoidable. They happen because of peoples' responses to their social, political and economic situations with which they may confront. These changes may be associated with globalization, new technological advances, environment etc.

For any society, the cultural values are continuously under change to adapt to the changing needs and upcoming demands. Some values remain firm and constant even through this changing process and some get changed as they no longer show appropriateness in the new context.

In this reference the author wants to quote an example of a traditional hut of the Tribals in India i.e. 'Ghotul' [A *ghotul* is a spacious tribal hut surrounded by earthen or wooden walls. It is an integral part of Gond tribal life in the Bastar region of Chhattisgarh and the neighbouring areas in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh in India. It is a place for youths, an independent and autonomous "children's republic" as described by Verrier Elwin. The *ghotul* is

central to social and religious life in Gond society. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghotul>) . This hut is designed by the tribal community as a part of their culture. "The message of the ghotul—that youth must be served, that freedom and happiness are more to be treasured than any material gain, that friendliness and sympathy, hospitality and unity are of the first importance, and above all that human love—and its physical expression—is beautiful, clean and precious, is typically Indian" (Verrier Elwin, 1947). As a tradition of the past this place was also used by the young boys and girls to fix their life partners before marriage. When the author of the paper was working on issues related to the Sustainable Community Planning in Rural India and through interactions with the youth of such tribes in Chandrapur District (Maharashtra, India; April 2012), found out that they are unaware of any such customs. The present lifestyle with the urban influences probably does not demand such places and customs. This shows that culture and customs do not remain static, they change and the changed ones take the shape of culture and customs of to mark that particular period. These changes are adaptive and flexible for the society to mark that it is a living culture that changes with the change.

According to Campbell (2010), "all cultures are dynamic." Dynamics of culture are the changes that modify the cultural plans of any society making it flexible for socio- physical network around them. In this process there are three possibilities- the cultural values are either lost or replaced or blended. These changes may bring positive effects which lead to the development of culture or negative effects which lead to deterioration of culture. Deterioration or disintegration of culture is a situation in which a community is at the risk of losing its identity due to the surrounding changes beyond its control. Hence, the society has to be careful about changes and their impact on its culture.

Cultural values are continually being reinterpreted in response to new needs and conditions. Some values are reaffirmed or re-established in this process, while others are challenged, as they stand no longer appropriate. For example, the Adivasis (tribes) of India are seen struggling for the restoration of their traditional rights. Government is pumping resources to help them out but due to the various obstacles, this help is not reaching them. A time has come when small informal education classes called as ' Padshalas ' [ Padshalas are the projects by NGOs in rural tribes for educating the tribals.] are to be organized in these communities to remind the Adivasi children about their forgotten culture as well as to make them understand their identity. This understanding and awareness is must in a community to keep the culture alive so that the new changes as a need of time for human development do not take away the original essence and essentials of existing culture.

#### **4. Culture and Sustainable Development**

Sustainability is defined as 'the ability to meet current environmental, economic, social, and cultural needs without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their needs'. It includes community's values and cultural heritage. A paradigm shift in the worldview toward sustainability needs to include discussions about cultural sustainability in

ways that do not damage our ecosystem, environment, and social well-being in an inclusive and holistic way. Throsby (cited in Denise Scammon) notes, "The notion of diversity, which is of such overwhelming importance in the natural world, has an equally vital role to play in cultural systems". A combination of policies and designs that cover all four pillars of sustainability are needed to meet this goal. As the concept of sustainability continues to evolve, cultural sustainability [Cultural Sustainability is a new interdisciplinary approach, aimed to raise the significance of culture and its factors in local, regional and global sustainable development ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural\\_sustainability](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_sustainability))] should be included in discussions that examine environmental, economic and social dimensions of society. Sustainable Community Development can be termed as sustainability reflected in the capacity of the community to cope with change and adapt to new situations (Williams, 2003, p.15). Community sustainability goes beyond environmental practices and economic growth: it is about creating a more just and equitable community through encouraging social and cultural diversity (Beatley & Manning, 1997; Roseland et al., 2005). It also requires the community to define sustainability from its own values and perspective. This involves community participation and a collective decision-making process that meets the social, cultural, environmental, and economic needs of the community (Nancy Duxbury and Eileen Gilette, 2007) Following part of the write up deals the essentials ingredients of sustainable community development with culture.

#### **Human Development**

Development to define is a qualitative and quantitative positive change in the lives of people which affects not only their material satisfaction but also inner satisfaction. It is true that development is inseparable from culture because culture makes the human and human development cannot take place without any medium. In reference to this, a statement made in the conference titled, *Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue*, UNESCO 2009 can be quoted, "Culture precisely is the medium, through which individuals express their ability to fulfill themselves and is therefore an integral part of human development". As appropriately said, culture being the foundation of human development, touches the periphery of his social, technological, economical and environmental development which conclude his sustainable development.

Development empowers people to shape their future and also offers them the means to attain them. This development should include the all round human development in which culture can play a key role. The factors of culture which bring about the development include language, religion, education, family practices, decision making system, institutional process, artistic expressions, values passed on from generation to generation, global ethics, knowledge, technology and so on. The development achieved in this way brings development for his today without compromising his development of tomorrow.

Culture is an imperative for the development of any society. In fact it is the basis of development. Defining development



is talking all about a change. According to Osagie (1985), development is a more inclusive concept with its social, political and economic facets. It is the qualitative and quantitative positive transformation of the lives of a people that does not only enhance their material well being but also ensures their social well being, including the restoration of human dignity and individual freedom. In simple words development is a warm, gradual and considerate process to uplift the techno-economic standards of human being while maintaining his socio-cultural values.

Culture and development, these two concepts are interrelated and interdependent. Culture evolves the man and gives him identity and in turn the development of man needs the base of culture. No developmental policy can be implemented or developmental task can be completed if the society does not have strong roots in its culture. The largely discussed definition of culture with regards to development was adopted at the World Conference on Cultural Policies (Mexico, 1982) is, " Culture....is the whole complex of distinctive, spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterise a society or a social group. It includes not only arts and letter, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs."

Some studies have shown that the traditional values of culture either accept or reject the trends of modernization. Morris (1976:15) has mentioned that the changes of modernization should be gradual so that they do not change the stability of society, which is true, but as the time is moving ahead and the world is advancing in all respects of material gains, the waves of modernization try to hit and deform the originality of culture. Hence gradual steps should be forwarded in the direction of modernization. This will evolve into a sustainable society.

Globalization has led to a new conceptualization which tends to consider culture as a "malleable fact". Any cultural continuity over a long period of time seems to be harmful because it pre supposes an absence of cultural learning or social transformation ( Hela Yousfi, 2007). The flexibility in culture is must to keep the culture alive.

### **Culture and Social Development**

Culture helps to weave the social relations and networking for a group of people. This enhances the social bondage and brings about a sense of caring and responsibility for each other. These bonds prove to be helpful in situations of disasters like; wars, conflicts, destructions, natural havocs etc. Culture helps to boost the morale, restore peace and happiness by improving the individual's strength.

The base of social sustainability is in the social equity. In many cultures the role of women in a society is of secondary importance and priority. For example, the Indian rural women and their role in water conservation. The rural Indian culture marks a un-measurable difference in the role on priority and decision making regarding safeguarding of water resources. The author in her past research on 'Water Conservation and Role of women: Indian Villages' (unpublished) has remarkably observed and argued on the

issue that women are the main users of water and have vernacular knowledge of preserving and conserving water, but in a male dominated society they are not allowed to participate in the decision making process of safeguarding water resources. Women must be identified as decision makers on an equitable basis. They should be empowered to bring about human development because it has been evident from historical times that it is the women who create the cultural values, nurture them and transfer them to the next generation. Gender inequality can bring negative face to the development.

Culture should be recognized as dynamic and transformative force because it is an indicator of social development. It not only marks the level of development but also facilitates it. Therefore, culture is an active key player of social transformation.

### **Culture and Economic Development**

Generally people believe that human development is as same as economic development. But truly speaking, human development has various facets and economic development is just one of them. The social norms and cultural values of people teach and promote exchanges, savings and investment behaviors among the individuals. These prove that people show economic behavior in their cultural aspects.

Undoubtedly, culture is a resource and economy generating machine. It can create employment and produce income for a nation. It has been mentioned in the UNESCO Report [*The power of culture for development*], UNESCO REPORT 2010] that, the cultural industries at global level account for more than 7% of total GDP.

According to Denise Scammon, using cultural capital to generate a sustainable economy is already occurring. Each time, someone pays to walk through a museum to view art works or attends a music concert, that money is generating a sustainable economy.

Cultural capital can promote economic sustainability in most natural and built environment that generate tourism. Cultural tourism is one of the best means of resource generation for a nation having rich cultural heritage. Cultural Tourism promotes site visit, sale and development of local art and crafts and generates jobs during all such process. Sustainable cultural tourism, cultural and creative industries, cultural institutions are powerful economic sub sectors that can generate decent employment, stimulate local development and foster entrepreneurship. These way opportunities are created which promote economic stability and growth. But in doing so, the culture led economic development should take into account the protection of cultural assets that are often fragile and constitute a unique and non- renewable capital (Thematic think Piece, May 2012).

Undoubtedly, Cultural sustainability involves efforts to preserve the tangible and intangible cultural elements of society in ways that promote economic sustainability. Bahrain, the case study taken in the research, shows the attempts of high regards towards the conservation and preservations of its historical fabric through tangible

architecture and intangible socio-cultural values. Every year there is a flow of tourists to visit Bahrain on those accounts and bring a healthy income to the country.

### **Culture and Technological Development**

Every culture imbibes a creative and innovative sense in the human being. This gives him a desire to invent new technologies to cope up with the new situations arising from the never ending demands of the society. This is a step of progress in technological field which cannot happen without the support of cultural values. Culture strengthens the ability of people to become creative, innovative, genius, decision maker especially in the situation of difficulty and trauma.

In some countries, the major obstacle in meeting the development arises from the developmental policies undertaken by the public authorities which are based on cultural aspects but do not meet the local context and issues. In some cases the cultural values of a particular area become major limitations on efforts for issues like gender inequality and thus the developmental action becomes impractical.

The role of cultural models in the process of adaptations to the new technologies is very different according to different civilizations. 'We often accept an innovation that is based on its utility at an individual level, but criticize the consequences of it at cultural level (Danila Bertasio, 1993). This double minded process arises from the double faced soul of our culture according to Daniel Bertasio, one is a face that is completely close to humanistic traditions and other one that is open to scientific traditions. The author comments on the need of a common control on both the faces of our cultural soul to bring about technological development yet not hinder the cultural system.

### **Culture and Environmental Development**

Man and nature share integral relationship since past and interactions between them are mutually dependent and reinforcing. Every culture has traditional practices which teach about environmental management required for achieving environmental sustainability. Survival of human being as well as the conservation and preservation of nature is at the stake of human behavior which is guided through his culture. The positive practices in the local culture always value the balance between the nature and the manmade world.

According to Denise Scammon, traditionally, the sustainability paradigm encompasses the interactions between humans and the economic, social and environmental aspects of living. She believes that adding culture to the already widely accepted three pillars of sustainability--social, environmental, and economic is important for society to address because the addition of a fourth pillar to represent culture creates a holistic approach to sustainability. The author agrees with the new approach of addressing culture as the fourth pillar of Sustainability, but has adopted the approach of considering Culture as an integral basis for promoting the social, economic and environmental sustainability.

### **Culture and Globalization**

The world is shrinking down, i.e. coming closer. People are talking about the concept of global village and borderless world. The process of Globalization is bringing them together to share not only economic activities but also socio-cultural activities. The global culture and exchange process is giving them the means to actively interact in each other's cultural, economic and political life. This is not a new phenomenon. From historical times, one society has always been influenced by another for its consumption habits and now with the increased ease of communication the influence is even more powerful.

Culture has always been an important factor in strengthening the identity of a community. It has protected their traditions, beliefs and modes of life. It has offered a typical identity for individuals and as well as groups. In case of foreign influences, strongly rooted culture protects the original values and ideas against the influences of new ideas, new identities and new forms of life which are extraneous and do not belong to them. In reference to culture and globalization, John Tomlinson (1999) has commented that, "Relation of culture and globalization is uni-linear, both influence each other. Globalization lies at the heart of modern culture and cultural practices lie at the heart of globalization". It is interdependent relation required for mutual benefit of the two communities sharing the process.

Along with constructive cultural opportunities generated by economic development, its negative or destructive influences cannot be ignored. The threats created to native cultures, older cultures, in the pace of Globalization are inescapable. As the author has already mentioned that the globalization process cannot be avoided or stopped because of such resultant effects because these processes bring trade, commerce, business through interactions among the different parts of the world.

Sometimes there is a danger in the process of globalization that the powerful nations try to impose their identities and ways of life upon the weaker nations. So in order to fight this phenomenon, and protect the national identity, one must protect ones culture by understanding the process of globalization and know how to behave in adverse situations. Along with the advantages and constructive cultural opportunities generated by the globalization in the form of economic development, one needs to consider its negative and destructive influences. Hence, the challenge is to take benefits of globalization for economic reasons without affecting the originality of native culture. It should be globally understood that all cultures are authentic in their own terms and no country has the right to impose its beliefs and values onto others.

Rapidly growing population, urbanization trends and the environmental hazards bring drastic changes which sometimes tend towards the loss of cultural and communal identity. But if the culture is strongly rooted, it can bring about stability and even the most secluded individual can be benefited by participating in the development process based on the globalised attitude. As the famous Brazilian economist Celso Furtado said, "*We must think of*

*development from visualization of substantive ends which we wish to reach and not the logic of the means which foreign countries impose on us. The overcoming of this structural strand off which is at the base of our crisis shall only be achieved if development leads to an increasing homogenization of our society and creates space for the achievement of our culture's potentialities". [Furtado, 1984, pg 30]*

## 5. Methodology

After studying the relationship of culture and sustainable development of the society, author has selected a case of 'Kingdom of Bahrain' to explore the focus of study on Cultural Awareness and sensitivity to facilitate the sustainability of the community. The term -Cultural sensitivity [Cultural Sensitivity: Knowing that cultural differences as well as similarities exist, without assigning values (i.e. better or worse, right or wrong) to those cultural differences( National Maternal and Child Health Center on cultural competency, 1997).] means being aware that cultural differences and similarities exist and have an effect on values, learning and behavior (Stafford, Bowman, Eking, Hanna and Lopoos- Defede, 1997).

Whereas, Cultural awareness [Cultural Awareness: Developing sensitivity and understanding of another ethnic group. This usually involves internal changes in terms of attitudes and values. Awareness and sensitivity also refer to the qualities of openness and flexibility that people develop in relation to others ( Adams, 1995).] is the knowledge of sense of belonging, matter of pride and belief in the values of deeply rooted culture for any individual of any nation. Culture gives ability to look outside of one self and be aware of his own cultural values and customs. It has to be understood that what may be normal and acceptable to one culture maybe unusual and unacceptable to another.

### Cultural History of Bahrain

Bahrain is the smallest country in the entire Arab nation situated in the Persian Gulf. It was part of an empire known as *Dilmun* and shows strong historic background of almost 5000 years old. The name "Bahrain" is derived from the Arabic word *Bahr*, meaning "sea". It is enriched with splendid and distinctive culture. The exclusive customs, festivals, rituals, cuisines, artworks, music and dance comprise typical Bahraini culture. In spite of rapid economic development that Bahrain has experienced, the nation remains purely Arab in cultural aspects in terms of language, food, dressing and art practices. That is why, even in the vogue of modern trends, Bahraini men and women still prefer to wear their traditional dresses. The cultural practices in Bahrain show a good balance between the modern acceptance and traditional inheritance.

Basket weaving, clay pottery, pearl jewellery are exceptionally performed handicrafts in Bahrain. The country is also famous for its poetry, reciting Quran, ceremonial dance, music etc. The population of Bahrain is comprised of native Bahrainis as well as a large number of people around the world who live happily and cohesively in the kingdom. Major religion of the country is Islam but people with other faiths receive freedom to observe their religion. Traditional

handicraft industries, old forts and houses, heritage sites, cultural canter form major attractions for tourism in the country thereby bringing in the influx of tourist and foreign currency.

Although Bahraini authorities have recognized that multiculturalism is an asset, it is an extremely delicate question how to establish a balance between foreign influences needed for a future development of country's economy and local culture. The paper emphasizes on studying the cultural sensitivity and awareness among the citizens of Bahrain. This is very essential as the process of westernization, modifying the lifestyle and attitude of people not only in Bahrain but in most of the countries which are having people from foreign nationalities in large number.

Taking a look at the map of Bahrain- it is an archipelago of 33 islands located in the Persian Gulf. Due to its strategic position in the Gulf, Bahrain has been a crossroads of trading routes between Asia, Europe and Africa since ancient times. Already 5000 years ago, a kingdom called Dilmun thrived in that area, playing a role of a trading link between Indus Valley civilizations and Mesopotamia. This central position of Bahrain brought also risk of foreign invasions. Bahrain passed subsequently through domination of Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Arabs, Portuguese and British. The latter controlled Bahrain until 1971 when Bahrain declared independence. It comes as no surprise that Bahrain has worked as a melting pot of nationalities, languages, cultures and traditions.

To study the level of awareness on cultural aspects, survey method was thought to be a useful method. The importance of survey method is well explained in Chapter 8, Survey Research, Sage Publication (p. 160). "Survey research is very appealing when sample generalizability is a central research goal. In fact, survey research is the only means available for developing a representative picture of the attitudes and characteristics of a large population." The author had designed a survey questionnaire in this regard. Based on the survey opinions, the author wanted to generalize few opinions of people on culture and understanding.

There are various methods for conducting survey, which have their own benefits and shortcomings with respect to time, cost, affectivity, expected behaviors etc. When the author, referred to the Chart no. 8.9 [Chart adopted from Dillman ( 2007, p. 200)] in Chapter 8 (p. 179), Survey Research by Sage Publishers; found the 'In -Person Survey' to be a useful method. The major reason for selecting the method was that the questionnaire emphasizes on open ended questions with medium complexity and controls the sequence of questions.

The survey questionnaire was designed as an integrated whole where each question had a clear purpose and complimented the other questions. It had a mix of closed and open ended questions. The open ended questions helped the author in estimating the meaning to the answers attached by the respondents

The questionnaire contained questions on cultural attitude of people, which if not properly framed could evoke emotions and personal differences leading to unethical issues during the research. Hence, the author pre-tested this questionnaire with the use of Behavior Coding [<sup>1</sup> The method was developed by Charles Cannell and his colleagues at the University of Michigan in the 1970s. It is a major tool used to evaluate interviewer performance and questionnaire design.], on a small pilot group of five respondents keeping the sample resembling the large sample. During the pilot testing, the technique of behavior coding was found effective. It was observed that the respondents from pilot sample had difficulty in interpreting the open ended questions and hence needed a major change in framing the questions. Accordingly the changes were made in 6 questions out of the total 25. Following are the summarized results of the survey:

The targets were two groups: one comprised of the students at the University of Bahrain and the other comprised of the Teaching Staff at the same University. Both the target groups belonged to the field of architectural engineering. The sample size for students was 50 and the survey was administered by the author. The questions framed in the questionnaire were aimed at understanding and evaluating the awareness of Bahraini youth towards their own culture, other foreign cultures, acceptance and rejection of modernization, impact of globalization on the society etc. The survey sample of Teaching Staff was 18, but during the survey process, the survey enquiry turned into a group discussion. The author noted all the important comments and taped the interviews to be used as an important data. The topics discussed during the interview were framed to gain an insight on their sense of cultural responsibility towards safeguarding, spreading, saving and flourishing culture through appropriate education to the society.

During the survey, the researcher found that, 90% of youth realize that Culture is more beyond the arts. This was a good sign that the community identifies the non-materialistic values of culture. All the respondents accepted that they are well aware about the Bahraini culture since their families still nurture the cultural practices and no better school than the family to get the early lessons on culture. They accept the multinational and multicultural environment of Bahrain, but not hundred percent sure that the trends of modernization will not affect their own culture. They as youth of the nations believe that they would try from their side to resolve and assimilate the other cultures into their cultures for the healthy community development. 70% of them believed that, culture and development are integrated; it is not possible to think about the one without the other. They gave some suggestions for the better integration of culture and development which were considered by the author while proposing the recommendations at the end of the chapter.

The author had an interesting and informative interaction with the faculty of Architecture, University of Bahrain. The useful points directing the topic of paper are discussed here: According to the respondents, Bahraini culture is based on respect and tolerance. It gives scope to democracy, women empowerment and emphasizes education to all. It teaches to accept people from different countries and welcome their

culture. According to them, culture can be preserved and conserved through maintenance and care of historical sites, heritage buildings and other traditional norms. In Bahrain, The Ministry of Culture has undertaken various projects to safeguard the cultural values associated with old architectural heritage in the country. Through such efforts the culture will always be integrated with community. As per their responses, religion plays a vital role in designing the culture of Bahrain. It is the tolerance and respect for other cultures as great teachings of their religion. They said that due to these qualities, Bahraini culture is able to accept the global changes, yet restore its originality.

The teachers added that, Bahrainis can participate in Intercultural Exchange Programs so that the cultural isolation [Cultural isolation is the term for a country or region that does not care to interact with, understand or empathize with cultures outside its borders. (<http://www.ask.com/world-view/cultural-isolation-3b624dda2b1af708>)] can be relaxed, but they must keep in mind that they as host culture should not be dominating while inviting and interacting with the guest culture. To improve the intercultural exchange, they can arrange expanded social activities, international ceremonies, multi cultural exchange programs, education exchange events etc. They acknowledge the role of media as important in spreading the cultural awareness.

The teachers admitted their role as facilitators in spreading the cultural awareness among the society. They are responsible for spreading the cultural awareness through education at institutional level. They can direct the students to respect their culture by considering each person as a message carrier of his/her culture.

The faculty highlighted and praised the various social events arranged by the Ministry of Culture and some NGOs in Bahrain, to spread the sense of pride in cultural belongings. Such events include: spring of culture, national day celebration, cultural food festivals, events in museums, craft exhibitions, etc. Social network programs help a lot in spreading the information to connect the people on such occasions.

One of the most valuable suggestions pointed out during the discussion and worth mentionable is regarding the changes in 'Education System'. It involves the process of educating the students by assigning them the building design projects on the topics that integrate the culture and real life issue. This will improve their abilities and skills on using cultural issues in achieving sustainable built environment. It is true that 'the architecture that does not care for cultural values cannot exist...and if exists cannot persist...and if persists can't flourish'. There are number of valuable buildings which symbolize the trends of Bahraini architecture. Hence, there is an urgent need to preserve the architecture that marks the country's cultural identity. The architectural design projects at the University must be based on local conditions of Bahrain. The approach should emphasize the adoption of local practices within global style.



## 6. Recommendations

After the introspection through cultural life of Bahrain via opinions of youths and professionals, the author has framed some recommendations. UNESCO has prepared a guiding perspective about how culture and development can be expressed which has been accepted by different countries as a bench mark. This guiding perspective was also taken as a reference for preparing the list of recommendations which are grouped at different levels: individual, societal and national level. These suggestions are prepared for Bahrain as case, but some generalizations can be done to suit different places and contexts.

### Individual Level

1. Accept, welcome and understand the diversity in cultures, as Bahrain is a multicultural country.
2. Remove the cultural barriers by finding and emphasizing areas of similarity, while appreciating cultural sensitivity and relevant cultural differences.
3. Understand how cultural value orientations impact one's behavior.
4. Develop a global mindset.
5. Inculcate cultural sensitivity i.e. being aware of fact that cultural differences and similarities exist and have an effect on values, learning and behavior of individual.
6. Give respect to cultural identity because it tells one who he is and how he can identify his culture with himself.
7. Participate in cultural events, festivals, fairs and summits.
8. Always remain flexible for healthy changes in the society.
9. Place the culture as the central key of personal development.

Developing a culturally competent attitude is an ongoing process. It is important to view all people as unique individuals and realize that their experiences, beliefs, values and language affect their ways of interacting with others and the larger community. Also, be aware that differences also exist within cultures. It is wrong to assume that a common culture is shared by all members of a racial, linguistic or religious group.

### Societal / Local Level:

- a. Spread cultural awareness through language training programs to come over with language barrier for better cultural understanding.
- b. Hold classes for spreading cultural arts: dance, music etc.
- c. Recognize cultural and ethnic diversity as an asset.
- d. Acquaint with and be sensitive to cultures of others and appreciate the differences among them in respect of their ethnicity, national origin, nationality, religion and custom.
- e. Develop the potentials of locale based on culture to bring about the development of society.
- f. Promote culture based projects.
- g. Prepare a Community Development Program (CDP) based on the cultural issues. The members of this

program will work to reach out to Bahraini people and promote cultural awareness throughout the state.

### National Level:

#### Educational Policies:

- a. Incorporate compulsory courses on cultural awareness at all levels of education.
- b. Promote intercultural exchange program for spreading intercultural communication.
- c. Introduce field trips and studies for heritage sites.
- d. Organize cultural programs focusing on various foreign cultures.
- e. Initiate student's exchange programs at higher educational level.
- f. Integrate traditional knowledge and practices in sustainable development schemes and seeks synergies between traditional environmental practices and high technologies.

Education is an important element in communicating the facts about all dimensions of sustainability that affect a careful stewardship of our planet. At University level, for Architecture and Interior Design Programs, courses like 'Social and Cultural Factors in Design' should be framed to connect the link between theory and application. Such courses should be offered at lower levels of program plan so that the students develop their perspectives and understandings from the basic levels so that they can deal with the complexity of the built environment and consider integration of culture as a solution for the same. As a result in practice, they will be able to produce the language of national architecture on the cultural language as well as satisfy the cultural needs of locals through architectural solutions.

#### Cultural Policies:

- a. Place culture as pivotal idea of national development.
- b. Include culture and integrate it with policies and development programs at local, national and international level.
- c. Invest in cultural programs.
- d. Spread the cultural contacts between the different countries as well as within the country through films, paintings, music, dancing etc, which can expand the cultural opportunities and can provide income and employment to many.
- e. Prepare National Cultural Plan.
- f. Preserve the heritage sites.
- g. Develop and strengthen the cultural centers like the already existing centers in the form of National Museum, Bait Al Quran, oil museum, to organize cultural program for the benefit of society which will bring in local development.
- h. Promote inter-cultural dialogue to harness social cohesion to create environment taht is conducive to development.

#### Tourism Polices:

Bahrain is a place with huge economic, social, cultural, scientific and educational potentials. Government of Bahrain has encouraged tourism policies that contribute to large scale tourism projects. Still attempts should be made to improve



tourism at all levels through interest and awareness. Following are the suggestions:

- a. Introduce tourism at local, regional and international level to spread awareness and sense of pride for the Bahraini culture and to market identity.
- b. Promote cultural tourism to bring about economic development of the country by providing job opportunities in Cultural Arts and Crafts Sector.
- c. In spreading the cultural tourism, the participation of local community is must.

Various programs by the Honorable Cultural Ministry have been made to bring about a high level of cultural awareness and community participation is must to progress them.

#### **Business and Financial Policies:**

- a. Develop policies to understand the cultural background of an individual to be able to interact, manage and lead effectively through business development programs and workforce development program both within the organization as well as with international clients and partners.
- b. Improve the cultural competence- an ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures for the employees especially in the field of human resource, government agencies working with people from multi culture. Bahrain being a country with work force comprising of people from various nationalities and cultures, cultural competence should be given a priority.
- c. To promote the cultural competence four factors should be supported: Awareness, knowledge, attitude and skills.
- d. Connect and meet with different multi- cultural agencies.
- e. Extend strategies to deal with cultural differences and challenges and provide training for the same.
- f. Develop cultural competencies for commitment, communication and dealing with uncertain situations.
- g. Give regards to the impact of culture and its crucial role in the economic development while framing the financial policies.

## **7. Conclusion**

There should not be a rigid theory framed upon the role of culture in development. It is a complex issue to identify the ways in which culture can be preserved and cultivated and also to see whether it may or may not influence the development. Culture is affected by two types of forces- forces encouraging the change and forces resisting the change. Sometimes, the changes in technology, political situations and social systems produce changes that alter the social pattern giving rise to new cultural models. New cultural model means changes in cultural values which if are not under control lead to aculturation or disintegration of culture.

The paper has focused on how culture and cultural awareness, effects of culture on people's values and behaviors help to derive a sustainable community. The author has referred to the various concepts taken up by researchers in this field: naming few are 'Culture- as a key dimension of Sustainability' by Duxbury and Gillette (2007); 'The role of culture in technological advancement' by Daniel

Bertasio (1993); 'Culture: A driver and an enabler of sustainable development' by UNESCO (2012).

The paper started with considering the role of culture a s facilitator in boosting the community development towards sustainability, but during the literature study found that the idea of culture and sustainability are inseparable and culture is now an established fourth pillar of sustainable development. The cultural issues can figure among the ends of development as well as among the means to achieve the development.. To create sustainable society the development should not be seen just as growth of Gross National Product (GNP) but more broadly as the enhancement of freedom and wellbeing of people. It is very important to take a note of impact of economic and social development on established culture and vice versa. It is truly said that 'a leadership interested in the technological, political and social advancement or development of its nation should never disregard the role of culture' (I.Mbakogu, 2004).

Magdalena Karolak has asked a pertinent questions in his write up titled as 'Preserving Arab culture in the Kingdom of Bahrain; whether Bahrain is at the risk of losing its identity of culture at the hands of huge influx of workers coming from foreign countries bringing along different languages , cultural patterns, etc. The author answers this question by making a statement that 'no matter how many foreign influences reach a land, they can never affect the originality of culture if the inhabitants are culturally aware, culturally competent, culturally sensitive and can identify the roots of their own culture'. This statement can remain true for any country. This is a message that needs to be expressed through mass communication as well as through education. Cultural sustainability examines ways to enhance our cultural identity and sense of place through heritage, shared spaces, public art, social capital [social capital is the expected collective or economic benefits derived from the preferential treatment and cooperation between individuals and groups([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social\\_capital](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_capital))] educational opportunities, and public policies in ways that promote environmental, economic and social sustainability (Denise Scammon et al.).

*In conclusion, sustainability efforts that once were characterized by environmental, social, and economic discussions now see the inclusion of culture in the discussions.*

**Future scope of the research:** The research can be further developed to prepare general guidelines to support the community development of the countries standing on the edge of cultural identities loss because of strong extraneous influences.

**Limitations of the research:** The respondents in the survey method of research comprised of educated group belonging to the architectural stream of the society. It could be argued that the sample was very selective and fail to represent the overall population of Bahrain in general.

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