

## **Souk Waqif in Old Doha, Qatar: Cultural Heritage, Urban Regeneration, and Sustainability**

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**Abstract :** Cultural heritage and tourism have become during the last two decades dynamic areas of development in the world. The idea of heritage is crucial to the critical decision-making process as to how irreplaceable resources are to be utilized by people of the present or conserved for future generations in a fast changing world. In view of the importance of 'heritage' to the development of a tourist destination the emphasis on developing appropriate adaptive reuse strategies cannot be overemphasized. In October 1999, the 12th general assembly of the ICOMOS in Mexico stated, that in the context of sustainable development, two interrelated issues need urgent attention, cultural tourism and historic towns and cities. These two issues underscore the fact that historic resources are non-renewable, belonging to all of humanity. Without adequate adaptive reuse actions to ensure a sustainable future for these historic resources, may lead to their complete vanishing. The growth of tourism and its role in dispersing cultural heritage to everyone is developing rapidly. According to the World Tourism Organization, natural and cultural heritage resources are and will remain motivating factors for travel in the foreseeable future. According to the experts, people choose travel destinations where they can learn about traditional and distinct cultures in their historic context. The Qatar rich urban heritage is now being recognized as a valuable resource for future development. This paper discusses the role of cultural heritage and tourism in regenerating Souk Waqif, and consequently the city of Doha. Therefore, in order to use cultural heritage wisely, it will be necessary to position heritage as an essential element of sustainable development, giving particular attention to cultural heritage and tourism. The research methodology is based on an empirical survey of the situation, based on several visits, meetings and interviews with the local heritage players. The rehabilitation project initiated since 2004 will be examined and assessed. Therefore, there is potential to assess the situation and propose directions for a sustainable future to this historic landmark. Conservation for the sake of conservation appears to be an outdated concept. Many irreplaceable natural and cultural sites are being compromised because local authorities are not giving economic consideration to the value of rehabilitating such sites. The question to be raised here is 'How can cultural heritage be used wisely for tourism without compromising its social sustainability within the emerging global world?'

**Keywords :** cultural heritage, tourism, regeneration, economy, social sustainability

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