

Knowledge Management as Means to Achieve a Sustainable Life Style

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Abstract

The impact of human "life style" on natural system continues to grow and multiply in the last and current century. Our behavior patterns, social attitudes and customs are intertwined with our natural environment.

What we do to day, not only involves changes to the existing ecosystems and destroys our environment, but also affects the habitat of the future generations. Old fashioned towns and rural neighborhoods, have many lessons that we can learn from, and make use to save the environment. These lessons focus on four principals, including:

- 1. To conserve energy, water and other natural resources.*
- 2. To preserve the health of our environment*
- 3. To strengthen our local economy*
- 4. To emphasize on conventional and "local style" and promote a high quality of life.*

The village –like situation will allow residents to live with less emphasis on modern technology, and industrial products. Raw materials and crafts are used instead of the modern products.

The Village of Staj –which has been a case study in our research-, is an old rural community in Khorasan Province in Iran with over 1000 years of history .The villagers have specific customs. People make almost all their product from raw materials. The rural houses are made from stone, clay, and lumber. The villagers insulate their roofs with special clay that is found near the village and it seems to contain some type of water proof greasy substance that works as an insulation and lasts at least for ten years. Some of the indigenes people who immigrated to other cities widely use this clay in modern buildings.

In despite of cold winters in Staj, buildings do not need so much energy for heating. Rural buildings are characterized by thick walls, few small window and door openings and two main entrances located at to separate orientation. (For use in winter and summer).

By studying our ancestor's habits and traditions, we can modify our immoderate modern life style.

Outline of the main article

- 1. Investigation of rural architecture in respect to natural environment characteristics and visual landscape.*
- 2. Investigation of cultural and historical issues in Staj.*
- 3. The use of handy crafts facilities and relevant tools instead of modern technology...*
- 4. Influences of natural environment of Staj on life style and behavioral pattern*

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1- Cultural and historical issues in staj

The village of staj is an old rural community in khorasan Province in Iran with over than 1000 years of history. Staj is described as a part of Sabzevar in the history book of “Beyhaq” that was writhen 900 years ago by the Persian historian A.Beyhaqi.

The village has specific customs. They celebrate their wedding for two days. In the traditional family, marriage is still a family rather than a personal affair, and related family usually chosen as wife. When a family determines a date for their wedding, they invite relative’s friends and neighbors by a messenger in advance .Depending on the economic position of families wedding might be for several days, and close relatives are invited for all meals in these days. Musicians entertain guests at all times. At the first night they use henna and in the next day the bridegroom rides horse to public bath. The musicians accompany him along the way. The men feast at bridegroom’s house and the women at the bride’s house.

Under age males must be circumcised by the hairdresser or a surgeon. Parents celebrate their children circumcision followed by musician playing the drums and clarinet. Kettledrum and oboe are ancient instrument where as tar; drum, kamanche, violin and tambourine are added instruments in modern era.

The tenth day of the lunar month “Moharam” the martyrdom of Imam Hossein is an important public mourning. During these days they wear mourning outfits, and members of religious procession of mourners beat their breasts which represent an epic drama from “Ashora”.

The villagers love their local and traditional customs and don’t want to replace them by global culture.

2- Investigation of rural architecture in respect to natural environment characteristics and visual landscape

Staj is like a living anthropological museum. It affords an impressive exponent of the adaptation of man with his natural environment.

It is a small mountain village located forty kilometers from *Sabzevar* on the western slope of Sheshtamed Mountains. This village is 1700 meters above sea level. Staj is famed for its in local products. It has a compact rural texture with narrow steep, organic and sometime ceiling alleys, set on the slope of the mountain. The houses are arranged in a stair-step shape.

There were two castles in the rural texture that protected the people when the enemy attacked. One situated in the entrance of village. Some people believe these two castles had a under- ground pathway to each other.

The configuration of Staj protects it from strong winds and glaring. To economize in the use of fuel and emphasize on use renewable energy, the rooms used in winter are specially designed and differ from those used in summer .Each room maybe used for various functions. For example a single room maybe used as a dining room, a sitting room, a bed room and a guest room. Balcony is an important space and useful for spring and summer.

Rural buildings are characterized by thick walls, few small windows and door openings. It’s bitterly cold in winter, with deep snow and average of 117 cold days. But rural buildings don’t need so much energy for heating. The materials used for the roofs of building are main lumber by the 50 centimeters distance between them, and tiny timber on the opposite orientation, that coated

by straw and clay for finishing. Their white magic soil isolates their roofs for long time. This clay is found near the village and it seems to contain some type of waterproof greasy ingredients that works as an insulation, and lasts for at least 10 years. Some of the indigenes people, who immigrated to other cities, widely use this clay in modern building .In their belief this materials is more durable than industrial products such as bitumen insulation .In this type of roof, snow must be cleaned with a shovel.

The walls of their building is built by mud and bricks and tiny timbers used as tie beam. The village is built on a rocky ground so the path way bed is coated by stone .The stone found in the neighborhood was the prime construction material for hundreds of years especially in the foundation and footing of the walls.

Rural building are characterized by few and often small, wooden window and door opening. Rural houses have two separate zone and entrance. Their live stock sheds and stores are kept in the ground floor. They are related to path road with separate door. The villagers know potentials of natural materials in ecological context. This characteristic make their methods. These methods have been tested for years, so nobody can change them easily. This type of life style makes them spirited and independent from modern technology, and modern life style.

There are many rural building that contribute to the natural landscape and built heritage. Generally due to the change in agricultural practices and economic production mechanism , these building are under used or have cased to be used for their intended propose and have become redundant or are disrepair and have lost their natural and traditional values .Although it is important to establish that the rural buildings is no longer suitable for its intended use, but we can learn from them some hidden lessons that will be useful for new generation .This kind of architecture is a *public art* . Public art is the creation of meaning in the “ruralscape” by means of the activation of object – action with a marked aesthetic component. In this respect most of the rural pathway facades and views, would be considered under this category.

In this life style every body participate in social issue and rural shape is formed by this contribution. The view of village is coordinated by natural environment and it seems as a part of landscape. It’s formed of several irregular levels of terraced, cream houses with gray slate roofs, interspersed with trees in the submontane area. Every body makes his house in this village but the general forms of these buildings adherence of univalent concepts:

- Introspection.
- Emphasize on natural environment.
 - Raw material
 - Climatic design
- Public participation in design and construction
- Local style in stead of international style
- Harmonize with environment by color and shape.
- Attention to the out door view
- Rural view as a part of natural landscape

3-The use of handy crafts facilities and relevant tools

Staj has an independent economy. They use their handy crafts tools, which usually made by women. Social life consists of two different places: Inside and outside the home. Women get married at an earlier age and settle into their role of house wife and handy crafts.

In the cold season men participate and help women in handicrafts. Silk, cotton and wool fabric, rug and carpet weaving, light cotton footwear, wood and metal tools are the main products of the village. These traditional products are capable to recycle so preserve the health of environment. This kind of trade that emphasize on local manufacture strengthen their local economy.

4- Influences of natural environment of staj on life style and behavioral pattern.

Agriculture, making handy craft tools, and animal husbandry are the main economic activities in staj .Each individual is supposed to play a part in supporting the continuation of the family. The father is usually responsible for making the basic income, and work in farm or desert. The mother contributes mostly by handy crafts and takes care of the home. Children also help their parent.

The order of their life is based on the nature. They coordinate their activities by sunrise, sunset and other natural times. This natural regulation contains not only their work activities but also their behavioral patterns and customs. For example:

- By sun rise they leave their home and by sunset get back.
- Their public bath is used by men at night and women use it from sunrise till sunset.
- They celebrate their wedding in November and December because their live stock are fat and brawniness and suitable for slaughter.
- Some of children's name may derive from the time in which they were born.

The natural calendar is important in their life and life style is ordered by it. They emphasize to coordinate and harmonize activities with season, mounts and days.

Conclusion

Although the essence of the case study strategy is focused on studying a setting or phenomenon, but the case study's strength is its capacity to generalize to theory.

These overall principals are derived from our surveys in Staj:

- 1: They love their traditional customs and don't want to replace them by global culture.
- 2: They coordinate their lives with natural phenomenon such as sunrise, sunset and seasons.
- 3: They emphasize on handy crafts and strengthen their local economy and preserve the health of environment.
- 4: These concepts are recognized in their architecture
 - Introspection
 - Participation
 - Local style
 - Harmonize with natural environment

References

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