



## HERITAGE CONSERVATION PLANS OF INDIA - QUANTITY VS QUALITY ANGSTS

## History

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**KEYWORDS:**

Heritage, Conservation, Protected Monuments, Sustainability

Heritage Site has a special cultural or physical significance and outstanding universal value to the humanity. There are no two opinions on the need for heritage and heritage conservation. The uniqueness and diversity of India's heritage is reflected in its human settlements from ancient times, social structure, religious beliefs, buildings, traditions, civic activities and varied natural resources. Various State Governments, through its state legislations have identified a minimum of 4000 historical monuments for protection. According to the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act 1958 and subsequent rules, ancient monument means any structure, erection or monument, or any tumulus or place of interment, or any cave, rock-sculpture, inscription or monolith which is of historical, archaeological or artistic interest and which has been in existence for not less than 100 years. It means that there are thousands of historical structures and heritage areas which are still lying uncared for in our nation. The Article 51 A (F) casts a duty upon every citizen to value and preserve the rich heritage of Indian culture. Multiple legislations and guidance of Central agencies are also found in India. Are they enough? Why is still a general apathy among the public, lack of pride in heritage centres, significant neglect and vandalism found in large numbers? A large number of heritage buildings and precincts have become highly vulnerable facing severe peril both in urban and rural areas due to extensive economic pressures. Heritage conservation is a continuous value based process involving a wide range of activities. Is the quantity of the Indian monuments an issue or lack of awareness of protection, sensitization among common people an issue? Shouldn't Indian situation call for alternative ways and means to develop mechanism for the revival and revitalization of heritage resources? This is an conceptual paper that focus on

- Efforts taken in India for heritage conservation
- Need for a comprehensive cultural heritage management targets
- Angsts of quantity Vs. quality in the conservation efforts in India-case studies

In India the responsibility of preserving heritage monuments becomes that of the government and the government is expected to take appropriate measures to preserve them without changing their ancient character. Isn't it time to realize a change in the approach of heritage conservation?

**Heritage Management plans of India**

The Constitution of India directs the state and its citizens to protect and preserve the nation's rich heritage. The Government of India and its federal members promulgated several laws to conserve and protect heritages under their purview. Cultural heritages in the country, among the many, are protected through the following main laws.

- The Indian Treasure Trove Act, 1878
- The Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904
- Rajghat Samadhi Act, 1951
- The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958
- The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Rules, 1959
- The Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972
- The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972
- Environment (Protection) Act, 1986
- Bio-diversity Act, 2002
- The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2010

Foundations for heritage conservation in India were laid down way back in the pre-independence era at the time of inception of Town Planning Acts (Madras Town Planning Act 1920 of Tamilnadu and the Travancore Town Planning Act 1932 of Kerala) itself. The planning tools developed in 1960's for the entire country were not sufficient to cater to the protection of rich and varied urban heritages of India. Under this scenario, a national society named "Indian Heritage Society" (HIS) (formerly known as Indian Religious Society) was formed in 1993 with the motto of "Preserving Indian heritage for the next generation". Society's main objective is to draw the attention of the public and the government to the dangers that threaten the environment due to destruction and ill-planned exploitation of the natural resources, specifically the heritage of art and architecture. It aims to devise appropriate measures for their protection, preservation and proper utilization.

Another major initiative was the establishment of National Monuments Authority (NMA) under the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India as per provisions of The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains AMASR (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2010. Several functions have been assigned to the NMA for the protection and preservation of monuments and sites through management of the prohibited and regulated area around the centrally protected monuments. One amongst these responsibilities of NMA is also to consider grant of permissions to applicants for construction related activity in the prohibited and regulated area. It aims to create awareness amongst the people and various stake holders on the need for conservation and preservation of the built heritage.

With the intention of Urban development that aim at blending 'nature and culture for a better future' a new scheme was launched by the present government. The National Heritage Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY) that seeks to preserve and rejuvenate the rich cultural heritage of the country was launched by the Minister of Urban Development Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu in January-2015. It aims to promote integrated, inclusive and sustainable development of heritage sites, focusing not just on maintenance of monuments but on advancement of the entire ecosystem including its citizens, tourists and local businesses. It provided Rs.500 cr to the following 12 cities selected in the first phase under the 'Central Scheme' of HRIDAY. Based on city population, Varanasi was allocated Rs.89.31 cr, Amritsar-Rs.69.31 cr, Warangal(Telangana)-Rs.40.54 cr, Ajmer-Rs.40.04 cr, Gaya-Rs.40.04 cr, Mathura-Rs.40.04 cr, Kanchipuram-Rs.23.04 cr and Vellankini-Rs.22.26 cr, both in Tamil Nadu, Amaravati (AP)-Rs.22.26 cr, Badami (Karnataka)-Rs.22.26 cr, Dwaraka (Gujarat)-Rs.22.26 cr and Puri-Rs.22.54 cr. HRIDAY promotes the involvement of state and local urban bodies, NGOs, spiritual organizations and private sector for effective implementation of the scheme. The Scheme supports development of core heritage infrastructure projects which shall include revitalization of urban infrastructure for areas around heritage assets identified / approved by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India and State Governments. These initiatives shall include development of water supply, sanitation, drainage, waste management, approach roads, footpaths, street lights, tourist conveniences, electricity wiring, landscaping and such citizen services.

Heritage conservation has to be carried out on a continuous basis and comprehensive listing and grading are required to achieve the task of effective conservation. According to Das and Basu (2007), long-term protection of heritage depends upon the encouragement, sustainable development of local resources and promotion of appropriate tourism

as a means of conserving them so that local and regional economies get benefitted. A good heritage management plan shall essentially include inventory of resources, their designation and conservation practices while taking care of fiscal aspects, manpower, publicity and role of locals. Cities with rich heritages are being gradually threatened by unplanned urbanisation and tourism. Fortuitously, increasing awareness about heritages in recent decades has been leading various organisation to identify heritages as well as to delineate heritage zones based on a set of defined criteria.

**Conservation efforts – sample case studies in India**

Name of the heritage site	Threats faced	Heritage Management Plan adopted
Chandramauleswar Temple, Hampi  The temple is located on the Rishimukh Island that is situated near the northern bank of River Tungabhadra. The temple is dedicated to the worship of Lord Shiva.	unplanned development  inadequate protection  seasonal flooding  misuse by local population  Neglect  vandalism	The Global Heritage Fund uses a development model called “Preservation by Design”  Application of the latest or most effective methods and technologies  Formulation of conservation strategy through partnerships of stake-holder organizations to enhance long-term sustainability  Involvement of local communities [stone masons, local ferry men and sadhus] to rebuild the temple  Ancient bridge reconstructed and made useable for visitors  Promotion of local economic development by capitalizing on the strengths of their unique cultures and archaeological resources.
Jaisalmer Fort, India  The last living fort in India which is crumbling suddenly due to natural and man-made calamities	Sewage system built by the govt. officials without understanding the structure  Tourist boom  Use of 50,000 gallons of water by locals and visitors  Climate change [increase in rainfall suddenly]  Earthquake damages	Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage assessed the damage  The engineer's rebuilt damaged outer walls with golden sandstone dug from nearby quarries and even employed the services of a camel to grind lime plaster with its hooves, according to the traditional method.  To guard against damage from future tremors, they shored up weakened roof beams and inserted copper pins in the walls to protect against lateral thrust.  Renovation of fort's largest structure, the granary. Built from four different types of stone, it once held enough grain to feed the fort's residents for 12 years.  Local authorities plan to turn the granary into a spice museum  Propose to begin an amphitheater to showcase Rajput music

**Integrate Sustainability Issues -**

To overcome the angsts of Quality Vs Quantity in the heritage management, it is essential to have a comprehensive heritage management plan that shows a proper care of the socio-cultural,

economic and environmental issues.

**SOCIO CULTURAL ISSUES:** It is a vital to incorporate the socio-cultural effects while preserving the visual integrity of a place, identifying, evaluating, assessing and documenting cultural heritage values. Intangible values are as important as protection of historical structures. The heritage management plan must endeavour to regulate traffic, mobility, accessibility in cultural area for all generations / social groups and the new developments in the heritage site area but also bring in careful adaptation of buildings to new uses.

**ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES** that are addressed in a heritage management plan includes Preventive and reactive measures for natural hazards and climate change, Adaptation of cultural heritage to environmental needs, Drainage and Microclimate factors  
**ECONOMIC ISSUES** to be taken are employment of local population, use of local sustainable materials, balancing tourism offers with inhabitants’ needs and adequate measures for encouraging new business approaches and workplaces Instead of responsibility shared by several agencies such as Indian Heritage Society (HIS), International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) (India) and UNESCO-lead Indian Heritage Cities Network (IHCN), Central Public Works Department (CPWD), Public Works Department (PWD) of state governments and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), the way to move forward is to create a dedicated Government organization for heritage conservation. It also needs to focus on heritage education and facilitate promotion of Archeological / Heritage tourism.

Heritage building conservation promotes sustainable development by conserving the embodied energy in the existing buildings. Maintenance must take a leading role in conserving the heritage values of the buildings. Heritage buildings are valuable assets to the tourism industry due to their strong influence in motivating foreign tourists to visit the country. Therefore, it is paramount to conserve these buildings by continuously caring and protecting them from being destroyed so as to prolong their life span and functions. A well-conserved natural and historic environment, based on traditional knowledge and skills, considerably reduces underlying disaster risks’ factors, strengthens the resilience of communities and saves lives.

There are only few heritage sites that produce sufficient surpluses to facilitate investment in sustainable practices. It is necessary in the present socio-economic scenario to improve the financial output of the heritage centre along with the enhanced conservation activities. The strategies for the sustainable heritage management must deal with the capacity building, improved access to information, training to personnel, strategic leadership and necessary resources to generate funds. Creation of local and regional and national networks can be very useful. As the gravity of the threats to heritage centres is exhilarating, so must be the efforts to conserve and protect the heritages. The ability to access, enjoy and care for one’s heritage is essential for what the Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen calls the “capability of individuals to live and to be what they choose”, that is a fundamental component of human development. Protection of heritage resources is indicative of one’s culture and development.

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