

# Seminar on Conservation and Local Development

Ahmedabad  
12<sup>th</sup> October, 2019



AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK



AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE

**CHC** CENTER  
FOR HERITAGE  
CONSERVATION

**CRDF** CEPT RESEARCH  
AND DEVELOPMENT  
FOUNDATION

**CEPT**  
UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY  
OF ARCHITECTURE

*Cover Image source: © AKDN*

**Aga Khan Trust for Culture**  
**The Cultural Agency of the Aga Khan Development Network**  
P.O. Box 2049, 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland  
1-3 Avenue de la Paix, 1202 Geneva, Switzerland  
Website: [www.akdn.org](http://www.akdn.org)

**Center for Heritage Conservation (CHC),**  
**CEPT Research and Development Foundation (CRDF),**  
CEPT University,  
Kasturbhai Lalbhai Campus,  
University Road, Navrangpura,  
Ahmedabad – 380009, India  
Phone no: (+91) 7265800010  
Email: [chc@cept.ac.in](mailto:chc@cept.ac.in) / [crdf@cept.ac.in](mailto:crdf@cept.ac.in)  
Website: [www.cept.ac.in/center-for-heritage-conservation-chc](http://www.cept.ac.in/center-for-heritage-conservation-chc)

*Disclaimer:*

*The contents of this publication comprise of the views and opinions of the speakers and not of AKDN, AKTC, CHC, CRDF or CEPT University.*

# Preface

In recent years conservation doctrines have increasingly addressed intersections between the discourses of sustainable development and conservation by acknowledging the specific situations of poorer countries. In practice, conservation professionals have explored these intersections by introducing concerns for resources and livelihoods, including participatory processes, and addressing broader environmental concerns. Many have pointed out the need for conservation practice to become interdisciplinary and inclusive.

The Aga Khan Historic Cities Programme (AKHCP) provides an excellent demonstration of regeneration projects in historic areas carried out with the central objective of improving the lives of the inhabitants while also promoting models that will sustain these improvements. The Programme has shown how the creation of green spaces, conservation of landmark buildings, improvements to the urban fabric and the revitalisation of cultural heritage – in many cases the only assets at the disposal of the community – can provide a springboard for social development.

This seminar, organised in the context of the showing at CEPT of two exhibitions of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, on the Aga Khan Award for Architecture and AKHCP respectively, explores these intersections between local development and conservation through examples of places such as Nizammuddin, Ahmedabad, Amber, Shimla, Coorg, Muziris, Alleppey presented by our eminent guest speakers and their theoretical underpinnings. The overarching question addressed by the seminar speakers would be - what would conservation practice look like if it fully addresses all the challenges of local sustainable development?

# Table of Contents

Preface .....	iii
Table of Contents .....	iv
About the Organisations .....	v
The seminar schedule.....	vii
Introduction to AKHCP Philosophy and Approach	
Prof. Yudhisthir Raj Isar .....	1
Rethinking Conservation and Rebuilding lives in Nizamuddin	
Ratish Nanda.....	5
Mind the Gap; Hold onto that Hat - Retrospectives: Amber, Shimla, Coorg & Goa	
Poonam Verma Mascarenhas.....	17
Conservation with Community Participation - Muziris and Alleppey	
Dr. Benny Kuriakose.....	35
Intersections between the discourses of Conservation and Development: Pedagogical Implications for Heritage Management Education	
Dr. Neel Kamal Chapagain .....	45
Paradox of Protection, and other lessons for pedagogy of urban conservation	
Dr. Jigna Desai .....	61
Concluding Remarks.....	73

## About the Organisations

### Aga Khan Development Network

The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) works in over 30 countries around the world. It currently operates over 1,000 programs and institutions – many of which date back over 60 years, and some over 100. It employs approximately 96,000 people, the majority of whom are based in developing countries.

The overall goal of the Aga Khan Development Network is the improvement of Quality of Life (QoL) in the areas where its member institutions work. AKDN's vision and strategies encompass an improvement in material standards of living, health and education, as well as a set of values and norms in the organisation of society which include pluralism and cultural tolerance, gender and social equity, civil society organisation and good governance. AKDN therefore has a holistic view of what constitutes progress that goes beyond material benefits or only poverty alleviation, and which encompasses a more rounded view of human experience and aspirations.



AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

### Aga Khan Trust for Culture

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) focusses on the physical, social, cultural and economic revitalisation of communities in the developing world. It includes the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, the Aga Khan Historic Cities Programme, the Aga Khan Music Initiative, the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto, Canada, the on-line resource Archnet.org and related programmes.

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture Education Programme aims to promote broader and deeper awareness among young people of the philosophy and values that underpin the efforts of the Trust. To this end, the programme is developing teaching materials and processes that will enable the wealth of knowledge and learnings accumulated by two of the Trust's key programmes – the Aga Khan Award for Architecture and the Aga Khan Historic Cities Programme – to be shared with university and high school students, as well as a broader interested public. The Aga Khan Trust for Culture Education Programme develops teaching materials and processes that enable the wealth of knowledge accumulated by two of the Trust's key programmes – the Aga Khan Award for Architecture and the Aga Khan Historic Cities Programme – to be shared with university and high school students, as well as a broader interested public. Materials include teaching packages and curriculum units.



AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE

## CEPT University - Faculty of Architecture

CEPT University focuses on understanding, designing, planning, constructing and managing human habitats. Its teaching programs aim to build thoughtful professionals and its research programs deepen understanding of human settlements. Through its education, research and advisory activities, CEPT strives to improve the impact of habitat professions in enriching the lives of people in India's villages, towns and cities. Originally established in 1962 as the School of Architecture, Faculty of Architecture, CEPT University, is one of the vital centers of thought and education in the field of Architecture in India. It continues to aim for excellence in its teaching and research programs in the field of Architecture. Education at this Faculty is based on the premise that an architect is a responsible agent of societal change. It aims to give its students a breadth of cultural exposure that shapes a reflective and critical outlook based on social and environmental awareness and responsiveness. This is combined with rigorous learning of skills and disciplines necessary in the profession of architecture. This twofold orientation and a well-developed pedagogical method have helped the Faculty to become an outstanding Center of architectural thought, research and learning.



## Center for Heritage Conservation, CRDF

The Center for Heritage Conservation (CHC) has a vision of becoming the focal point in research, advisory and capacity building of the practice and policy of heritage conservation in the country.

Existing processes, borrowed principles and unstructured practices have not been enough to address the challenges and contingencies of these complex Indian realities. Intervening in these areas requires strategies that are specific to the local context and involve collaboration with stakeholders such as NGOs, community organizations, professionals and private enterprises. With a firm belief in the ethics of conservation and sustainability, the Center intends to engage with municipal corporations, departments and ministries at central and state level, private practitioners and developers to inform practices on the ground and create sustainable and equitable solutions. CHC will also act as a repository of existing knowledge and contribute towards generating awareness and an intelligent discourse around the subject among the citizens and other interest groups.



## The seminar schedule

SEMINAR

# Conservation and Local Development



Date:

**Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup> October 2019**

Time:

10:00 am to 5:00 pm

Venue:

Auditorium, CEPT University,  
Ahmedabad

Subjects & Speakers:

Introduction to the AKHCP philosophy and approach  
**Prof. Yudhisthir Raj Isar**

Rethinking Conservation & Rebuilding lives in Nizamuddin  
**Mr. Ratish Nanda**

Mind the Gap; Hold onto that Hat (Retrospectives: Amber, Shimla, Coorg & Goa)  
**Ms. Poonam Verma Mascarenhas**

Conservation with Community Participation - Muziris and Alleppey  
**Mr. Benny Kuriakose**

Intersections between the discourses of Conservation and Development:  
Pedagogical Implications for Heritage Management Education  
**Dr. Neel Kamal Chapagain**

Paradox of protection – A reflection on conservation initiatives at Ahmedabad  
**Dr. Jigna Desai**

Concluding discussion & remarks  
**Prof. K T Ravidran**

**OPEN TO ALL**

For more details contact:  
fa.pg@cept.ac.in

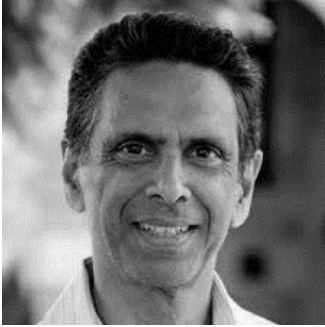
**CEPT**  
UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE









**Prof. Yudhisthir Raj Isar**

Education Director, Aga Khan  
Trust for Culture

[raj.isar@akdn.org](mailto:raj.isar@akdn.org)

Yudhisthir Raj Isar straddles the multiple worlds of cultural theory and practice. He is Professor of Cultural Policy Studies, The American University of Paris; and was Eminent Research Visitor, Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University (2011-2013). Since January 2017, he is also the Education Director at the Aga Khan Trust for Culture. Isar was the founding co-editor of the Cultures and Globalization Series (SAGE) and has authored many book chapters and journal articles. He has been president of the European arts and culture platform Culture Action Europe (2004-2008).

Isar is a trustee of cultural organizations and a consultant to foundations and international organizations, notably UNESCO. Forty years of experience in conceiving an implementing cross-cultural projects and programmes. Topic areas have included the following: the public policy implications of cultural identity and diversity; culture and development; heritage conservation and community development; museum development; cultural pluralism; international cultural co-operation and exchange; intercultural dialogue; ethnic politics and conflict; cultural citizenship and governance; cultural industries; cultural policy formulation; management of cultural institutions; arts education; higher education in architecture and planning; cultural documentation.

## Introduction to AKHCP Philosophy and Approach

Let me begin by congratulating CEPT and its Centre for Heritage Conservation directed by Dr. Jigna Desai for having organized this one-day seminar under the recently launched Education Programme of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture. As the main purpose of the Education Programme is to share the philosophy, working principles and methods of two flagship programmes of the Trust – the Aga Khan Award for Architecture and the Aga Khan Historic Cities Programme – with young people in both formal and informal teaching and learning settings, it is highly fitting that that you have designed such a gathering of conservation academics, professionals and students to exchange insights around issues of historic urban conservation focusing upon the Indian context. Discussions such as these are essential if the stakeholders are to together deepen their understanding of the many dimensions of architectural conservation today, notably in settings such as South Asia.

Before sharing with you a few thoughts on the distinctive methodology of the Historic Cities Programme, which provides a template as it were for today's proceedings, let me briefly evoke the role of the Award for Architecture established in 1977. The efforts of the Award actually set the stage for the emergence, a decade later, of the Historic Cities Programme. The Award's Master Juries were particularly attentive not merely to the visions of different architects and their implementation, but also and perhaps even more so, to newly designed buildings whose spaces and forms appropriate to the local context and traditions, as well as to old buildings that had been restored for present day use, but in ways that were respectful of past templates and demonstrated a concern for the communities who lived in or used them. This concern, which reflected a need felt across the Global South, was what led His Highness the Aga Khan to take up the challenge of restoring historic buildings and urban to be executed by the Trust itself. While the Award had put in place an

## Conservation and local development

infrastructure of recognition, so to speak, for the work of others – architects, engineers, artisans and their clients – the Historic Cities Programme, which began its operations in 1991, was to become an *infrastructure and programme of intervention*. Building on the lessons learned through the work of the Award, the Programme has, over the years, carried out a series of *projects on the ground*, interventions to restore and revitalize the historic urban heritage for and with the communities that live in them today: beginning in Cairo, and going on to Zanzibar, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Mali, Tajikistan and Malaysia.

The 14 cycles of the Award since 1980 have brought together Master Juries whose efforts have reflected key strands of thinking about and evaluating the quality of architecture in our time, notably for in terms of building that is not aesthetically good alone, but also socially relevant and meaningful for the people who live in or use them. *Mutatis mutandis*, the Historic Cities Programme has done the same, as demonstrated by the two exhibitions that were inaugurated at the CEPT Library yesterday evening – one on the work of the Award and the other on the Historic Cities Programme. The archives of both endeavours are a hugely valuable resource for teaching and learning in the two respective fields. Indeed, it is precisely in this spirit that we are now making this abundant documentation available to schools of architecture and their departments of architectural conservation.

Let me say few words now about the 'Integrated Urban Rehabilitation' methodology that has been put in place by the Aga Khan Historic Cities Programme. This is an approach that has always centred upon the community of people who live in historic cities and neighbourhoods. In other

words, its frame of reference is wholly that of 'local development' – the topic of discussion for today's seminar. The local development paradigm requires grappling with several interconnected challenges. Two years ago, when I began work on the Education Programme, I was greatly struck by what Stefano Bianca, the first director of the Historic Cities Programme, had written about its chief motivation: '*to somehow improve the poor self-image of the people the community concerned.*' Bianca went on to explain that restoration and reuse of historic landmarks, public open spaces, and housing stock can build or restore this self-image only if the two pursuits are grounded in the capacities, the imaginations, the resources and the aspirations of the local community. That is why it is so important he argued, alongside architectural conservation, to raise living standards, provide employment, support small enterprises, put in place health and education services and empower women.

A range of challenges, then, that require recourse to many different disciplines and types of interventions. Interventions that would start with a thorough approach to documentation and interpretation of various urban historic forms in order to have a suitable framework on which to start work. Historic and structural analysis including archaeological research to understand the historical layers would be needed as well. In parallel a plot by plot survey of the urban fabric in order to understand land use, social stratification, physical condition and many other factors. In terms of planning technology, the challenge of introducing modern infrastructure without disrupting the essential features of the historic urban form, something that often requires very tough trade-offs, particularly when it comes to

## Conservation and local development

vehicular traffic. So too the improvement of housing infrastructure, with many ramifications such as water supply, sewerage, and electricity. Yet another key area of intervention would be open public space enhancement. Often these public spaces, streets, even barren land are neglected because nobody feels responsible for them – a lacuna that is truly overwhelming in the Indian context.

The Historic Cities Programme has addressed all these challenges and has found effective ways of tackling them, as Ratish Nanda will explain to us in detail when he presents the restoration of Humayun's Tomb, together with the Nizamuddin Basti Revival project and the creation of the Sunder Nursery. But AKTC does not have exclusive rights to this kind of approach and many agencies are tackle the same sorts of issues in their various ways. Yet across all conservation and adaptive reuse projects some obvious common questions arise - questions of selection, of priorities, of ownership and solidarity. Just as central is the question of income generation capacity. This question in turn leads us to the whole framework of socio-economic development for the local community where again you can only seriously talk about local ownership if the people in that community are afforded tangible benefits other than the preservation of elegant elite structures of brick and mortar.

How can conservation be conceived and implemented in ways that improve the quality of life? It is precisely this question that Highness the Aga Khan chose to address at the outset of his Imamate over six decades ago, when he began to visit communities of his followers who lived in extremely poor built environments. As he put it in an interview:

*"Anyone who visited the slums of Karachi... or the high mountain areas of the Karakoram, or who simply visited the periphery of Bombay or Calcutta, came into direct physical contact with levels of poverty which were absolutely indescribable, and which were very much evidenced by the physical environment in which the people lived. The first indicator of a community's poverty, what you see, is the physical context in which they live. Therefore, my interest in architecture was driven at that time by the question of what to do to improve the quality of life..."*

Seeing conservation as essentially as a means of improving the quality of life is a principle that had long been familiar to me through my three decades of work with UNESCO. Yet experience has revealed it to be a principle far more frequently advocated than accomplished. By the turn of the present century, however, it had become clear that the work of Aga Historic Cities Programme embodies this principle in exemplary ways. It does so by forging partnerships locally that are truly cross-cutting: public, private as well as grounded in the local community.

Returning now to my point of departure, let me close by acknowledging once again the contribution CEPT is making to attaining one of the core goals of AKTC, which is to transmit to and share key learnings from the work of its various programmes and to do so in close cooperation with faculty in these institutions, in ways that also advance the pedagogical objectives of the schools themselves. We are thus in the process of creating 'win-win' collaborations with several

## | Conservation and local development

other institutions in India, including the Centre for Heritage Management at Ahmedabad University, Rizvi College of Architecture, KRVA, Manipal University, the Goa College of Architecture and CEPT itself.

Today's seminar will, I am sure, provide yet another building block in this emerging edifice.



## Ratish Nanda

Chief Executive Officer,  
Aga Khan Trust for Culture,  
Delhi, India.

ratish.nanda@akdn.org

Ratish Nanda, CEO, Aga Khan Trust for Culture is a Conservation Architect by training. He heads the multi-disciplinary AKTC teams presently undertaking the two major urban conservation projects in India: the Nizamuddin Urban Renewal Initiative, Delhi and the Qutb Shahi Heritage Park Conservation in Hyderabad. For AKTC, he was earlier responsible for the Baghe Babur restoration (2002-2006), in Kabul, Afghanistan and the garden restoration of Humayun's Tomb (1999-2003). He has earlier worked for Historic Scotland in Edinburgh (1998-99) and also INTACH Delhi Chapter (1995- 2000). He has authored over 100 articles and his major publications include, 'Delhi, the Built Heritage: A listing'- released by the Prime Minister of India; Delhi: Red Fort to Raisina; Conservation of Historic Graveyards (Scotland) and Rethinking Conservation: Humayun's Tomb. He has lectured in over 20 countries. Awards received by him include the Chishti India Harmony Award (2014), the Eisenhower Fellowship (2007), the Sanskriti Award for Social and Cultural Achievement (2004), the 'Urban Hero' title by Prince Claus Fund, Aga Khan Foundation International Scholarship and the Charles Wallace Conservation Fellowship (1997), among others.

# Rethinking Conservation and Rebuilding lives in Nizamuddin

## Abstract

The site of Humayun's Tomb offered all three aspects that Aga Khan Development Network aspired to work for - conservation of grand heritage, the possibility of improving the quality of life for large community and creation of an open space which should be a city level open space. The focus of the project is to improve 'quality of life'. Conservation of Humayun's tomb was completed over the span of 7 years. During this time every aspect and every space of the structure was attended and restored. Various historic structures – Nila Gumbad, Batashewala Mahal, Dargah Hajarat Nizamuddin, Nizamuddin Baoli were secured through consistent efforts of efforts of multi-disciplinary team and active community engagement eventually leading towards socio-economic development. The holistic approach of addressing the needs of nature, habitat and culture has yielded positive results. The residents who were previously ashamed of the condition of their neighbourhood are now proud of their revitalised surroundings. The Trust's support to Historic Communities demonstrates how conservation and revitalisation of the cultural heritage – in many cases the only aspect at the disposal of the community – can provide a springboard for social development.

## Keywords

Historic Cities, Quality of life, Community, Humayun's Tomb, Urban Renewal Initiative, Heritage Management

### Aga Khan Development Network

Aga Khan Development Network works in about 30 countries worldwide and Aga Khan Trust for Culture works in some of those countries. The organisations look at culture in a very broad aspect – it is not only historic buildings. It also takes into consideration food, music, museums, crafts and many other associated aspects. The creation of this program is associated with the project of Al-Azhar Park in Cairo, Egypt. Today the park attracts more visitors than the famous Pyramids of Egypt. With nearly two million visitors a year, the \$30 million Azhar Park - a gift from His Highness the Aga Khan to the city of Cairo - not only generates enough funds for its own maintenance (through gate and restaurant receipts), but has proven to be a powerful catalyst for urban renewal in the neighbouring district of Darb al-Ahmar.<sup>1</sup> In the 1970s His Highness was attending a conference and was made aware that there was enough space in Cairo for every individual to put their one foot on the ground. So he pledged to build this park on the site of a garbage dump. Once garbage was cleaned the remains of this 12<sup>th</sup> century fortification wall were found. Subsequently the fortification wall - the entire stretch of 1.2 km was restored. The 3 aspects of this project in Cairo eventually became a template for the future projects of Aga Khan Development Network all around the world.

- The creation of a green space which is today the heart of the city of Cairo. The city is now building several such

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.akdn.org/where-we-work/middle-east/egypt/cultural-development-egypt>

<sup>2</sup> For decades, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) has been working to revitalize the social, cultural, and economic strength of communities in the developing world through its

gardens inspired by Al-Azhar Park with the help of the same landscape architect.

- Conservation of the World Heritage Site of Al Azhar – the old city of Cairo.
- Working with the local community to improve their quality of life.

I had an opportunity to work for 6 years on the restoration of the historic garden known as Baghe Bahar in Kabul, Afghanistan. It is a 30 acre in the heart of Kabul. The plan was developed by Prof. Mohammad Shaheer of Shaheer Associates. Over the span of 15 years more than 100 projects were successfully undertaken in Afghanistan. These projects are recorded in a book called 'Afghanistan – Preserving Historic Heritage' by Prestel publication.<sup>2</sup>

In 1997, the efforts in Egypt and Afghanistan led to the restoration of the Mughal garden around Humayun's Tomb. The project was undertaken as a gift from His Highness the Aga Khan. In 2003, then Prime minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh requested His Highness the Aga Khan to undertake projects in India. After careful consideration of more than 50 sites all across India, Humayun's Tomb as selected as a site for further works.

The site of Humayun's Tomb offered all three aspects that Aga Khan Development Network aspired to work for - conservation of grand heritage, the possibility of improving the quality of life for large community and

Historic Cities Programme. This book documents more than 100 such efforts that have been carried out in Afghanistan since 2002. Each project is illustrated with specially commissioned photographs and detailed descriptions.

## Conservation and local development

creation of an open space which should be a city level open space. The 19<sup>th</sup> century view of this historic area was envisaged and captured in a conceptual aerial view. The view was instrumental in understanding the changes in the area over last 100 years. The series of gardens and enclosures which were part of the original scheme was lost to time in 21<sup>st</sup> century.



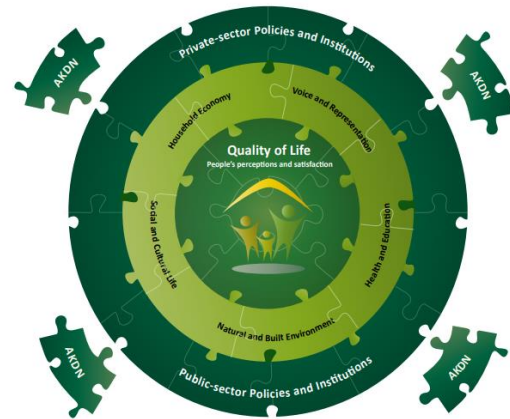
*Aerial View of Humayun's Tomb*

Hence, Aga Khan Development Network decided to initiate the following three programs in the identified project area,

1. Conservation of Humayun's Tomb and 60 other monuments dating from around 14<sup>th</sup> century onwards.
2. The creation of green space in the form of Sunder Nursery.
3. Community development programs at Hazarat Nizamuddin Basti which has a population of around 20,000.

## Quality of Life

The focus of the project is to improved 'quality of life'. It is essential to define the concept of 'quality of life'. The questions to be asked are – how to seek the quality of life? What is the meaning of the quality of life? It is not possible to improve quality of life unless these questions are answered. This notion is defined with the help of about 40 indicators categorised under 5 heads.



*Framework for quality of Life Assessment*  
*Source: Quality of life Assessment Program, AKDN*

In order to impact these 5 parameters for improvement in quality of life, AKDN made efforts to work with multiple public partners. The three government agencies – Archaeological Survey of India, Municipal Corporation of Delhi and Central Public Works Department became the three primary partners. Despite different mandates and objectives all these agencies were brought together with persistent efforts of AKDN. The project team considers themselves as a link between all these public authorities. AKDN has entered into a formal agreement with these authorities in order to establish conservation projects along with health, education and sanitation initiatives as well as the creation of public open spaces for the benefit of local communities.

Humayun's Tomb project is the first privately undertaken conservation work on any of the national monument of India. Unfortunately even after 20 years of this initiative Aga Khan Development Network still remains the only such organisation to undertake such commitment. Responsibility of heritage conservation cannot solely reside with Government authorities. To ensure the survival of national heritage the conservation

## Conservation and local development

sector needs to be liberated and the conservation professionals must make a case for it.

### Conservation of Historic Buildings

For the conservation of Humayun's Tomb, an agreement was signed with the authorities in 2007. The garden restoration work initiated in 1997 formed a background for building restoration project. Since then substantial efforts have been put in historical and archival research of these monuments and area. Even after 20 years of work historical documents still surfaces. Historical research is a continuous work. As per the photographic images taken in around 1847-49, the spaces around the monuments showcases Mughal Landscape. However, colonial landscape features were introduced by British Rulers. Many features were changed during restoration works undertaken by Lord Curzon in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1947, the area was also used as a refugee camp for the refugees from Pakistan.

The importance of archival research cannot be overstated. It must be noted that such research is not merely for academic purpose. The research allows to understand significant layers of history and past interventions. In the 1980's the garden witnessed major interventions. Many historic features such as Mughal Chaadar and platforms were destroyed due to inappropriate cement and concrete interventions. The awareness about past efforts and materials used for interventions is extremely important for the conservation of built heritage. The site work was initiated with the extensive activity of removal of these incongruous materials and features and restoring the original Mughal features. A

million kilos of cement was removed from the roof of Humayun's Tomb. Also, 2 lac sq.ft. of cement plaster was removed from the wall surfaces of the tomb. This resulted in a substantial increase in the number of visitors within 6 months of project completion. The economic benefits of well-executed conservation projects justify the efforts and investment.

The project team introduced 3D laser scanning technology for documentation of the historic monuments in the year 2007. Since then, the technology has now become a standard tool and is widely available for commercial surveyors. It has proven very effective for AKDN projects.

The conservation principles were set out distinctly for the project. An approach of 'craft based practices' was adopted for this project. Traditional building construction techniques still prevails in India. Hence, it was pragmatic to implement the available resources and knowledge for the benefit of historic monuments. The conservation work was periodically peer reviewed to do justice to this World Heritage Site.

The craft based approach has also resulted in a substantial employment generation. The projects undertaken in Delhi and Hyderabad over the last 10 years have culminated into of about 14 lacs man-days of work. Creation of such socio-economic opportunities promotes conservation practices amongst other fraternities. Conservation practices today need justification in terms of what impact conservation can have in meeting several other government objectives.





*Craftsperson at work*

On 30<sup>th</sup> May 2014, during a thunderstorm of unprecedented velocity the wooden core of the 18 feet tall finial at Humayun's Tomb snapped and the entire finial collapsed on to the roof – 75 feet below. A thorough evaluation of the situation resulted in submission of a detailed report on the conservation strategy on 16th July 2014. The report was approved on 31st December 2014 by the Director-General, ASI following which repair works could commence in 2015.

Conservation of Humayun's tomb was completed over the span of 7 years. During this time every aspect and every space of the structure was attended and restored in one or the other way. The cement mortar in the dome was carefully replaced with lime mortar. Not a single piece of stone was replaced during repair of the dome. However, one of the challenging parts was reinstating the finial above the dome. Well-intended but inappropriate repair works of the past resulted in the collapse of the finial. Although the 3D scanning allowed to immediately create a copper replica, the gold plating and installation were challenging tasks. Titan Company Ltd., as part of its CSR effort, offered to provide the gold required to authentically finish the finial. Titan's support

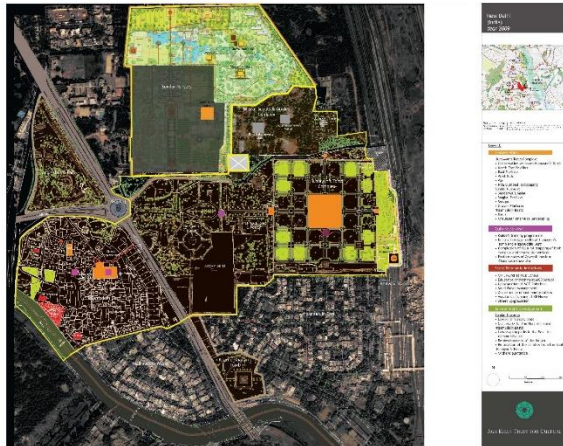
extended to their undertaking the gilding within their secure factory premises in Hossur and under the supervision of their team of scientists.<sup>3</sup> However, eventually, the gold plating was executed using a traditional method by a craftsman who works for gold leaf plating at Gurudwaras and Temples. The research undertaken for recreating the finial also revealed that India was producing a copper of exact purity which is required for the effective gold plating and even in today's times copper of such purity is not commercially available. Reinstating the finial was also an extremely strenuous and tech-defying activity which was successfully accomplished by the inter-disciplinary team of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture.



*Team Humayun's Tomb*

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.nizamuddinrenewal.org/conservation/humayun-tomb/work.php#finial>

## Securing Heritage



Master Plan – Nizamuddin, New Delhi

### *Nila Gumbad*

Encroachment, inaccessibility, neglect, dilapidated conditions is a very common sight for most of the historic monuments situated in the urban area. Nila Gumbad – one of the earliest and important Mughal era building was also in a similar condition when AKDN initiated the project. This structure is considered historically significant since it is a pre-cursor to the Humayun's Tomb. It is situated next to the Tomb. In the 1980s, a sewer line was laid between the two premises which led to a deterioration of the complex and neglect of the structure. Conservation of Nila Gumbad consisted of the relocation of 200 families who occupied the premises, relocation of the road which divided the complex ineptly and 15 years of persistent efforts. In October 2019, the access was opened to Nila Gumbad from the Humayun's Tomb. The structure has also been included in the list of World Heritage Sites as a part of Humayun's Tomb's inscription.

### *Batashewala Mahal*

This ASI protected monument and three Mughal gardens around it are situated in the

heart of the city in the immediate vicinity of Humayun's Tomb. This significant site has been given for Camping Ground in 1989. Over the period 150 buildings were built in the surrounding gardens which overshadowed the monument. Presently this is being restored. Sporadically built 150 buildings have been demolished and gardens are re-established. A substantial grant is secured for the restoration of the monument and the gardens. The conservation effort coupled with landscape restoration paved the way for the inclusion of the site within the expanded Humayun's Tomb World Heritage Site in 2016.

### *Dargah Hazarat Nizamuddin*

The 14<sup>th</sup> century Dargah was the catalyst for construction of Humayun's Tomb and other Mughal Monuments in this area. It is considered auspicious to be buried near a saint. In last the 7 centuries, more than 100 monumental structures have been constructed around the Dargah of Hazarat Nizamuddin. Along with these monuments, the area is also a habitat for a community of about 20,000 people. They have been living in poverty alongside the World Heritage Site.

### *Nizamuddin Baoli*

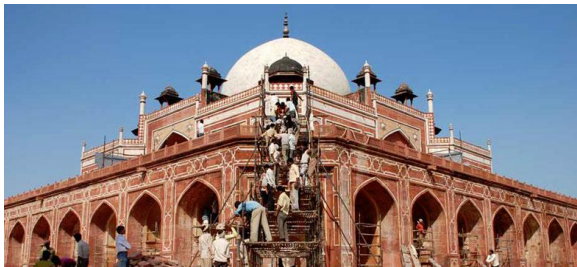
The sacred water body near the Dargah had become a home to 18 poverty-stricken families. The historic water structure has been comprised due to such occupancy. Also, the occupants were living in very poor conditions in the shadow of a partially collapsed structure. Under the Nizamuddin Urban Renewal Project these families were provided with alternate houses. The community intended to completely close the water body and widen the access to the Dargah. Through a series of community consultation meetings the community agreed

## Conservation and local development

for the restoration of the Baoli. The sacred water body was meticulously cleaned with very laborious efforts. It took 8000 man-days of work to clear about 40ft of sludge accumulated in the Baoli. The circular base of the Baoli was revealed for the first time in the past many decades. The effective cleaning and conservation work has led to the revival of the Baoli which now collects rainwater and serves as a sacred recreational space for the community.

### Community Engagement for Conservation

Cultural venues, performance spaces were created in the vicinity of the Dargah by rescuing the structures and open spaces from their confinements. Previously closely guarded historic places were restored and redesigned to bring their users, occupants, visitors together and to encourage community engagement.



*Community working on Humayun's Tomb*

The work done at Humayun's Tomb was instrumental in gaining trust from the community. Eventually the community of Nizamuddin Basti trusted the project team with the conservation of the main mosque which is in active use. In India, conservation of living mosque is unheard of. Although, for the community, religious values take precedent over historic values the mosque has been restored to its past glory after 5 years of steady efforts.

### Understanding the requirements of Socio-Economic Development

At the commencement of Urban Renewal Project, AKTC conducted a baseline survey to understand the needs of the community. The survey team consisted of a socio-economic experts. The survey highlighted the need for open spaces, sanitary services, healthcare facilities, schools and training centers. Once, equipped with this baseline data, the Trust along with its other partners revived and/or established infrastructural facilities such as Municipal Schools, Polyclinic, Computer Training Centres, and Vocational Training Programs. Not only were the community from Nizamuddin Basti but also people from the other neighbourhoods immensely benefitted with the establishment of these basic facilities. Although the neighbourhood population was approximately 20,000, more than 4,57,000 people have taken services from the polyclinic.

It is not pragmatic to expect communities to take responsibility for conservation when there is a struggle for basic needs of life. The question to be addressed is how conservation can improve the quality of life not how people can improve conservation. For decades the question has been asked from the wrong perspective. Due to the vision of His Highness the Aga Khan this perspective is being changed.

The Trust initiates the project only after clear understanding of by whom and how the project will be operated and maintained in the future. For example, the polyclinic at Nizamuddin has been built and established on behalf of Delhi Municipal Corporation. The facility is owned by the Corporation and

## Conservation and local development

in past 10 years the gradual transfer of responsibilities is continuously taking place. The handholding period is utilised for intensive training of community representatives and health workers. Various functions and operations of the clinic are now being managed by the community. The investment done in the clinic has saved more than Rs. 30 crores to the community. The effective continuation of this facility is being ensured by the project team.

### Providing Public Toilets

The baseline surveys revealed that 255 of the community did not have in-home toilets. Hence, as a part of the project, multiple community toilets were also built. Today gradually these toilets are being converted from community toilets to public toilets. The public toilets is a necessity for over 2 million pilgrims who visit Nizamuddin Dargah from far off places.

### Rain Water Harvesting

During the conservation project, 20 previously existing wells have been de-silted in Nizamuddin Area. This has resulted in the improvement of the water table. Now, the water table is less than 20ft between the area of Humayun's Tomb and Sunder Nursery which is unusual for Delhi region.

### Creating Economic Opportunities

The community at Nizamuddin Basti is engaged in heritage conservation not as volunteers but as people who learn traditional craft practices. Traditional crafts and skills such as glazed tile making, embroidery, cooking methods have

presented opportunities that suited the aspirations of this community. At the commencement of the project only 2% of the women from the community had nay economic opportunities. However, today these women have proven themselves as successful entrepreneurs and are even empowering others in their families and the community. A group of women has taken Nizamuddin Cuisine to a different platform. The intangible cultural heritage has provided a springboard required for stepping out of their conventional systems and in their journey toward achieving financial independence. Their success stories are the testimony of the positive social, economic and cultural impact of the Urban Renewal Initiative.



*Community involvement through awareness programs on site*

### Urban improvement in Historic Area

The holistic approach of addressing the needs of nature, habitat and culture has yielded positive results. The residents who were previously ashamed of the condition of their neighbourhood are now proud of their revitalised surroundings. Waste management and sanitation projects in this neighbourhood have changed the image not only for the community but also for the

## Conservation and local development

outsiders. It has imbibed a sense of pride in the community members.



*Awareness programmes in the neighbourhood*

One major project that brought the revival was the cleaning and development of Barapullah Nallah. Over time, this historic nallah that carried rain-water had become a dirty drain with waste water, solid waste and sewage. Work in the Barapullah Nallah has four components – engineering, landscaping, sanitation and engagement with the community. In the first step to beautification and landscaping of the area near the nallah, 200 trees were planted on both sides of Barahpulla Nallah. The plantation was carried out by involving resident community from houses near Nallah, school children and team members from the community.<sup>4</sup> A multi-disciplinary team of the project worked relentlessly with the community, with the school children and made this an urban infrastructure development project.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.nizamuddinrenewal.org/waste-sanitation/barapullahnallah-development.php>

The key thought behind this work in the words of His Highness the Aga Khan is,

*“The Trust’s support to Historic Communities demonstrates how conservation and revitalisation of the cultural heritage – in many cases the only aspect at the disposal of the community – can provide a springboard for social development. We have also seen how such projects can have a positive impact well beyond conservation, promoting good governance, the growth of civil society, a rise in income and economic opportunities, greater respect for human rights and better stewardship of the environment.”*

- His Highness the Aga Khan



*Educational opportunities are a fundamental right and key contributors to a good quality of life*

When Aga Khan Trust for Culture started the work in and around Humayun’s Tomb, the historical monuments were reduced to insignificant, inaccessible ruins of the bygone era. Through extensive conservation efforts, realignment and redesigning of open

## Conservation and local development

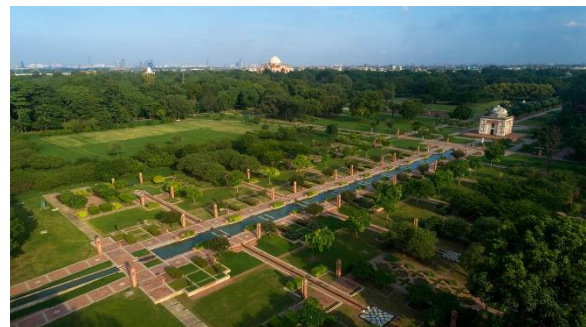
spaces the area was restored to its past glory. In the year 2018, it was recognised as one of the 100 greatest places on earth by The Time magazine. AKDN and AKTC have grown from their experiences at Al-Azhar Park in Cairo. Nizamuddin Basti Urban Renewal Project has exceptionally expanded vision and achieved an integrated urban development while conserving the historic monuments. The investment made in human resources, financial resources, efforts made on conservation of the built heritage, on creating an open space and with the people is almost equal. At Nizamuddin, a new garden – based on principles of Persian Landscape Design is established in the heart of the city with the aim of improving the quality of life for the people. 40 acres land of the pre-existing nursery – known as Sunder Nursery is now developed into an ecological paradise with flowing water features, plants and trees of various native species humming with birds and bees. The artificial habitat is created by removing decades of construction rubble on these historic spaces. It is important to be mindful of the term ‘artificial habitat’ especially when the objective is to create awareness about original ecological system. The newly developed habitat differs from the historic micro-habitat of the city which consists of the ridges, the river and marshy land. However, the new habitat offers a healthy environment for urban residents. The environmental and ecological impact of conservation projects can be more appealing to the other fraternities of society. The concept is to eventually create an 800 acre seamless city park from the area which is presently divided within multiple government authorities such as ASI, CPWD, DDA and Ministry of Environment. If completed the park will be bigger than New York’s Central Park. Open green spaces are

necessary for society because they are devoid of any boundaries. People from the diverse background can appreciate and experience these spaces irrespective of their gender, age, culture. His Highness the Aga Khan explain the significance in the following words,

*“Creating green spaces in urban areas constitutes a significant improvement in the quality of the environment and people’s living conditions. They are leisure spaces and meeting spaces for all ages and all social categories, encouraging different sections of the population to mix and integrate. And they have proved to be catalysts for economic activity and a source of employment, both directly and indirectly, particularly through the services provided for visitors”*

- His Highness the Aga Khan

## Providing Visitor Infrastructure: Site Museum



*Aerial view of Sunder Nursery and its surroundings*

A site museum is being constructed to establish an underground connection between Humayun’s Tomb, Sunder Nursery

## Conservation and local development

and Hazarat Nizamuddin Dargah. The area above ground will be developed into a plaza. A state-of-the-art site museum is to be built at the entrance of the World Heritage Site to: enhance visitor experience; allow a better understanding of Mughal architecture and building craft traditions; shed light on the development of the Nizamuddin area over a millennium; and, most significantly, explain the pluralist Sufi cultural traditions that defined Hindustani culture for at least five centuries.

This will be the first of the Site Museums planned for the 25 Adarsh or “model” monuments recently designated by the Government of India’s Ministry of Culture.<sup>5</sup> The museum design is developed by Vir Muller Architects.

### Restoring the Sense of Pride

All the various subprojects under Nizamuddin Urban Renewal Initiative is a reflection of parameters from the circle of life. The project has successfully impacted health and education infrastructure in the neighbourhood. 200 acres of open spaces has been landscaped and revitalised. Environmental factors are rejuvenated with the creation of artificial habitat. Intangible cultural aspects such as food, poetry, music, Qawwali, art has been revived and further economic opportunities are created based on these. A sense of pride is restored to the previous poverty-stricken community. The community takes pride in seven centuries of heritage in which their neighbourhood is

situated. About 1900 women and youth has found jobs as a result of 20 different vocational training programs initiated by AKDN. The community is made aware of their rights and various government schemes through a program called ‘*Rahnuma*’ which was started 3 years ago. The program was instrumental in reducing the exploitation of local people. This is an important achievement of the project.

It has been possible to accomplish the objectives of improving the quality of life due to various working partners and support from National and International Organizations and Government Authorities. Due to the involvement of these organisations as well as corporates allowed the project of such a scale to be undertaken. The project team consisted of 30 different disciplines working in sync with each other. Essentially critical aspects of such local developments projects are inter-disciplinary practice and public-private partnership which can either be profit based or non-profit based. Governments will need support from private organisations for undertaking conservation and local development projects. Similar smaller scale projects can be initiated by young conservation professionals in different parts of the country with the help of local Residents’ Welfare Associations and educational institutions such as CEPT.

*[This article is based on the lecture presented by Ratish Nanda in this seminar, later transcribed by CHC Team.]*

---

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.nizamuddinrenewal.org/conservation/humayun-tomb/images/humayuns-tomb-site-museum-flier.pdf>

### References:

'Cultural Development in Egypt' on the official website of Aga Khan Development Network last accessed on 04.02.2021 at 17:03 IST

[ <https://www.akdn.org/where-we-work/middle-east/egypt/cultural-development-egypt> ]

'Finial' on the official website of Nizamuddin Urban Renewal Initiative, AKDN last accessed on 04.02.2021 at 17:05 IST

[ <http://www.nizamuddinrenewal.org/conservation/humayun-tomb/work.php#finial> ]

'Barapullah Nallah' on the official website of Nizamuddin Urban Renewal Initiative, AKDN last accessed on 04.02.2021 at 17:07 IST

[ <http://www.nizamuddinrenewal.org/waste-sanitation/barapullahnallah-development.php> ]

AKTC (2015). Humayun's Tomb – Sundar Nursery – Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti Urban Renewal Initiative, last accessed on 04.02.2021 at 17:10 IST

[ <http://www.nizamuddinrenewal.org/conservation/humayun-tomb/images/humayuns-tomb-site-museum-flier.pdf> ]





## Poonam Verma Mascarenhas

Architect and  
Building Conservationist

Director, Archinova Environs at  
Goa

pvm1@gmail.com

Poonam Verma Mascarenhas is an architect, building conservation professional, researcher and writer, founder-director of Goa-based award winning studio Archinova\_Environs, and co-founder of Goa Heritage Action Group, an NGO, with three decades of pan India & international experience. Poonam's work life began at Auroville in 1991 using alternative building technologies. A Charles Wallace Fellow, she was consultant to INTACH Jaipur for conservation of 22 listed sites comprising temples, fort walls, cenotaphs, stepped wells, gates, reservoirs and designing Heritage Walks at Jaipur-Amber under ADB funded RUIDP projects (2001-4).

Her Goa-based studio Archinova\_Environs has revitalised numerous Goan heritage homes and couple of privately owned palaces in Rajasthan. Her bio-climatic boutique apartment project Samskruti Hoysala at Bangalore has won many awards including Best Green project 2014.

Since 2016, she is the Cultural Heritage Management Expert for ADB-funded IDIPT projects in Himachal Pradesh as consultant to PMC-DSC IPE Global Ltd. The team completed 'Rehabilitation of Shimla Townhall' in November 2018 while 'Conservation of Historic Urban Precincts and Buildings in Mandi Town' comprising temples, ghats, Victoria Bridge and rehabilitation of Vijay High School are nearing completion.

Poonam's research-based publications include more than 20 articles and papers along with 'Kerala Heritage Guide' (2000), 'Silent Sentinels, Traditional Architecture of Coorg' (HECAR, 2005), and has contributed to monographs on Auroville architects Poppo Pingel (2012) and Piero and Gloria Cicionesi (2018). Her latest book is 'Mapped Heritage of Panaji, Goa 2017' (GHAG, 2018).

She has served on several academic juries and is a senate member of SPA Vijayawada.

## Mind the Gap; Hold onto that Hat

### Retrospectives: Amber, Shimla, Coorg & Goa

#### Abstract

The conservation projects at Amber, Jaipur, Shimla, Coorg and Goa have presented the opportunities to identify the various gaps in our thinking processes and the approach of subjectively seeking objectivity has led to thought-provoking outcomes. The pattern of assimilation, appropriation, adaptation, adoption and fusion has continued to shape the built environment through the history of Indian Subcontinent. 'Preservation' is a colonial construct embedded in the Archaeological Survey of India's (ASI) and that of States too in regards to the caretaking of monuments. However, city level listing and protection that Bombay Environment Action Group completed in 1995 is the only one of its kind. More than two and half decades later, for Indian cities to retain uniqueness - remains a distant dream. This paper hopes to address the complexity with range of site- specific solutions and in turn make a case for an urgent shift in the development model of our unique cities.

#### Keywords

Problem solving, development policies, environment protection, inter-departmental collaboration, cultural beliefs, heritage mapping

## Conservation and local development



Red Hat (Emotion): feelings, hunches, instincts and intuition



White hat (neutral): data facts, information known or needed



Yellow Hat (Benefits/logical): Values and benefits, why something may work



Black Hat (judgement/ analysis): difficulties, potential problems- why something may not work!



Blue Hat (planning): manage process, next steps, action plans



Green Hat (ideas): creativity, solutions, alternatives, new ideas



Purple hat (invested): Committed and invested- subjectively seeking objectivity.

---

*Dr. Edward Bono and his thinking caps*

Dr. Edward de Bono and his seven hats-theory on thinking effectively for problem solving is an innovative approach to the thinking process - applicable for individual and also for group deliberations. He assigned colours to these thinking process and postulated that if one was mindful of which colour hat is on while in the process of deliberating- chances of consensus and satisfaction on outcome is more likely!

In this paper the operative is the purple hat for: *subjectively seeking objectivity*.

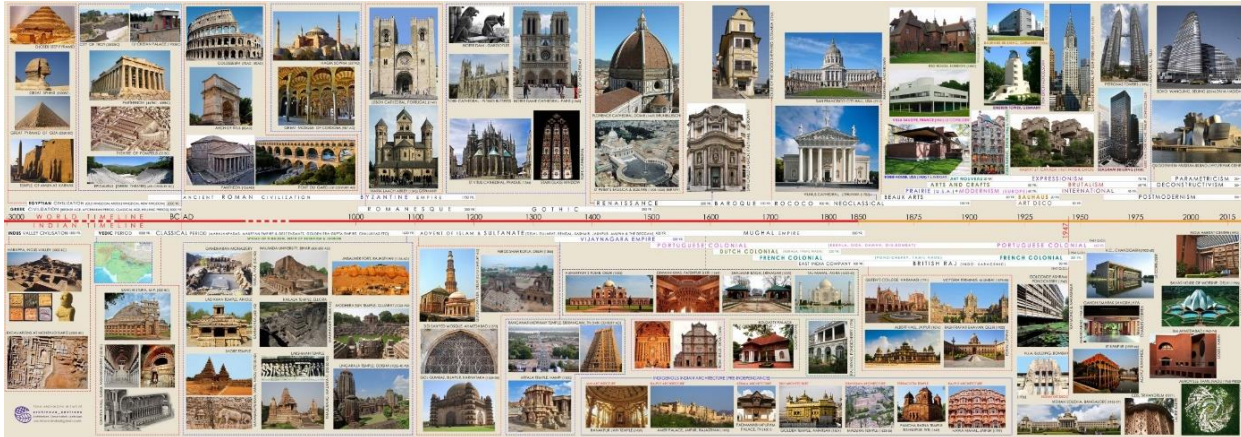
The conservation projects at Amber, Jaipur, Shimla, Coorg and Goa are teamwork and involved different teams. However, the perspectives gleaned and presented in this paper belong solely to the author.

### Context

The earliest presence of humans on the Indian Subcontinent dates back one lakh

years, beginning at the now World Heritage Site of the Bhimbetka cave dwellings whose real significance was discovered only in 1970s. The ecological aspects of these caves and the surrounding 21 villages are still being explored and studied. Several building manuals such as the Vastu-Shastras have existed on the art of building since ancient times.

Medieval India saw subsequent centuries of demolition and material reuse for new construction. Additionally, patterns of assimilation, appropriation, adaptation, adoption, and fusion have continued to shape the built environment through the subsequent Mughal and Colonial periods. Thus, comprehending Indian traditional architecture requires prismatic vision. The subcontinent is a memory bank interpreted differently by the voyagers, merchants, invaders and colonists.



*World and Indian Architecture- A Timeline: pattern of assimilation, appropriation, adaptation, adoption, and fusion  
(Source: archinova\_environs)*

'Preservation' is a colonial construct embedded in the Archaeological Survey of India's (ASI) stance with regards to the caretaking of monuments. The formation of States and the State Archaeology Departments came much later and may have inherited the list of monuments from ASI-initially and were added to subsequently- and is an on-going process. However, city level listing and protection policy that was conceptualised and completed by Bombay Environment Action Group (BEAG) in 1995 for Bombay (now Mumbai), is the only one of its kind. More than two and half decades later, for each Indian city to retain its uniqueness - remains a dream.

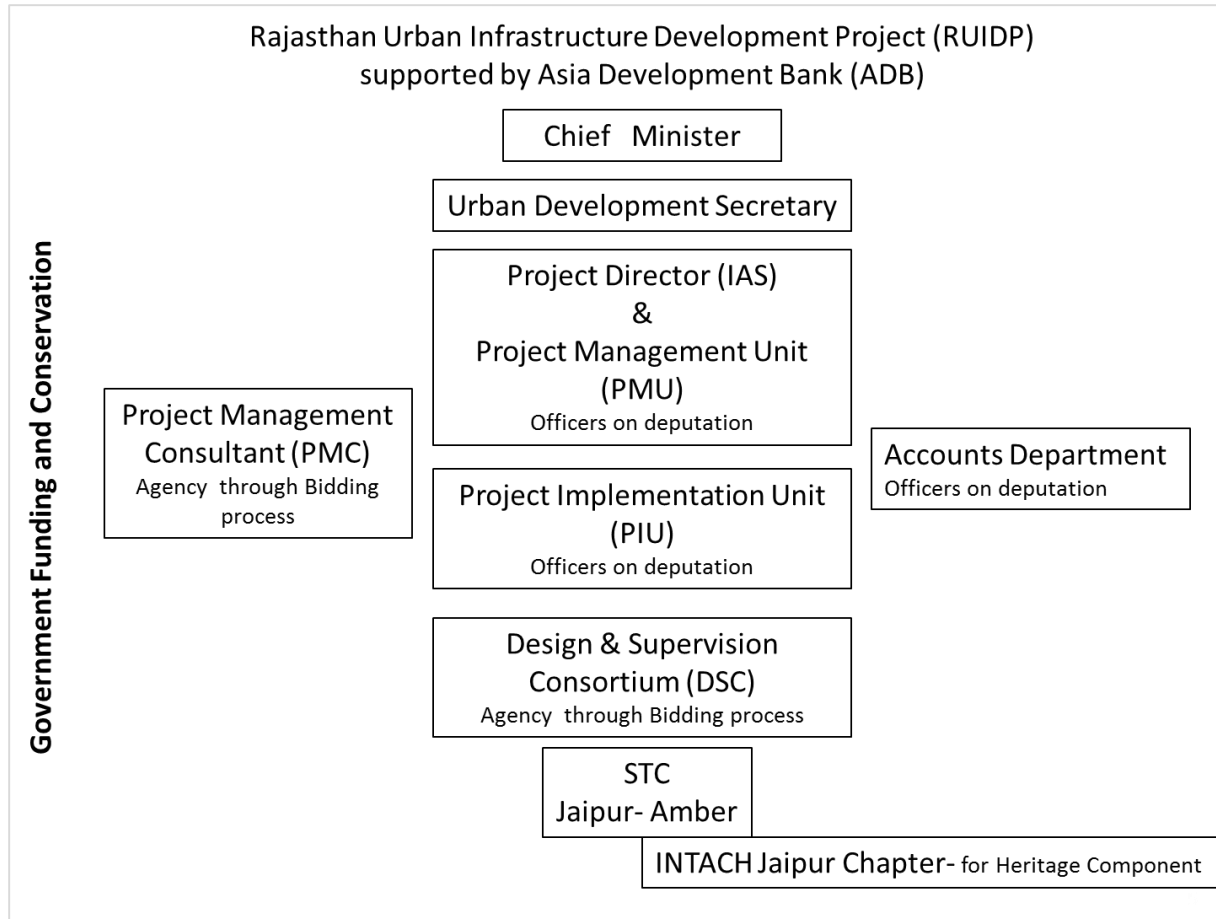
This paper hopes to address the complexity employing the range of site-specific solutions and make a case for an urgent shift in the development model of our unique cities.

### An Overview of Government Funding and Conservation

It was only as late as 2001, that an Heritage Component was constituted for urban conservation projects, under the aegis of Rajasthan Urban Infrastructure Development Project (RUIDP) supported by Asian

Development Bank (ADB). Chief Minister headed special vehicle project and the admin structure was constituted under Urban Development Secretary with Project Director (appointee IAS) heading the five verticals: Project Management Unit (PMU), Project Management Consultants (PMC), Project Implementation Unit (PIU) and Design and Supervision Consortium (DSC) along with Accounts department. While PMC and DSC comprised consultancy firms through bidding; PMU, PIU, and accounts had officers on deputation from various government departments such as Jaipur Jal Nigam, Jaipur Municipal Council, Jaipur Development Agency, Jaipur Town Planning, PWD, Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation, so on and so forth. The notion was to have inter-departmental collaboration to ease the process of implementation- also a first.

Jaipur INTACH Chapter, an NGO was appointed as sub-consultant to DSC-STC for Jaipur and Amber. A sum of 50 Crores was set aside for Conservation in Jaipur-Amber out of 3000 Crore in first tranche. Thus, as consultant to INTACH Jaipur, began the journey of finding, minding and filling the gaps!

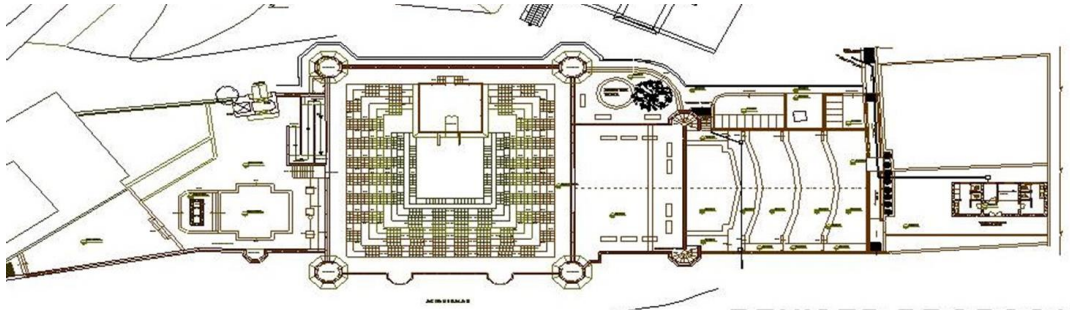


*The system of governance*

Amber, the parent city of Jaipur, the only medieval city of India to have a rich, albeit decrypt built fabric and in immediate threat of amass encroachment, had been a concern for Jaipur INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage) since the early eighties. They had thus invested in a feasibility study that became a valuable reference for the consultant team.

The selected sites were under the jurisdiction of Rajasthan State Department of Archaeology and Museums (SDoA). However, no records were available. Neither the as-built nor specifications for traditional works. So while the team worked on conservation plans, they also had to initiate the process of determining the methodology

of different traditional practices to conserve the sites. This challenge was overcome by identifying a master craftsman to help with materiality and finishing issues and referencing the PWD BSR of 1968. This collaboration of a conservation architect, civil engineer and master craftsman resulted in documenting specifications, methodology, and rates of 'Jaipur practice' traditional works employing traditional materials such as lime, sand, surkhi and many additives in processing for applications in masonry, plaster, ceiling, water proofing of stone roofing, and finishes. It however, took a year to negotiate the buy-in from the RUIDP civil engineers. Lack of precedents raises enormous amount of angst in government projects- we learned.



*Conservation and Development of Panna Miya also known as Meena Ka Kund (Source: Author)*

Subsequently, the decision makers also agreed with us- that the pre-qualification conditions for other infrastructure projects could not meet the needs of a conservation project and thus were also amended. It took determination and many negotiations and revisions to finalise the tender of the first conservation site. After substantial efforts and perseverance RUIDP floated the tender but failed to attract any responses.

In early 90's, Intach Jaipur convenor (late) Shri J.P. Singh had bought a ruin in Amber and Abhikram, a design and conservation firm, had rehabilitated it employing traditional technologies and thus we had a demonstrable project for all to see and take cognisance. However, it was not done as an item rate contract. While the restored haveli did help convincing an identified contractor from Jaipur to take up the conservation tender, but it was through the capacity building exercise, of the contractor this time, that finally the first site commenced.

### Amber: Conservation Planning and designing with nature

At Amber the concept of planning and designing with nature became tangible experience. Essentially a dam wall spanning the two hills of Aravalli in the northern outskirts of Amber village; designed to have rooms at lower level for services and a pavilion to serve as short stay lodge for the royals- constituted Upper Sagar and another check dam wall with walkway created Lower Sagar. The resultant reservoirs along with the Panna Miya (also known as Panna Meena ka Kund) - a stepped well in the valley at the village centre are design interventions from an era of deep understanding of topography and water connect. While restoring, the reservoirs were de-silted, the walls of the dam were repaired and the stepped well emptied of all the solid waste that had collected in it over years- in time for the good monsoon rains that had failed for prior 2 seasons.

## Conservation and local development

It was gratifying to find that not only the restored 3 sites but the all- 175 wells in the valley around Amber had water in them against 26 as was the case before conservation effort. Thus - not only did the built elements were restored, by serendipity- the project team had managed to recharge the water table that in turn revived the ancient water management system! An experience that is hard to forget on connectivity. It was a rewarding and humbling experience to understand the ingenuity of the 16<sup>th</sup> century planners and builders from such close proximity. This profound outcome also helped to change the perspective of the communities associated with this area and ensured the continued maintenance of the water structures.

### Jaipur: the 18<sup>th</sup> century Green City in denial

This city can be described as the 18<sup>th</sup> century Green City in denial. Working the conservation plans and tenders of 9-city Gates, cenotaphs, facades of 44 buildings – 20 of which were from the 300- listed by Ford foundation study- facilitated intimate relationship with this city. Behind the touristy glitter - Jaipur Walled city, founded in 1727- is a ‘greenest’ city at its very basic planning principles of: mixed land use, walkability, inbuilt water management, ratio of built and open spaces encouraging community interaction, built using locally available materials and a sound economic policy for the city’s planned growth – as still valid. Social cohesion through secular design has to be experienced at its squares which have buildings: domestic, temples and mosques blending seamlessly.

This extraordinary walled city is decaying – while Jaipur is on fast track to *Metropolism*!

Nothing in its growth reflects any sensitivity to understand and emulate the timeless planning principles seen in the historic core. The question seriously is why? Part answer lies in the governance system. While working on the historic gates, it was realised that while Jaipur walled city was admin responsibility of Jaipur Municipality (JMC), the outer boundary and the rest of the city was with Jaipur Development Authority. While JMC had elected member Mayor as presiding, the JDA was under commissioner- an IAS officer. Decisions on project proposals were highly subjected to inter party and intra- personal politics. While Jaipur INTACH team tried hard to create participation of citizens as stake holders at various sites for long term caretaking and ownership – the same was frowned upon and actively thwarted. The entire process remained top down.

Eventually the project team managed to incorporate and provide for the sympathetic activities that were being undertaken on the extents of the project sites. For example, the vegetable market at Chandpol (west gate) was re-organised and provision for short time parking for the shoppers too was incorporated while at Galta Gate (East gate), the research undertaken by the project team brought attention to the yearly pilgrimage that impacted the site and so we designed the storm drain covers to also facilitate as platforms for the shops that pop up during the fair and added a public pay toilet placed discretely on site. Unorganised pay-parking at each of the historic gates was re-designed and at New Gate, intervention was done in the wall to create pedestrian gates to ensure safety of citizens.

In Amber we created two open air theatres- one adjoining the Panna Miya / Meena Kund, in the heart of the village while other at

## Conservation and local development

Mathura Gate, accessible also from Jaipur-Delhi highway, with the vision that these could be adopted by the schools in the vicinity for their yearly cultural programmes and by the village residents for their annual 'Ram Lila' and other cultural festivals that dot the calendar year of *Rajasthanis*. We managed to execute these interventions but failed to institutionalise the partnership for co-caretaking.



*Jaipur Viraasat Festival, 2005 (Source: Author)*

Factually, Jaipur and Amber have a rich tradition of festivals and periodical community gatherings take place on the occasion of these festivals. The integrated conservation plans for various sites thus aimed for creation of facilities to ensure continuous use and maintenance resulting in mindful ownership by the communities. Alas, the successful execution was not followed by an effective public-private partnership for the long term ownership of the heritage by the community. Regional political aspirations and a chase for visibility often thwarted post-execution stages of the project. The Amber projects did highlight its value to the administration and led to creation of Amber Development Authority.

Subsequently, an inspired Secretary (IAS) of the SDoA took up the restorations of the

Amber fort and the fort wall. While RUIDP had placed the fort wall project aside, our conservation plan and estimates were adopted by Archaeology department for execution. To see the wall restored with provision for visitors' adventure walk, on my visit after few years, did I realise the impact of our perseverance.

Our methodologies for conservation along with specifications and rates were institutionalised and ever since conservation works under Government of Rajasthan have not stopped. But, alas, connect of communities and built heritage fabric is largely uninfluenced by these invocations.

### Colonial Heritage: Shimla Town-hall

Funds are required to create an impact on urban scale and thus when Department of Tourism of Himachal Pradesh included heritage conservation as component in ADB funded - Infrastructure Development Investment Project for Tourism in Himachal and Punjab, (IDIPT), it provided much needed impetus. Being involved as an expert consultant with this initiative for Himachal over last three and a half years provided a rare opportunity to now gauge the progress in last decade.

While working on the Rehabilitation of Town Hall, there was support and commitment of the administration to follow the conservation ethics. The specifications and rate analysis for traditional practices were constituted in a supporting environment. The conditions of contract for conservation projects were modified with eager participation. Competitive bidding took place displaying capacity building in the field of conservation projects.

## Conservation and local development



*Shimla Town Hall before conservation*



*Shimla Town Hall after conservation*



*Shimla Town Hall interior spaces before conservation*



*Shimla Town Hall interior spaces after conservation  
(Source: Author)*

There was acceptance for site subjective solutions and resultant rate analysis was done while executing which allowed for site specific pro-conservation processes. Thus, the rehabilitation of Shimla Town-hall displayed capacity building of the Government.

However, the challenge came in achieving quality in execution and that too from the craftsmen! The attitude of 'job for money' was resulting in substandard work. To bring a sense of respect for the old building that they were working on they had to be reminded that while the building may be of colonial era, the craftsmen that had built the building in 1908 were from the region and probably their own ancestors. This sentiment did shape some change in attitude of ownership of one's work. However, I did realize that we as a nation are losing our

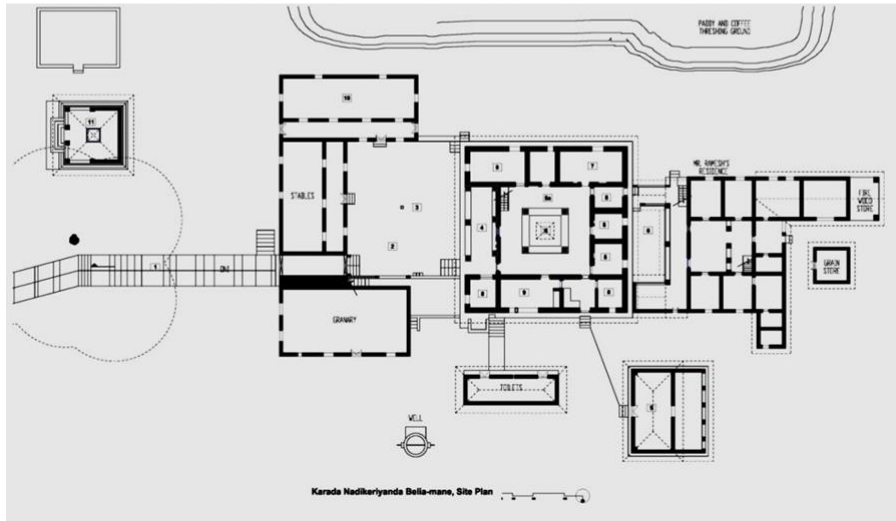
sense of pride in our work in all spheres and mediocrity or less is becoming norm.

The schism of top down is palpable even though community engagement has become part of such ADB mission projects and is also showing results when viewed related to capacity building for crafts, home stays, forest regeneration etc. However, when it comes to heritage buildings; dialogues between stakeholders ended with ownership claims but not sharing of sensible and sensitive responsibility.

### Coorg: Built fabric and cultural beliefs

The link between built fabric and cultural beliefs came to light to me in very concrete form while researching and writing on Traditional Architecture of Coorg, published





*Ainmane: Family (ancestral) Homes of Kodavas (Source: Author)*

as *Silent Sentinels* by HECAR Foundation in 2005. The most striking of the built fabric of Coorg are the family mansions called the *Ainmane*. These courtyard- type houses are large campus like, situated strategically on high ground often abutting the family's agricultural land much like the Goan Houses. Most of them are 300 to 400 years old and are well preserved and looked after. The Kodavas are a small genetic group and have moved to major cities or abroad – just like many Goans- and yet to find these houses in such well-kept condition did surprise and

intrigued me. It was perplexing to look at maintained Kodava houses after having witnessed the severe neglect to similar edifices in Goa. To unravel the reason, I looked into social history and customs of Kodavas and interviewed the scholars. The family houses are thus an embodiment of the family ancestors and hence in turn have a place of reverence in the customs.

Further, the northwest corner of the courtyard of the main house is adorned with a lamp and this is kept lit 365 days a year as

## Conservation and local development

symbolic reverence to the ancestors, thus encoding a belief into a tangible practice. Not surprisingly, each member of the clan, through the generations, always has a place in the family home, regardless of the gender. The system provided a social security to family members and hence most of the houses were inhabited by some family member or the other through the centuries. In recent years, with outward migration of family members, a caretaker is often engaged by the family. All births, marriages and death ceremonies are tied up with customary visit to the family home and ritualistic celebrations. Thus it is a “belief” system that has emerged as the force of continuum of a building type.

## Socio Cultural Dynamics and GOA

The research of traditional houses at Coorg shaped another experience – that of an old

house in Saligao- Goa. 140 years old house came to disuse on passing on of the elders and lay abandoned for 40 years. The two sons of the family live in other parts of the world but visit Goa for holidays. The eldest son and his wife had special attachment to this house. Post retirement they were exploring the options. They were considering the offer by their neighbour who showed interest in buying the property at Rs. 7 lakhs.

The issue was of joint family property. Inspired by the Ainemane’s, I found myself suggesting to them to form a family trust of the property which would ensure joint holding and participation. It took them a year to get all on board. Subsequently the property was restored to accommodate 4 bedroom home with attached toilets with huge family and dining spaces and cotemporary kitchen and a caretaker’s block on the footprint of the service block in the rear.



*The Goan House, Saligao in its disused and abandoned state (Source: Author)*



*The Contemporised traditional building with arrested decay and the addition of new design elements (Source: Author)*

## Conservation and local development

Existing well was revived and contemporary services put in. The old encaustic tile flooring in the front hall was restored and the entrance made safe while retaining the traditional *balcao*. The house has also started to earn for itself when rented out to friends as homestay. The 33 lakhs investment, for conservation and rehabilitation of this house of 350 sq.m. built-up area is now valued in crores of rupees.

In this case, while design sensibility and knowledge of working with mud and lime was important; it was the policy of joint holding as a family trust that saved this house for posterity. Perhaps because we understood the socio-cultural process at play- that we were able to help.

### Culture is a process

Culture- in 20<sup>th</sup> Century, emerged as a concept central to anthropology, encompassing all human phenomena that are not purely results of human genetics.

Specifically, 'culture' in anthropology had two meanings:

- The evolved human capacity to classify and represent experiences with symbols and to act imaginatively and creatively;
- The distinct ways that people living in different parts of the world classified and represented their experiences and acted creatively.

This denotes that **Culture is a process**. Anthropological research suggests that we view this process to have six steps:

1. A new pattern of behaviour is invented or an existing one is modified.

2. The innovator transmits this pattern to another.
3. The form of the pattern is consistent within and across performers, perhaps even in terms of recognizable stylistic features.
4. The one who acquires the patterns retains the ability to perform it long after having acquired it.
5. The pattern spreads across social units in a population. These social units may be families, clans, troops or bands.
6. The pattern endures across generations.

Perhaps now we can make sense that people are 'choosing' the apartment blocks. Perhaps, it is indeed us as builders, owners, property dealers, vacationers, entrepreneurs, working class- who have rejected the 'old house' or a Haveli, in favour of manageable, 2-3 bedroom apartment, row house, villa, in gated community! Where is the time to maintain the very demanding old house!

Thus, fundamentally, we founded Goa Heritage Action Group (GHAG) in 2000, to counter the culture of appropriation by the builders and to pursue the Government of Goa to bring into the fold of protection- the unprotected built and natural heritage. Two notified conservation zones of Panaji did get some relief due to the listing exercise taken up by GHAG but the list did not get notified. GHAG then initiated 'Festival of Arts' in Fountainhas to raise awareness on the potential of the locale and its heritage for three years and Corporation of Panaji actively supported it by taking up infrastructural repairs and houses received façade repair grants. The initiative is still an appreciated memory.

## Conservation and local development



*Environmental exploitation in Goa (Source: Author)*

And the list was brought into public domain as a book- *Walking in and around Panaji* in 2005.

While, conservation related legislation is still awaited; the interrelationship of various sectors that together impact our living environment fuelled my interest in Regional Plan for Goa. The regional plan (RP) 2011 was delayed and got notified only in August 2006. It was in an architect's office that the decoding of the land-use as stipulated in the document begun. It was an exercise in colour-coding and mapping the land-use: Settlement, Orchard, Commercial 1, Commercial 2 etc. The resultant map when overlaid on Google Earth map presented a completely alarming picture. The marshes, forests (notified and private), mangroves and even the coastal lands which would be

governed by CRZ- regulations, had been given settlement status in large chunks. With no substantial demographic shift in the state, one had to wonder at the logic of such a major alteration.

Bracing the 'revelation', the self-talk amongst volunteers comprising writers, lawyers, designers, and architects- paved way to public meeting wherein leading members of all the NGO's functioning in Goa numbering 350 plus were presented with the findings. Religious organizations, schools, and other institutional bodies were next contacted and appraised with the situation and all this awareness generating effort culminated into the rally of December 18<sup>th</sup> 2006, where thousands joined the demand for revoking the RP2011. Goa Bachao Abhiyan was thus

born. What followed has been aptly summarized on GBA website:

*"Due to the opposition of the people of Goa led by the GBA, the Government of Goa, then headed by Mr. Pratapsing Rane as CM, revoked the notified Regional Plan for Goa 2011 in February, 2007. The current Government of Goa set up a Task Force on RP 2021 first in October, 2007 and changed its terms of reference in February, 2008. A draft RP2021 was notified in October, 2008 and then State Level Committee was set up to finalize RP 2021 with inputs from village level committees. All the committees for RP 2021 have been headed ex-officio by the Chief Minister since October, 2007.*

*When the draft RP2021 was sent to the villages, the people of Goa made the effort to study it and gave their suggestions and comments through the Village Level Committee on RP 2021 and the Gram Sabha meetings across Goa hoping that the RP2021 will stop the destruction of Goa and the necessary legislative changes would be made to make a peoples' participatory plan legally binding on all.*

*However, the RP2021 is yet to be completed and no changes have been made in the laws in force to provide for participatory planning. In the meantime the destruction continues.*

*On the contrary, retrograde changes have been made in the Goa TCP Act, 1974 to provide for PPP vide amended Section 16 & 16 A and the administration has notified the Goa Land Development & Building Construction Regulations, 2010 in September to provide for 80 FAR across Goa when many villages have asked for a cap at 50 FAR."*

The fight continues as a Public Interest Litigation filed to challenge the section 16 and 16A is in court.

The draft RP- 2021 has many a new headings: Eco sensitive Zones 1 and 2, being of great interest; for it not only mentions the nature as heritage but also views the built heritage as an important resource. Other policy thrusts are the agriculture policy, mining and tourism. Thus not surprisingly, demands are being made for inclusion of experts like sociologists, economists, ecologists, agriculture scientists, and in light of increasing threats of climate crisis, scientists from the National institute of Oceanography etc. - to participate in framing the policy for the development plans- and not just the architects, engineers, planners; which has been the norm. This is a big gap in our system of development.

Personally, while facilitating- the review of draft plan by Village Parra, power of mapping in empowerment of citizens became a profound experience.

The motivated village residents required some technical advice and hand holding on the process of mapping and soon they had marked all the missing info on to their village plan.

## Conservation and local development



Save Goa - People's Participation in Planning, 2006 (Source: Author)

### PLANNING IN GOA

#### Milestones

#### Government Process

26<sup>th</sup> Jan 2007

Regional Plan 2011 Revoked

March-April 2007

State Assembly Elections, Congress re-elected

October 2007

Setting up of Task Force for drafting of the Regional Plan  
1 member and 2 invitees from GBA also on the Task force

February 2008

Terms of reference for Task force altered;  
2 invited GBA members withdrew

October 2008

Draft RP 2021 Notified

Experienced Planner also resigns on moral grounds- State Govt Kept 5 major municipalities and 1 panchayat out of the purview of the RP

Soon after

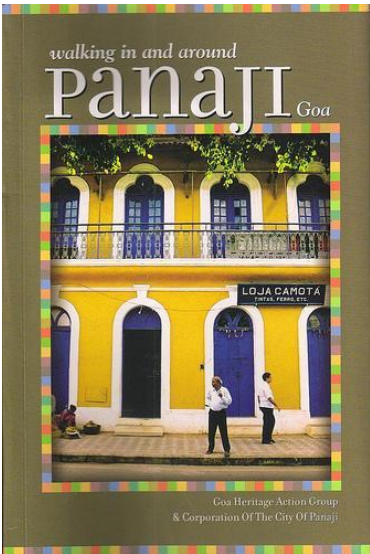
State Level Committee set up to finalise RP 2021

Amendments made to TCP act 78 vide 16 and 16A: which in practice exempted all Govt projects from the purview of RP. PIL is in COURT

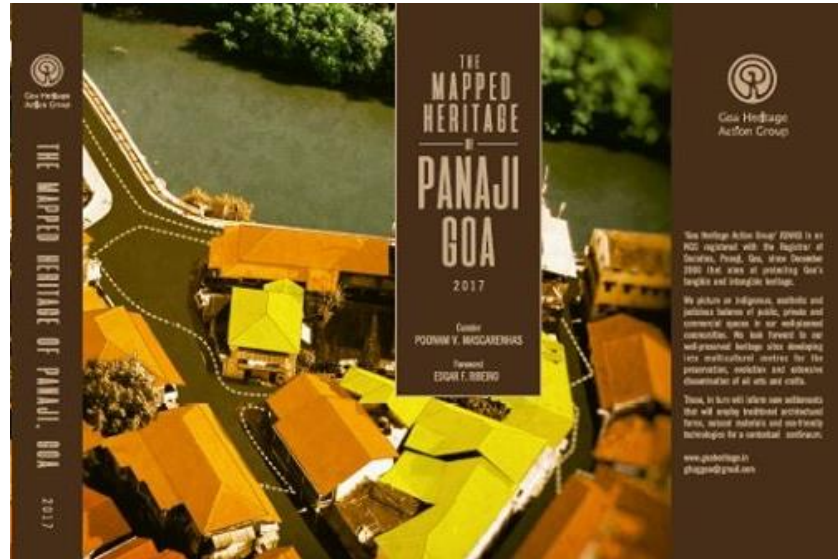
Oct 2009- Oct 2011

RP 2021 Released in 4 phases for the 11 Talukas (only)

Milestones of the shifts in planning practices in Goa



Awareness through Publications



The Mapped Heritage of Panaji Goa, 2017. GHAG released the book in July, 2018

Then, the projected land-use changes were marked and aspirations discussed and Consensus was reached on various aspects: FAR, widths of roads, commercial areas, institutional areas, protected areas, no development areas and so on and so forth. In terms of heritage to be revered, along with many a buildings and ponds, they had also marked their century old Banyan trees. The professionals may not have given the same importance to such intangible aspects.

To citizens of Parra, the mapping exercise facilitated the ownership of the development. The key word is the ownership and in this scenario it translates into a collective responsibility. The peer pressure ensured the shift from 'my plot' to the well-being of 'my village'.

Mapping is an important aspect of planning. It's a tool to comprehend our spatial reality of our city. While listing is qualitative – the mapping is quantitative. Thus in 2015, when survey of heritage properties was undertaken again after a decade, the team

engaged in extensive mapping of all the attributes. The idea behind mapping was also to have ward delineations for effective management of heritage in each ward but Corporation of Panaji informed us that the same tend to shift at each election, and thus are a political tool to win elections and are not used for governance. A change is required in such practices.

Our research revealed that between 2005 to 2017 Panaji lost 124 heritage buildings to demolition, unsympathetic additions, and redevelopment; but more importantly it has 907 as survivors and many amongst them are now re-furbished and earning a living through adapted re-use; and all this without legal protection. Primarily it is a result of awareness drive that made the residents, owners, and visitors, see the value and appreciate the master craftsmen who had been at work for four centuries creating this remarkable, resilient ensemble.

Same is not the case with most of our cities with historic core. Further, I would argue that

## Conservation and local development

sensible ownership of our built environment appears to be completely missing as is evident from the on-going superimposition of 21<sup>st</sup> C. building techniques and building materials. We seem to be compelled to build at the fastest pace and with least creative inputs- for maximum transactional gain. This is detrimental to the organic fabric that we see in place today in almost all of Indian cities that took centuries to evolve. It also adds to urban congestion, over-stretching the carrying capacity of the land beyond its limits.

The revitalization of towns should thus, concern first and foremost the residents. Planning in and around a historic town demands prudence, sensitivity and precision without rigidity, since each case presents a specific problem and unique opportunities. The Indian city is an ensemble of diverse characteristics, thus not amenable to a single type of planning intervention, however broad or comprehensive its scope.

To conclude, we in India urgently need revision in our planning and development model. We need 'Integrated Conservation led development' strategy wherein:

- **Conservation that is development oriented:** The study of built character should dictate the formulation of building bye-laws in respective areas. Conservation and re-use of buildings must be incentivized and new buildings should be spatially appropriate to the existing. We should accept the need of up-gradation of infrastructure but it has to be done creatively and sensitively.
- **Development that is ecologically appropriate:** The characteristic feature of traditional settlements was their ecological equilibrium, often not recognized and thus easily destroyed by contemporary insensitive interventions.
- **Development that reduces dependence on materials, skills and technology external to the area:** Area distinctiveness of historic towns is mainly due to the creative use of the local materials. There is a need for reviving the traditional building methods with locally available materials. Will be good for the planet too!
- **Coordinated Implementation:** Time for working in silos is over. The government needs to revamp its administrative structure and creatively harness the potential of all its employees and curtail all duplication and bridge the gaps.
- The art of **holistic conservation** is really the art of **developing strategies** where the relationship between care-taking and commodification is explicitly balanced. Land, rivers, fields and forests are all valuable resources and not commodities. Citizens in a democracy are not subjects to be ruled but co-participants in shaping the future of the country. And we professionals are citizens first- and need to take-on more ownership of our role.



### References:

Verma Mascarenhas, P. (2005). Silent sentinels: Traditional architecture of Coorg. HECAR Foundation.

Asian Development Bank. (2016). IND: Infrastructure Development Investment Program for Tourism - Tranche 1 Sub Project: Rehabilitation of Town Hall.

[ <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/project-document/178867/40648-023-rpddr-09.pdf> ]

Regional Plan for Goa, 2021; official website of the Town & Country Planning Board, Goa accessed on 02.02.2021 at 14:00 IST

[ <https://tcp.goa.gov.in/regional-plan-for-go-2021/> ]

D'Silva T, Rao T. and Goa Heritage Action Group (2005). Walking in and Around Panaji, Goa. India: Goa Heritage Action Group and Corporation of the City of Panaji.

Mascarenhas, P. Verma. (2018). The Mapped Heritage of Panaji Goa, 2017. India: Goa Heritage Action Group.





### **Dr. Benny Kuriakose**

Engineer, Architect and  
Conservation Expert

bennykuriakose@gmail.com

Benny started his career in 1984 and received the basic lessons in architecture under the tutelage of Laurie Baker. After receiving the Charles Wallace India Trust Award for an MA in conservation studies at the University of York, U.K.; he received his doctorate from the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras.

In his quest as a creative person, Benny has travelled diverse paths and translated the philosophy of his mentor Laurie Baker many times over. A retrospective of his work reflects his perseverance to transform those same concepts of cost-effectiveness, conservation, and sustainable architecture, in several sequences, whether it be in his designs for personal or public spaces.

Benny Kuriakose's strict adherence to the universal principles of architecture can be seen in the range of his work: in individual houses, resorts and institutional projects, in the Dakshinachitra project in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, in the rehabilitation of disaster sites at Nagapattinam, Bhuj or Lattur and in the Muziris Heritage Project in Kerala.

Apart from being a professional with strong principles, Benny is a serious student and researcher. He readily shares his knowledge and expertise in his projects, his workshops and in his writings.

## **Conservation with Community Participation - Muziris and Alleppey**

### **Abstract**

Muziris is a great symbol of communal harmony and this is the site where the Jews, Christians, Muslims and Hindus have lived peacefully for centuries. The conservation of heritage is the primary objective of the project and it is an experiment to see how heritage can be linked with development which will benefit the local community. The community expects their lives will be impacted in a positive way with the Muziris Project. The Government of Kerala has sanctioned Rs 140 crore for the Development of Muziris Heritage Project and is involved in carrying out different works.

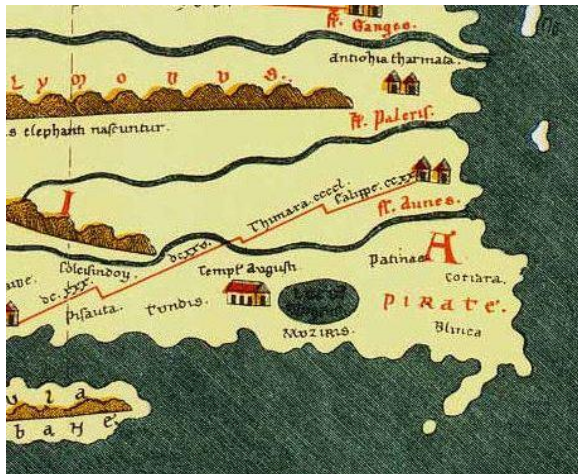
The intention is that the monuments should not be seen in isolation, but designed in a manner that involves the local communities and integrates the various proposals with other developmental activity. The project's vision is to see it as an integrated approach to conservation and heritage, which has different components with many different government agencies taking part. Heritage management and tourism, when integrated, create an outstanding product with mutual benefit.

### **Keywords**

Muziris, communal harmony, heritage management and tourism, infrastructure development, green project

### Background

Muziris, in the Ernakulam and Thrissur districts of Kerala, was an active port in the 1st century BC where Chinese, Arabs, Jews, Greeks and Romans came to trade. Similarly, although the Portuguese, Dutch and the British too initially came to trade, they soon became a part of the internal power struggles between Travancore, Kochi, Calicut and the Mysore kingdoms, and eventually went on to become colonizers. All of them have left their imprints on the region. The historical monuments and materials made available through recent excavations establish it as a unique location to tell the story of 3000 years of Kerala, a story of coexistence and sharing.



*The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, 4<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.  
Map showing Muziris*

The Government of Kerala with the support of the Government of India embarked on the Muziris Heritage Project (MHP), which encompasses a vast area around the ancient port of Muziris, including various historically and culturally important monuments like India's first mosque, one of the earliest synagogues and the oldest surviving European monument in India.

The MHP focuses on retrieving the historical heritage of this cultural region through various initiatives including historical research, archaeological excavations, integrated heritage conservation and tourism development, providing public access to historic buildings and sites within the framework of a public private partnership model. This project has set a precedent in India for adopting an integrated approach to heritage conservation and regional development.

### An alternative approach

Heritage management and tourism, when integrated, create an outstanding product with mutual benefit. Kerala has so far marketed only its lovely beaches, backwaters and forests and to some extent its monsoon and Ayurveda. This project can help the tourism industry in a way similar to what Angkor Vat has done for Cambodia, and Athens for Greece.

- The entire project is perceived as a heritage conservation exercise, and not merely as one for propagating tourism.
- It is one of the biggest non-formal education projects launched by the Government of Kerala. Layers of history ranging from the Romans, Greeks, Chinese, Jews, Arabs, Portuguese, Dutch and the British have been uncovered in this small area.
- The project has been integrated with the present day development plans. Its focus is on the local economy, attempting to rejuvenate employment, traditional industries and artisan activities that will provide a boost to local culture and traditions.

## Conservation and local development

- Activities of the various departments, involving 19 government agencies are being converged into the project.
- A major thrust is being provided for the development of infrastructure in the region. The facilities envisaged as part of the project are focused on the larger community.
- An effort is being made to provide a strong academic and research content input with the setting up of an international research Centre for Muziris Studies that is under construction.
- The entire programme is being executed with the active participation of the community. Around 80 volunteers were recruited as resource persons for the project, acting as the link between the community and the project.

The Muziris Heritage Project has been declared the first green project endorsed by the Government of Kerala. It has conceived the Muziris Heritage Project as a sustainable model for tourism where the local community benefits. The driving force of this is primarily history and conservation with tourism as a by-product.

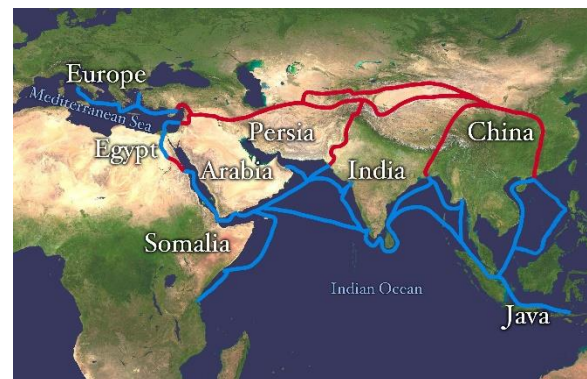
### The Muziris Heritage Project

The state government initially announced the Muziris Heritage Project in Thomas Issac's first budget speech of 2006. What started as a small project with an initial allotment of Rs 50 lakh has now grown into a large project with a sanctioned amount of Rs 140 crore. It covers an area of about 150 sq km in five panchayats and two municipalities. The project was supported by the present

government without dilution in its objectives and vision.

An amount exceeding Rs 100 crore has been spent on it by different government agencies with central government assistance.

The excavation in Pattanam under the auspices of the Kerala State Council for Historical Research started during the summer of 2007. The conservation development plan (CDP) for the Muziris site was submitted to the Government of Kerala in February 2009. The concept of the CDP evolved after a series of discussions with different stakeholders. It was decided that the conventional approach to tourism should not be followed because it would be detrimental to the conservation of heritage and the needs of the local participating community. In this context the drawbacks of the existing tourism projects in Kerala were studied. None of the existing models for cultural heritage management were found suitable to local conditions and hence an alternate model was developed. Several monuments and historic buildings were first identified as part of the master plan before starting the different works.



*A group of ancient trade routes that, linking east and west, carried goods and ideas between the two great civilizations of Rome and China.*

Over time, the project has received tremendous publicity, and is widely known

## Conservation and local development

today. The New York Times selected it as one of the 45 places to visit in 2012 along with the Kochi Muziris Biennale.<sup>1</sup> To quote from the travel pages of the paper, 'The most remarkable historical reclamation project is happening in the biennale's other Kerala site, Muziris. A fabled ancient port that traded spices and silk with Egypt and Greece two millennia ago, Muziris mysteriously vanished sometime after the fall of Rome. Archaeologists have recently located and started to excavate the vanished settlement, which opened to tourists this year.'

### Vision

The project's vision is to see it as an integrated approach to conservation and heritage, which has different components with many different government agencies taking part. Some of the major components are:

- Excavations are being done at different place;
- Conservation of historic buildings and old markets are being carried out;
- Infrastructure is being developed that includes public toilets, roads, and the construction of boat jetties;
- Museums for education and interpretation are being set up as part of the project;
- Academic research and scholarly exchange is being encouraged.

Three religions, namely Judaism, Christianity and Islam, came to India through this ancient port. The researchers working on Muziris found that this port and Kerala had trade relations with more than 30 countries. Muziris is thus not only Kerala's heritage; it is

also linked to the shared heritage of all these countries.



*Heichal from the Paravur Synagogue*

The Jews took the highly carved heichal from the Paravur Synagogue to Israel about three decades ago and it is now part of the exhibits in the Israel museum in Jerusalem. What has been taken away is not only Jewish heritage, but Kerala's as well. Our craftsmen have now reconstructed the heichal, which is 18 feet high and nine and a half feet wide. Although it is not a practice to recreate floral patterns, it was decided to reconstruct it considering the importance of the heichal to the Paravur Synagogue. But it was not easy to draw the heichal by looking at the different photographs from the museum.

Kerala, once renowned as the Spice Coast of India, was a major hub in the 'spice route', even trading with ancient Europe. Historical records speak of Roman Empires that emptied their treasury in lieu of the spices of this land, and of how spices opened doors to Europe and the Americas. At the centre of this spice trade was the ancient port of Muziris that has a history of 3000 years. The present day Kodungallur finds mention in the works of Pliny the Elder and also in the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea.

The Muziris Heritage Project may well be a starting point for a Spice Route, much like the Silk Route Unesco has promoted. By tracing the Spice Route, it has been possible to

## Conservation and local development

establish the astonishing amount of cultural exchange that occurred between nations. The extent of this cultural exchange and the consequences it had on world history is astounding, ranging from the cuisine to the spread of religions. Kerala has been a centre for this melting pot of cultures and religions, and living examples of this cultural exchange are evident even today – from the Syrian Christians who trace their origin to St. Thomas the Apostle to the Jews who made Muziris their home as early as the 6th century BC.

The Spice Route Initiative is aimed at mobilizing bilateral and multilateral support from countries, mostly former colonial and trading partners of Kerala due to the historic spice trade in the Muziris region, and of which there are historic traces in the form of tangible and intangible heritage. This project has great potential for bilateral and multilateral cultural cooperation for safeguarding the ‘shared heritage’ in Kerala.

Writing on tourism planning in relation to integrated and sustainable development, Eduard Inskeep states that: ‘Ill-conceived and poorly planned tourism development can erode the very qualities of the natural and human environments that attract visitors in the first place,’<sup>3</sup> a general observation supported by studies on how tourism is destroying communities and culture. According to McKercher and Du Cros, some unscrupulous tourism operators exploit local cultures and heritage assets for personal gain, while providing little in return for the community or the continuing care of the assets.<sup>4</sup> This can lead to cultural damage and the degradation of local economies and social structures. If the places and heritage, which attracts tourists are destroyed, then the development that takes place in

association with cultural tourism will die a natural death.

‘There is a dichotomy between satisfying the pressure for economic growth through tourism and protecting the cultural heritage sites and monuments that lie at its heart.’<sup>5</sup> Tourism and heritage management must be integrated to create an outstanding product for mutual benefit. McKercher and du Cros observed that this ‘is complicated by the historic lack of understanding of the role each plays and is reflected in the sentiment that both sectors work toward different and mutually incompatible goals... Tourism industry professionals value cultural assets as raw materials for their products to generate tourism activity and wealth. Cultural heritage management professionals value the same assets for their intrinsic merits.’<sup>6</sup> Quality standards and authenticity should be maintained to sustain tourism as well as cultural heritage.

A cultural tourism project should not be driven by tourism considerations, but managed by the principles and conventions of international guidelines on cultural heritage management. The success of any project depends on how heritage assets are converted into cultural tourism products.

### Thrust on Non-formal education

The number of cultural tourists is growing at a faster rate than any other kind of tourism. Beach tourism was a buzzword in the ‘80s, ecotourism in the ‘90s and now it is cultural tourism that is at the centre of the world tourism scene. Travellers are looking for experiences. As the world gets more high-tech, there is a growing demand for experiences that are ‘high touch’. The tourists want heritage, culture, education and adventure which is authentic. Kerala can no

## Conservation and local development

longer survive or be a market leader in the tourism industry by only marketing its beaches, backwaters, forests and Ayurveda.

People will continue to travel, although how they travel may change. They are looking for a more authentic and spiritual experience and travel to lesser known destinations has increased. Rural festivals and events with a good mix of cultural experience are in great demand.

One of the important strategies for the Muziris Heritage Project is the thrust given to the conservation of intangible heritage, which is often overlooked while planning. The intangible heritage is consciously integrated with the overall plan. According to the definition agreed upon in the 2003 Paris Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage,<sup>7</sup> 'Intangible heritage means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.'

As far as possible, the intangible heritage should not be removed from its context or setting to the extent that the authenticity is affected. The presence of traditional torch bearers is necessary to give life to the heritage. The integrity of the cultural space plays a major role in presenting an authentic experience, although it may not be

traditional. Highly commoditized attractions by the tourism sector for easy consumption have a shorter lifecycle.

The intangible heritage helps visitors gain a deeper understanding about the place and its culture. Many questions may be raised about whether the cultural performances organized for the visitors taken from its original context, can be considered as part of the intangible heritage.

The Government of Kerala has sanctioned Rs 140 crore for the Development of Muziris Heritage Project and is involved in carrying out different works. The conservation work at Paliam Nalukettu and Paliam Palace has been completed. The palace is being converted into a museum, which will tell the history of the Cochin dynasty and its relationship with other countries. The Nalukettu is being turned into a lifestyle museum. Though both buildings are owned by a private trust, the Government of Kerala came forward to conserve them on the condition that the buildings are open to the public.

### Sharing of Knowledge

Although this policy of public-private partnership was announced in public, many of the owners of historic buildings were reluctant to be associated with the project in the beginning. Subsequently, many religious and non-religious organizations joined the initiative by entering into partnership with the government. No forced land acquisition was considered and the thrust was to encourage participation of the local community. A popular demand from different sections of the people was to include their temple, church or a historic building to be part of the project.



In the case of Cheraman Masjid, the oldest mosque in India, some additions were made to the structure in the 1960s and 1990s to increase its size. The extensions had minarets and domes, never part of the Kerala mosque architecture, and were unsympathetic to the original historic core of the building. Now the mosque authorities have themselves come forward to restore the mosque to its original state by demolishing the ugly extensions, but without any government assistance. In a similar case, the chapel that was built in the 1990s in Kottappuram Market was demolished to build a new one that is a replica of the old chapel in tune with the historic surroundings.

Another project that was taken up was the conservation of the Paravur Synagogue. After conservation, the synagogue has been converted into a museum, which portrays the relationship of the Kerala Jews with the rest of the community. Chendamangalam Synagogue is being converted into a museum which will portray the life cycle of the Jews. The government plans to set up more than 20 museums in the project area and these four museums are part of the first phase.

As part of the Muziris Heritage Project, excavations are being carried out at different sites. The Kerala State Council for Historical Research is carrying out excavations at Pattanam site and it has thrown much light on the early history of Muziris and maritime trade with many countries. Kottappuram Fort is being excavated by the State Department of Archaeology, which has thrown light on the Dutch and Portuguese period. The government has also sanctioned funds for excavation at different sites other than Pattanam. These include sites such as Cheraman Parambu and Paravur Synagogue.

## Community Involvement in the Project

The Kottappuram and Paravur markets were thriving commercial centres whose fabric had a variety of Portuguese, Dutch and traditional Kerala influences. The market streets portray the pressures and problems that it earlier faced. The development that took place in terms of scale, design and typology was unsympathetic to the original character of the market, affecting the identity of the place. With the construction of new bridges and roads, the importance of the waterways was lost. As part of the revitalization project, toilets, drainage, pathways, street lighting and the improvement of the traditional markets is being carried out.

As part of the Muziris Heritage Project, infrastructure improvements have also been undertaken. The arterial roads in the Muziris Heritage Site have been improved. Public toilets are being built in more than 15 locations with most of them having facilities for physically handicapped people.

A major breakthrough during the planning phase was the decision to transport visitors from one destination to another by boat. The old waterways that were once in use will now be revived as part of the project. The government has sanctioned the construction of 14 jetties for developing boat traffic, which will be the main means of transportation for visitors. Seven boat jetties have already been completed and work on the others will also begin soon.

The visitors coming from the south side will park their vehicles in North Paravur and those from the north side in Kodungallur. They will get on to the boat jetties which are nearby. A major advantage of the 'park and

## Conservation and local development

ride' policy is that the parking requirements at each destination will be minimized. Hopefully, this should ensure minimum disturbance to the peaceful life of local residents caused by the big 'Volvo' tourist buses.

The Kerala State Institute of Children's Literature is publishing different books related to the Muziris Heritage Project. The institute has already published the newsletters in Malayalam and some books related with the project. The Centre for Development of Imaging Technology has undertaken to document the project at different stages. They have also made short films for the different museums.

The Information Kerala Mission of the Government of Kerala has prepared a detailed resource map of the entire area. This will be used for further exploration of the Muziris site. The Centre for Muziris Studies is being set up on the campus of KKTM College. The construction of the 50,000 sq ft building has been completed. The Centre will house a library, lecture rooms, auditorium, computer centre, and different offices for scholars and accommodation facilities for visiting scholars. The centre will provide the academic and research content required for a project of this nature.

The funding by the Government of India to the tune of Rs 40.52 crore has come handy. As part of the central government aided projects, the visitor centres in Paravur and Kodungallur, performance centre at Gothuruthu, tourist interpretation centres at different locations, conservation of different monuments, revitalization of the Paravur Market, the signage, bicycle pathways and toilet blocks etc. are under different stages of construction.

One of the policy decisions for the project was to add only those facilities that are relevant to the local community. The land acquisition route, that was part of many of the earlier tourism projects in Kerala, was avoided. The aim was not to promote five star hotels under the pretext of tourism. Although there was a strong political will for the project, no legislation was introduced unlike in many other conservation projects in India. The reason cited was that the participating community should strongly feel the need for legislation.

The Muziris Heritage Project is relevant for the future of Kerala for the following reasons:

- History, conservation and heritage can be linked to development and can form potential resources and assets. The economic values of heritage, which is sustainable, is important for a state like Kerala.
- Convergence of funds from different departments is important for a developing economy, where bureaucratic and inter-departmental procedures delay the implementation of many projects. The Government of Kerala views the project as a model not only for its concept, but for its implementation as well. There is a coordination committee consisting of ministers, and decisions are being speeded up.
- It is an integrated approach to tourism and this model is sustainable for the future of Kerala. Tourism and heritage management are integrated in this approach. A common mistake made in some of the earlier cultural tourism projects was a lack of coordination between tourism administrators and

## Conservation and local development

the custodians of our monuments. In the case of Muziris Heritage Project, the different departments of the government are working together based on the broad objectives mentioned in the Conservation Development Plan.

Like most projects in Kerala, the Muziris Heritage Project has also created its share of debate, arguments and controversies. One relates to the hypothesis about whether Pattanam is Muziris. Another one claims that the excavation and conservation work are not as per the standards. It is true that the expertise of handling such activity might not be up to standards available at present. No major excavations had been undertaken in Kerala since the 1970s till Pattanam, which started in 2006. While it is not easy to carry out this work as per the government rules and regulations and maintaining high quality is difficult, attempts to achieve higher standards must continue. However, the project has created lot of knowledge exchange and more awareness regarding Kerala's history, heritage and sustainable tourism.

Muziris is a great symbol of communal harmony and this is the site where the Jews, Christians, Muslims and Hindus have lived peacefully for centuries. The conservation of heritage is the primary objective of the project and it is an experiment to see how heritage can be linked with development which will benefit the local community. The community expects their lives will be impacted in a positive way with the Muziris Project.

The intention is that the monuments should not be seen in isolation, but designed in a manner that involves the local communities and integrates the various proposals with other developmental activity. The Muziris Heritage Project naturally lends itself to bringing back memories of the past; it is not about tourism or recreation alone. It is about making a difference – a big difference to conservation, restoration, the study of history, environment, research, development of craft and art forms, occupations and other community activity.

*[This article is based on the lecture presented by Benny Kuriakose in this seminar, later transcribed by CHC Team.]*

## | Conservation and local development

### References:

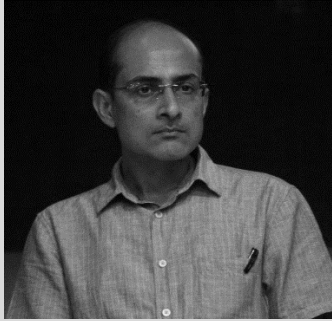
Official website of the Muziris Heritage Project last accessed on 03.02.2021 at 14:52 IST  
[ <https://www.muzirisheritage.org/> ]

Kerala Tourism, YouTube, The Legacy of Muziris (2016)  
[ [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cOzzAhVA01s&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cOzzAhVA01s&feature=emb_logo) ]

Website: Bibliotheca Augustana  
[ [http://www.fh-augsburg.de/~harsch/Chronologia/Lspost03/Tabula/tab\\_pe00.html](http://www.fh-augsburg.de/~harsch/Chronologia/Lspost03/Tabula/tab_pe00.html) ]

Sreedhara Menon, A. (1967). A Survey of Kerala History. India: Sahitya Pravarthaka Co-operative Society [Sales Department]; National Book Stall.

Press Information Bureau Government of India President's Secretariat, & P.M. (2016, February 27). The inauguration of Muziris heritage project in Kodungaloor, Kerala [Press release].  
[ <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=136956> ]



### **Dr. Neel Kamal Chapagain**

Associate Professor and Director,  
Centre for Heritage Management,  
Ahmedabad University

neelkamal.chapagain@gmail.com

Dr. Neel Kamal Chapagain, an architect and heritage professional from Nepal, is currently an Associate Professor and Director of the Centre for Heritage Management, Ahmedabad University in India. Prior to Ahmedabad University, he was a faculty at University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, USA. He has a PhD from University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (USA), an Architecture Doctorate and Graduate Certificate in Historic Preservation from University of Hawaii at Manoa (USA), and a B.Arch. from Tribhuvan University (Nepal). He is currently interested in exploring pedagogies for contextual education, as a way to engage with critical heritage discourse and integrated heritage management practice. He is recently nominated in the boards of Asia Pacific Higher Education Network for Intangible Cultural Heritage (APHEN-ICH) as well as Asian Academy for Heritage Management (AAHM). He was also involved with UNESCO Bangkok's recent initiative towards articulating professional competency frameworks and corresponding academic learning outcomes for cultural heritage management in the Asia Pacific region.

## **Intersections between the discourses of Conservation and Development: Pedagogical Implications for Heritage Management Education**

### **Abstract**

An overview of historical progression of the discourses of conservation and development suggests that these two discourses have evolved simultaneously. Initially, institutions and professionals focusing on either track have pursued their respective discourse and practice as if the other one has no connection. Today, however, these two discourses are increasingly seen as complimentary to each other; giving a push for integrated practice. The ongoing discussions on sustainable development goals (SDG) have revealed the opportunities of integrating conservation with development processes in its multiple goals. Moreover, the recognition of culture (hence an extension to heritage) as enabler of SDG has also been an encouraging context. Yet, the policies and practices are yet to implement this, hence a push from the educational sector is a must. This paper will begin with a brief overview of historical evolution of conservation and development discourses – particularly the genesis of these discourses in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the current scenario especially with reference to the Sustainable Development Goals and the agenda 2030 of the United Nations. Following the argument that heritage is an enabler (an instrument) and conservation or heritage management as enabling processes for achieving many of SDGs; the paper will discuss the implications of this argument to the education sector – particularly education relating to heritage and conservation. Drawing upon my observations and ongoing work on heritage management education, I will pose some questions and thoughts on future of conservation education – particularly with regards to the idea of integrating conservation into local development.

### **Keywords**

Culture, conservation and development discourses, sustainable development, education



*Walled Settlement of Lomanthang: Founded c. 1440 as capital city of then kingdom of Lo*

### Introduction

There are three key concepts in the topic of this paper: Heritage Conservation, Sustainable Development and Education. The concepts of heritage, development and education need to be understood in their respective historical evolution of the idea and practices. Though these notions may have been there for long, I would like to examine the evolution of these discourses in post-Industrial society and post-world wars contexts. In the wake of industrial developments, Europe – particularly the UK, saw alerts in mass production of everyday things, thereby side-lining the hand-crafted objects that had been the key resource for everyday objects. The arts and crafts movement in UK soon expanded its influence to building crafts and gradually to landscapes and urban setting as well.

A quick comparison of historical progression of the discourses of conservation and development suggests that these two discourses have evolved simultaneously. Initially, institutions and professionals focusing on either track have pursued their respective discourse and practice as if the other one has no connection. Today, however, these two discourses are increasingly seen as complimentary to each other; giving a push for integrated practice. The ongoing discussions on sustainable development goals (SDG) have alluded to multiple needs and opportunities of integrating heritage conservation with development processes in its multiple goals.

## Conservation and local development

To give a context to these three terminologies and frame my questions for pedagogy for heritage management education, I would like to reflect on some of my own experiences over the past twenty years.

### Personal connection

As an undergraduate student of architecture in Kathmandu, I ventured out to a high altitude region in North-western Nepal, called Mustang for my exploratory thesis on regional architecture. Personally for me, this exploration was a much-awaited self-exploration beyond the standard architecture curriculum that taught us sufficiently about cement and concrete based architecture, but less adequately about so many vernacular traditions. Aligned to my interest of going out of the urban contexts into the rural and if possible remote areas to explore the vernacular architecture, the exploration into Mustang was a fortunate incident for me. I explored how the trans-Himalayan region of Nepal had evolved a mud-architecture culture. Though the most remarkable set of examples were the centuries old Buddhist monasteries and the walled settlement of Lomanthang, I was equally fascinated by the knowledge and somehow continued practices of mud building or earthen architecture in the region. It is in these contexts that I began my professional career as a conservation architect in Lomanthang.

From an educational query on regional architecture to my professional beginning as conservation architect, I soon began to feel uncomfortable about my educational strength and the focus of my professional practice in conservation. Neither my education nor professional practice modalities had accommodated culture – and thereby people, in their framework. People –

in this case, need to be understood not just in terms of the demography, but in terms of everyday life, aspirations and a simple comfortable contemporary life. As we find in such scenarios, the heritage discourse had – for long, forgotten these concerns associated with people and their everyday life. In my multiple level of interactions and field research on the issues of heritage conservation, I learned that 'local' people actually pay attention to the process of 'development' whereas the drive of conservation projects seem to be that of resisting 'development'. At large in countries like Nepal, the term 'development' seemed to resonate easily to people whereas the term heritage or conservation seemed a bit distant term. In my further academic explorations, I therefore began to look into the nuances of culture and heritage as well as development.

When I look into development as a discourse, I find it intriguing that it is not so much different than the discourse of heritage in terms of how the ideas originated, how they progressed, and where they are today. Yet, in the global development of situations particularly in the twentieth century, development discourse seems to have gained more momentum than the heritage discourse. In general public mind-set, the development discourse seems to be linked with 'progress', 'comfort' and moving forward whereas the heritage or conservation is perceived as a backward idea or at least maintaining the status quo. A deeper inquiry into discourse analysis reveals that both discourses have their origins in good intent, but both discourses have been trapped into the consequences of power, inclusion and access.

## Conservation and local development

With the advent of sustainable development discourse in the new millennia, there has been new opportunity to interlink these two discourses – conservation and development. Moreover, when one expands the idea from ‘conservation’ to ‘heritage’, then both conservation and development become part of the heritage management process. Refined notions of conservation are no different than the notion of heritage management. Hence, it is important to understand the intersections of these discourses particularly in the context of heritage conservation as well as heritage management education. This paper dwells on these points, and concludes by sharing some of the recent initiatives that the author is involved with UNESCO Bangkok office, along with several other colleagues from the universities in Asia Pacific region.

### Sustainable development as a culminating point in both heritage discourses and development discourses

‘Development’ discourses and ‘heritage’ discourses in modern time began primarily after the industrial revolution. However, unlike the heritage discourses, the development discourses have penetrated the common mind-set so deep that in general it is assumed that there is no alternative of development discourse for today’s human societies. However, many scholars and practitioners have debated the consequences of uncritical development agenda, and accordingly the development discourses too have evolved to accommodate multiple views and needs. The emergence of sustainable development paradigm can be understood as a response to evident problems arising out of previous

development discourses. Heritage discourses too have gone through the similar transformative stages whereby the initial focus of material and tangible has now been shifted to the intangibles and cultural practices. Furthermore there are emerging arguments for an integrated notion of heritage as opposed to the compartmentalized piece-meal concepts of heritage, i.e. cultural v/s natural or tangible v/s intangible.

Earlier, heritage discourse mostly began as one major discourse based on the aesthetics and archaeological importance of heritage. In the last few decades, the single discourse has evolved into multiple discourses to include the various manifestations of heritage and diverse contexts. In the beginning, these were either important works of art or building, whereas later on the sites and settings were integral part of it. Along with the sites and setting, the landscape and people became the focus of heritage discourse, which then led to the connection to the economic as well as environmental sustainability. It is in this way that heritage discourses and development discourses have found a common ground through the discourses of sustainable development.

A quick overview of the chronological emergence of various conventions and international documents around the themes of heritage or sustainable development reveals that the two perceivably different tracks of global policy domain, have actually evolved in parallel to each other.

For example, The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment was held in Stockholm, Sweden from June 5–16 in 1972, which led to the famous Brundtland Commission a decade later along with a few



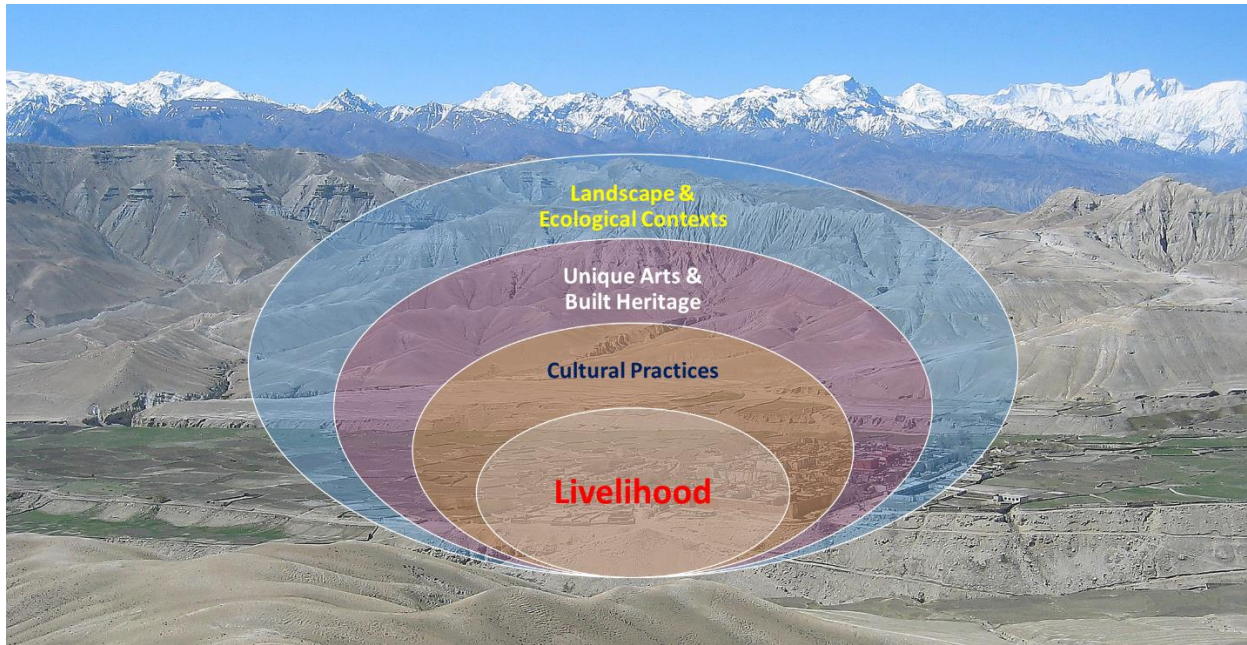
## Conservation and local development

other follow up events. The same year (1972), UNESCO hosted the World Heritage Convention – in collaboration with the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature), which provided a major impetus towards recognition and conservation of cultural and natural heritage sites, that are of ‘outstanding universal values’. This convention was an outcome of efforts from both UNESCO and IUCN since the 1950s. As the UN General Secretary commissioned what is popularly known as the Brundtland commission which officially defined the sustainable development concept and suggested global mechanisms to operationalize it, UNESCO’s World Heritage Convention and its Committee also formulated the World Heritage Operational Guidelines and began listing the World Heritage Sites towards the end of the same decade.

When the concept from the human environment conference and that of Brundtland commission was taken further through a series of other conferences and discussions, the Earth Summit of 1992 held at the Rio de Janeiro of Brazil, led to the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development 1992 – popularly known as Agenda 21. It gave the concept and policy implications a holistic shape, similar to the introduction of the idea of cultural landscapes in the World Heritage discourse in 1992. The world heritage concept in the beginning has simply divided the heritage sector into the cultural and natural, which was resisted, debated and finally in 1992, the concept of cultural landscapes was incorporated, which led to integrating cultural practices into the landscape. In this thought process, the heritage sustainability also

became a key concern, and accordingly the diversity of cultural expressions and practices became the foci of heritage discourses in the last decade. This all led into another major convention in 2003, the convention on the intangible cultural heritage.

In the 1990s, the foci on both set of institutions were on the recognition of cultural diversity, diversity of contexts, and the acknowledgement of local in the global systems of knowledge production and development initiatives. In the decade of 2000s, as the UNDP and UNEP focused more on the sustainable development agenda particularly in the areas of better livelihood and environment for all, the heritage related agencies such as UNESCO focused on the livelihood of community and sustainability of cultural practices. While the latest of the UNESCO conventions on culture has focused on the intangible cultural heritage and the cultural diversity as well as under water cultural heritage; the sustainable development goals also has emphasized on the people and diverse contexts. Since then, it has been recognized that the culture and sustainable development are inter-related, which are evidenced in the recent global frameworks like the UN Millennium Declaration (2000), UN Millennium development goals (2010), Sustainable Development Goals (2015), and lately the 2030 agenda. Within UNESCO’s work, there have been explicit references to sustainable development in both its world heritage discourse and intangible cultural heritage discourse.



*Interdependence of Social Systems*

### Sustainable development and environmental issues

Rogers et.al. (An Introduction to Sustainable Development, 2012) point out that the term 'sustainability' was introduced to bridge the gap between 'development' and 'environment' (p.22). However, they also recognize that 'the problem is, we experience difficulties in defining sustainable development precisely or even defining it operationally' (p.22). Here, it will be relevant to recall the largely adopted definition as given by the Brundlandt commission, that "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". The commission report also points out that,

*"Traditional social systems recognized some aspects of this (ecological) interdependence and enforced community control over agricultural practices and traditional rights relating to water,*

*forests and land. This enforcement of the 'common interest' did not necessarily impede growth and expansion though it may have limited the acceptance and diffusion of technical innovations."*

We may elaborate this point to explore the opportunities and knowledge contained in traditional social systems – which are products of the inherited cultural values and practices. This is where, I would argue, that the sustainable development goals could seek to extract the lessons contained in cultural heritage. Thus, rather than seeing cultural heritage as a passive recipient of social justice aimed by SDG or as a token of including diversity in a global initiative, we should actually pursue cultural heritage resources as an active contributor to the knowledge and practices of for sustainable development.

Following the 1972 convention on environment and energy, the Brundtland

## Conservation and local development

commission coined the term 'sustainable development' and defined it as:

'Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts:

- The concept of 'needs', in particular, the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and
- The idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs.'

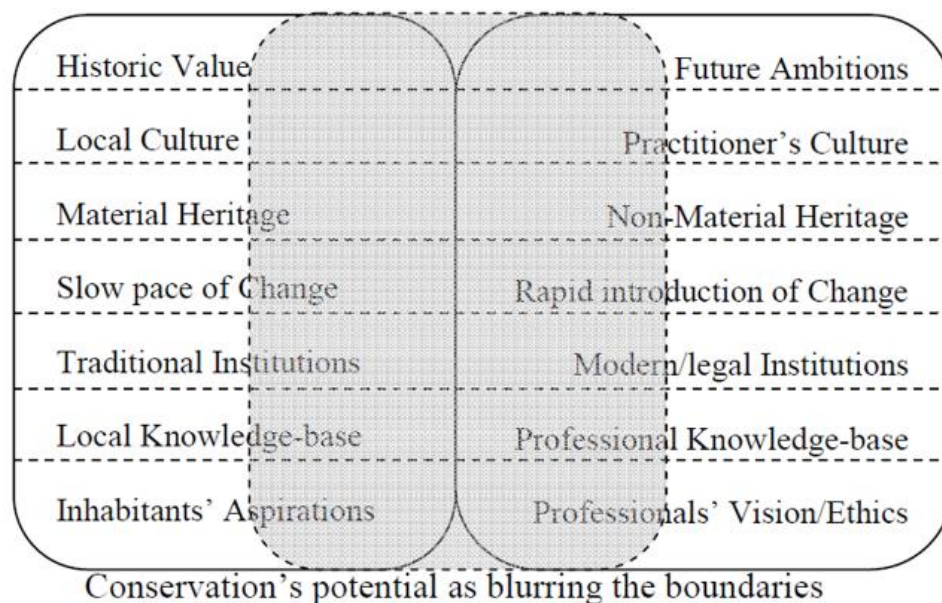
### Challenges in interlinking Culture/Heritage and Sustainable Development

As one can see the sustainable development refines the earlier idea of development (which came as a rapid change agent for both environment and culture) by bringing in a kind of sensitivity towards what we have, and what we ought to have for future generations. However, as much attention it seems to have given to the natural or environmental factors, cultural factors (hence heritage related factors) were not under consideration. This is the case with both the millennial development goals (MDG) and its successor Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Lately, voices to bring in culture into sustainable development goals have been increasing, and accordingly a gradual progress has been observed – yet not quite satisfactorily. My observations have been captured in the following points:

- Narrow Reference to Culture / Society
- Still not able to go beyond 'objectification',
- A passive recipient or a sector waiting for 'welfare'
- Assumptions and practice on 'Education'
- As a 'must' regardless of 'how' one is being educated, - through 'Formal' processes
- Knowledge as given from somewhere, to be transmitted to the 'uneducated',
- 'Need of contextualization' not fully practiced.

Though we can see some common themes running across the parallel progression of discourses and policy frameworks in both the cultural heritage and sustainable development, there has not been effective cross-referencing and mutual acknowledgement by these two distinct frameworks – particularly from the sustainable development initiatives. This is the key concern that is shared by heritage communities. For example – ICOMOS's special task force and advocacy group has been highlighting the lack of attention given to culture in SDG discourses.

While these global discourses are being revised and negotiated, academics have a larger role to play. The rest of the discussion will attempt to discuss what is possible and what is happening in terms of bringing in these integrated discourses into heritage or conservation education.



*(Re)conceptualizing the conservation practice*

## Education for Heritage and Conservation

Though heritage and conservation sector have not received sufficient interest and attention from general public as well as policy makers, education sector has been proactive in offering programs to promote heritage and conservation awareness among graduates and professionals. These programs had earlier focused purely on the conservation ideals, without so much attention to the everyday concerns of the public. This has caused increasing tension between the conservation professionals and general public. Similar issues had surfaced in the development sector as well, which gave rise to theories and practices of participatory processes, community participation etc. Heritage sector too learned the similar lessons and soon, acknowledgement of communities in conservation processes were emphasized in heritage conservation education. In a similar manner, the issues of livelihood or economics, rights and shared governance, etc. had become ingredients into both the heritage and development

related education and practices. Because of these common issues and approaches, it can be argued that the conservation and development praxis evolved in similar manner, and the new millennium has seen opportunities of dialogue between the two – particularly in the sustainable development paradigm globally promoted by the United Nations.

As mentioned earlier, the acknowledgement and integration of culture (read heritage for our interest) is yet to be fully mainstreamed in the sustainable development discourse, the advocacy and dialogues are going on relentlessly. It is in these contexts that the new thinking on heritage related education need to connect to these broader perspectives so that heritage could be demonstrated as enabler of sustainable development. In this regard, we must acknowledge greater opportunities arising out of the global processes particularly under the SDG2030 agenda.

Under SDG 4 on quality education, one of the goals (4.7) explicitly refers to culture:

## Conservation and local development

*“By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.”*

UNESCO has been promoting alignment of heritage education to sustainable development. Since 2018, UNESCO Bangkok office has initiated a collaborative process among institutions of higher education dealing with cultural heritage to first prepare a competency framework for heritage management professionals, and then later on to connect these competency frameworks to learning outcomes from graduate degree programs on heritage management in the Asia Pacific region. The competency framework is conceptualized as a set of core, managerial and personal competencies as well as a set of competencies in some specialization areas related to heritage sector. Professionals are conceptualized as having their skills and roles at any level in a heritage management team, i.e.

1. Skilled labour,
2. Mid-level manager or technical specialist,
3. Senior manager, and
4. Executive level official.

Each of these professional level would have a set of desired competencies for each of the four competence categories. Though this

exercise focused on cultural world heritage sites management, the competences can be applied to any heritage sites. Under each of the competence area, there are several competencies listed, and thus the framework encompasses a broader outlook of the profession than just focusing on conservation. In fact, conservation is just one of the many technical expertise that comes under the ‘specialization’ competence.

The competency framework is meant to help the organizations or recruiting department to spell out the expectations or qualifications desired in any professional position in the respective organization or heritage management process. This is expected to help plan the human resources within the organization, as well as to guide the recruiting and career progression development track. Capacity building trainings could be organized based on the level and areas of competencies that need to be improved in any organization or in the region.

Working backwards from this framework, we then worked on drafting a set of reference learning outcomes which could give a direction and scope to any Masters level heritage management program. Sustainable Development is one of the core competencies in this framework. Thus, we can see that new directions on heritage management education has proactively incorporated the sustainable development discourse into the heritage management education. Other competencies also support the overall and sustainable development of heritage sites but also people / communities around it, including ensuring of their rights and livelihoods among others.

A. PERSONAL COMPETENCIES	B. MANAGERIAL COMPETENCIES	C. CORE COMPETENCIES	D. SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL COMPETENCIES
<b>All levels</b> Level 4: Executive, Level 3: Senior manager, Level 2: Middle manager/ Technical specialist, Level 1: Skilled worker			<b>Mainly Level 2</b>
<b>FPC.</b> Foundation personal competences  <b>APC.</b> Advanced personal competences	<b>PPM.</b> Planning and projects management  <b>ORG.</b> Organizational governance, leadership and Development  <b>HRM.</b> Human resource management  <b>FRM.</b> Financial and operational resource management  <b>ADR.</b> Administrative documentation and reporting  <b>CAC.</b> Communication and Collaboration	<b>LAR.</b> Upholding laws and Regulations  <b>HER.</b> Heritage policy, principles, process and ethics  <b>COM.</b> Community, rights & Knowledge  <b>HED.</b> Heritage education & Interpretation  <b>SUS.</b> Sustainable development	Anthropology Archaeology Architecture Traditional craftsmanship Development planning Engineering Geography/Cultural landscape Intangible cultural heritage Landscape design Materials conservation Museology Urban studies

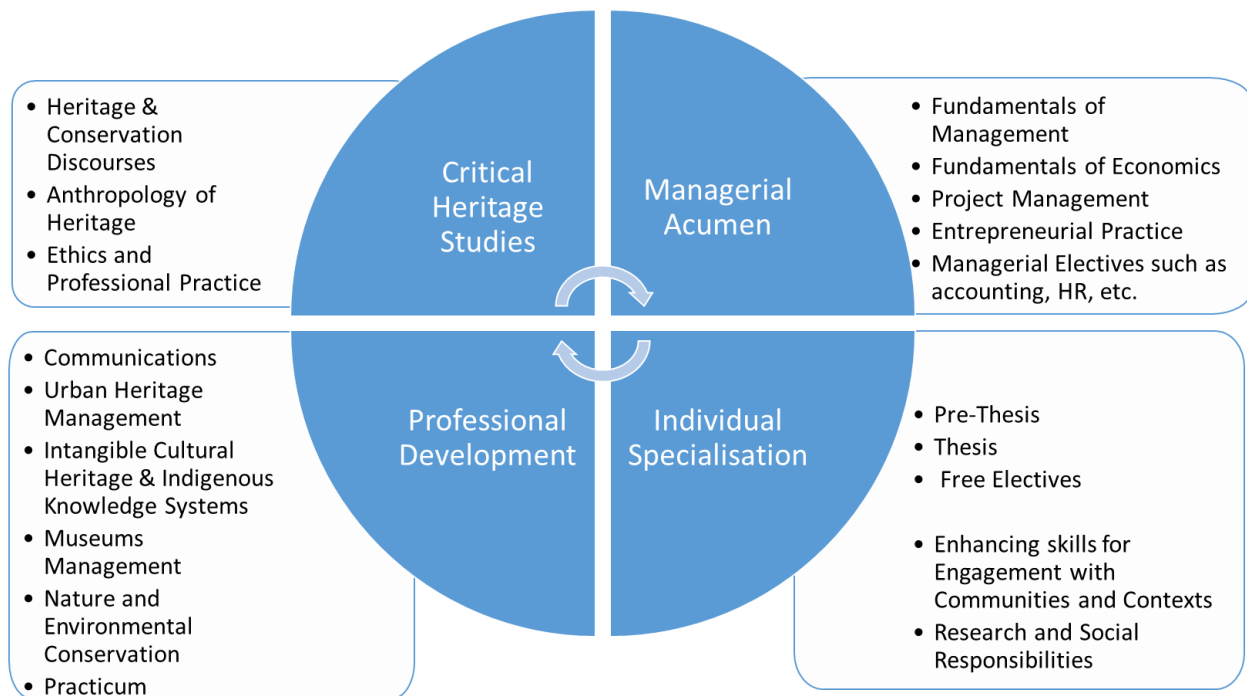
Multidisciplinary competencies for a Cultural World Heritage site Management Agency =  
 Combination of **A + B + C + selected areas of D**

*UNESCO Competency Framework for Cultural World Heritage Sites Draft 3.0 (Revised January 2019)*

It is anticipated that one single program may not be able to encompass all competencies as mentioned above. However, the intent here is to map the existing programs as well as guide the development of new programs so that there are complimentary programs and courses running in the region for the benefit of the larger network of heritage sites and communities. This itself is a move towards collaboration, sustainable planning and an integrated conservation and development agenda. All together these are expected to contribute meaningfully towards achieving SDGs in general, but the SDG 4.7 in particular.

### Heritage Management Education as an intersection of conservation and development: The Ahmedabad Experiment

Interestingly, the programme I am referring to was launched around the same time when the Post-2015 development agenda was launched by the United Nations - following the conclusion of the decade for ESD. In principle, the two events were not connected to each other, but one can easily see the common goals across the global initiative under the leadership of UN, and an experimental academic initiative attempted by a private university in India. On the one hand, ESD recognizes that culture as the backbone of cultural heritage and development are interdependent. Similarly on the other hand, the Masters programme



*An Effort towards Education for Integrated Heritage Management emphasizing on Local Development*

in Heritage Management at Ahmedabad University perceived heritage management as integral part of sustainable development agenda.

In the context of ESD and the Post-2015 agenda, I have observed a few common emphases between the ESD and the approach in Masters in Heritage Management at Ahmedabad University. I will briefly highlight them here. At the concluding conference of the UN decade for Sustainable Development, held at Aichi-Nagoya in Japan, a declaration was issued highlighting the strategies for the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

In connection to the preceding critique of the position of culture perceived in sustainable development, and the role of education, I would like to recall here the following key recommendations from the Aichi-Nagoya declaration.

Though almost all the recommendations are relevant, I have highlighted the following sections to indicate a shared emphasis as that of the Masters Degree programme:

*- EMPHASISE the potential of ESD to empower learners to transform themselves and the society they live in by developing knowledge, skills, attitudes, competences and values required for addressing global citizenship and local contextual challenges of the present and the future, such as critical and systemic thinking, analytical problem-solving, creativity, working collaboratively and making decisions in the face of uncertainty, and understanding of the interconnectedness of global challenges and responsibilities emanating from such awareness,*

## Conservation and local development

- *UNDERSCORE* that the implementation of ESD should fully take into consideration local, national, regional and global contexts, as well as the contribution of culture to sustainable development and the need for respecting peace, non-violence, cultural diversity, local and traditional knowledge and indigenous wisdom and practices, and universal principles such as human rights, gender equality, democracy, and social justice,

- *URGE* all concerned stakeholders, in particular Ministries of Education and all ministries involved with ESD, higher education institutions and the scientific and other knowledge communities to engage in collaborative and transformative knowledge production, dissemination and utilization, and promotion of innovation across sectorial and disciplinary boundaries at the science-policy-ESD practice interface to enrich decision-making and capacity building for sustainable development with emphasis on involving and respecting youth as key stakeholders,

More importantly, I would like to recollect here some of the key dimensions of ESD – as articulated in a roadmap document, that are evident in the Masters programme at Ahmedabad University.

a. *Learning content: Integrating critical issues, such as climate change, biodiversity, disaster risk reduction (DRR), and sustainable consumption and production (SCP) into the curriculum,*

- b. *Pedagogy and learning environments: Designing teaching and learning in an interactive, learner-centred way that enables exploratory, action-oriented and transformative learning. Rethinking learning environments – physical as well as virtual and online – to inspire learners to act for sustainability,*
- c. *Learning outcomes: Stimulating learning and promoting core competences, such as critical and systemic thinking, collaborative decision-making, and taking responsibility for present and future generations.*
- d. *Societal transformation: Empowering learners of any age, in education setting, to transform themselves and the society they live in,*
- e. *Enabling a transition to greater economies and societies,*
- f. *Equipping learners with skills for 'green jobs',*
- g. *Motivating people to adopt sustainable lifestyles,*
- h. *Empowering people to be 'global citizens' who engage and assume active roles, both locally and globally, to face and to resolve challenges and ultimately to become proactive contributors to*



## Conservation and local development

- i. *Creating a more just, peaceful, tolerant, exclusive, secure and sustainable world.*

*(UNESCO, 2014, Roadmap for implementation of the Global Action Programme for Education for Sustainable Development)*

In relation to the above ESD framework, it is heartening to note that the Masters programme in Heritage Management crosses through all the points except the idea of 'green jobs'. Instead, the emphasis on the programme is on self-reliant approaches like entrepreneurship and managerial acumens in areas like organisational management or project management. It was also quickly reviewed against the competencies articulated in the competency framework for cultural heritage management (as proposed by UNESCO Bangkok office), in which various competencies were found to be present at varying degrees in the programme of Ahmedabad University. There have been challenges, however, in recognition that such an over-arching educational framework is available in India, and that we can imagine next generation of professional attempting to go beyond disciplinary boundaries.

The Masters programme has evolved over time and in turn also contributed in thinking of others towards an interdisciplinary and contextual heritage management education. Working through the UNESCO supported networks both on sites and intangible heritage education, the programme has demonstrated a way of integrating various discourses on heritage (sites based heritage as well as intangible heritage including community knowledge systems and crafts among others). Such an integrated and contextual approach has been appreciated in the region, and we have begun to see similar programmes emerging elsewhere too.

In the past few years of the mentioned programme at Ahmedabad University, we have learnt to learn from various traditional knowledge systems and practitioners on making heritage relevant to everyday life. We have also learnt the importance of diversity, and participatory as well as collaborative learning. More importantly, we have learnt that heritage and conservation can make sense to larger society only if we are able to connect heritage and conservation to peoples' aspirations, identity and everyday life. This is where the heritage education needs to acknowledge the development discourse and find ways to collaborate with multiple aspects of development phenomenon, i.e. socio-economic development, infrastructural development among others. However, in doing so, the heritage education must bring in the concerns of environmental and economic sustainability, socio-cultural equity and inclusiveness, among others. Reference to SDGs are usually helpful in making these connections so that the heritage education can cater to the broader developmental aspirations of present society, and hopefully of future generations too.

## Conclusion

Heritage and conservation today are increasingly been recognised as enabler of sustainable development. It is therefore an important opportunity for the heritage education sector to play a major role by embracing open, collaborative and interdisciplinary studies on heritage, along with a contextual development of conservation and heritage management for empowering the new generation of heritage professionals. Recently formulated cultural heritage competence framework for Asia Pacific region may be a good reference document to connect the field to educational

## | Conservation and local development

programme design. It is only through an inclusive and collaborative framework, that the heritage education can play an anchoring role in sustainable local development processes. There are good insights into the United Nation's Education for Sustainable Development initiative within which heritage education has the potential to become a strong proponent of these frameworks. Ahmedabad University's Masters in Heritage Management programme seems to resonate

well with such global strategies but emphasizing on contextualising to local contexts. However, the most important point is to pursue heritage beyond categorical boundaries and nostalgic references to something that matters to people and everyday life, and position heritage management or conservation education as a way of contextual and sustainable development.

### References:

Chapagain, Neel Kamal (2016). Heritage Management Education for Sustainable Development: Reflections on the pedagogy of the Masters Degree Programme in Heritage Management at Ahmedabad University; ; a working paper at Ahmedabad University Working Paper series, initially presented at the International Conference on Education for Sustainable Development: ESD for transforming education for children and youth; Centre for Environmental Education, Ahmedabad, India.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (2016). SDG 4: Quality Education.  
[ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/> ]

United Nations, Resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 25 September 2015 (2015). Agenda items 15 and 116.  
[ [https://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E](https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E) ]

Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future (1987)  
[ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5987our-common-future.pdf> ]

UNESCO Bangkok, Asia and Pacific Regional Office, Competence Framework for Cultural Heritage Management, 2020  
[ <https://bangkok.unesco.org/content/competence-framework-cultural-heritage-management> ]

United Nations Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner, General Assembly Resolution 55/2 of 8 September 2000 (2000), United Nations Millennium Declaration.  
[ <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/Millennium.aspx> ]

United Nations, The Millennium Development Goals Report (2010)  
[ <https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG%20Report%202010%20En%20r15%20-low%20res%2020100615%20-.pdf> ]

UNESCO, & Bokovo, I. G. (2014). UNESCO roadmap for implementing the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development.  
[ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000230514> ]





### **Dr. Jigna Desai**

Associate Professor and Program Chair for Masters in Conservation and Regeneration, Faculty of Architecture at CEPT University

Executive Director, Center for Heritage Conservation (CHC), CEPT Research and Development Foundation (CRDF).

[jigna.desai@cept.ac.in](mailto:jigna.desai@cept.ac.in)

Dr. Jigna Desai is an Associate Professor and Program Chair for Masters in Conservation and Regeneration at the Faculty of Architecture and Executive Director of Center for Heritage Conservation (CHC), CEPT Research and Development Foundation (CRDF). She brings to the institute her experience in working with traditional urban environments and framing how traditional architecture may be understood, studied and transformed. Her current work focuses on formulating frameworks, tools and methods through which theoretical ideas of sustainability and conservation of living historic environments can be translated into practice, while addressing the challenges of co-production of space and commodification of heritage.

Jigna is also a director at a small, award winning practice - JMA Design Co that she co-founded in 1999. She has worked extensively on architecture projects and conservation research and advisory in different parts of India, carried out advocacy for community-based conservation in partnership with national and international institutions and government organisations. She is an Expert member of the International Scientific Committee for Historic Towns and Villages, International Council for Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS).

## **Paradox of Protection, and other lessons for pedagogy of urban conservation**

### **Abstract**

CEPT University has through its Undergraduate, Postgraduate and the very recent Doctoral Programs engaged with the historic city of Ahmedabad academically. Masters in Conservation and Regeneration program situates itself in the context of the World Heritage Site of Historic City of Ahmedabad and engages with the historic built environments, urban histories and theories, contextual design approaches and community engagement to explore relationship between conservation practice and urban regeneration. This is done through focus on developing skills required for practice and with active engagement with national and global, private and public projects that conserve historic environments. In continuation of the view on Conservation being a response to resource depletion and Heritage as a cultural resource, questions of sustainability, quality of life and local development are considered to be inherent to the challenges of heritage conservation. Heritage values attached to object or built environment are not just self-conscious experiences, but are representative of everything that makes culture what it is, including political conflicts, divides within society, position of women and so on.

### **Keywords**

Historic City, Ahmedabad, community engagement, urban regeneration, *pol*, World Heritage Site, equity in conservation, accessibility, pedagogical tools

### Introduction

Conservation is the youngest of the various domains of architecture and planning. The formal processes of conservation of the built environment, in its brief history of two centuries has moved from preserving artefacts and monuments to conserving towns, settlements and historic parts of the cities. Urban Conservation, concerned with parts of the city that are of historic significance, is practiced through the tools of government schemes for upgrading infrastructure for propagating tourism and through municipal guidelines that list certain structures of these parts as heritage structures for the purposes of protection against changes. Many monuments of significance located within a city are also protected through legal tools of Ancient Monuments and Archeological Sites Remains Act (Amended 2010). These sites (cities or parts of cities), apart from being historically valuable, are in many cases neglected parts of the overall administrative systems and more often than not homes to lower income groups.

As living parts of a city these historic sites need constant upgradation in terms of infrastructure and a continued, albeit not stagnant, association with its inhabitants. This chapter outlines this context in which conservation challenges are set in the historic city of Ahmedabad and goes on to detail out the pedagogy of conservation education at Masters in Conservation and Regeneration, Faculty of Architecture, CEPT University. It goes on to outline the Equity Framework for Sustainable Development of Historic Cities as developed by the author for the purposes of heritage conservation research, education and practice, while also identifying the participatory tools used in education.

### Historic City of Ahmedabad as a Laboratory

CEPT University has through its Undergraduate, Postgraduate and the very recent Doctoral Programs engaged with the historic city of Ahmedabad academically. The first undergraduate dissertation on the timber houses of the historic city was done in the late 1960s and since then the city has been the laboratory for researchers, educators and students of the University. The first formal program for educating and training Conservation Architects titled 'Masters in Architectural and Settlement Conservation' was introduced in 2007 by Prof. R. J. Vasavada. Right from its onset, Conservation was seen as a "movement activated by the realization that natural and cultural resources of this planet are limited and are being eroded at an alarming rate" (Thapar, 1989) and Heritage was seen as a "positive, living and evolving resource for future development of the society" (Desai and Vasavada, 2013). The program looked at the walled city of Ahmedabad as an educational laboratory where every academic engagement was a deep look into this living example of a city with its rich history, layered with cultural flows of different historic eras. The engagement of the educators, researchers and students of this program with the historic city of Ahmedabad further deepened with their active involvement in preparing the World heritage Nomination Dossier for the Historic City of Ahmedabad that was then submitted to the UNESCO World Heritage Center in 2017.

Masters in Conservation and Regeneration program as established in a renewed form in 2018 at Faculty of Architecture, CEPT University, is a two year specialist education in theory and practice of building

## Conservation and local development

conservation and conservation led urban regeneration. The program situates itself in the context of the World Heritage Site of Historic City of Ahmedabad and engages with the historic built environments, urban histories and theories, contextual design approaches and community engagement to explore relationship between conservation practice and urban regeneration. This is done through focus on developing skills required for practice and with active engagement with national and global, private and public projects that conserve historic environments. In continuation of the view on Conservation being a response to resource depletion and Heritage as a cultural resource, questions of sustainability, quality of life and local development are considered to be inherent to the challenges of heritage conservation.

### Conundrum of Conservation, Negotiating the Outstanding and the Day to Day

The Historic City of Ahmedabad is made of more than three hundred *pol* – a neighborhood unit, traditionally inhabited by self-governing social group of residents connected through family ties, caste or occupation. Origins of these *pol* can be identified through place names, as they are mostly named after the name of the community, occupations, important person of the neighborhood etc. Owing to the fact that groups of people from diverse backgrounds came and stayed in the city, and at various times were also in conflict with one another, each of these *pol* were structured to function as enclosable – controllable territories. These *pol* consisted of houses that were linear with two common walls and a courtyard, somewhere in the middle.



*A typical pol street.*  
(Source: Mrinal Bhatt, 2016.)

Each of these houses, while having their independent water systems, were socially dependent on the neighborhood as a collective. The timber framed, brick and mud/ lime mortar houses were stacked together next to one another making them heavily dependent on each other for structural safety.

The overall structure of the city reflected a hierarchical layering of the society itself through its movement pattern. The main streets of the city led to sub streets (*sheri*) that led to the residential *pol* that led to more specific family/ community domains called *khancha*, *khadki* or *dela*. The primary, most visible structure of the city is underlaid with two other path structures that are a result of specific gender and caste hierarchies. The primary streets were the bazaars that were essentially accessed by the traders, merchants and wholesale buyers. Secondary streets are either special markets (for utensils, clothes, jewelry, paper products) or markets for domestic products accessed by residents of the *pol*. Women of the city were (and to some extent are) discouraged from stepping out on to the streets unless for some specific purposes. Their places for interacting, essentially with other women, were within the *pol*.

## Conservation and local development

While most of these *pol* only have one visible access with a gate, there were small connections through back alleys, with small rights of ways through a private property. The women generally access the neighborhoods through these small connections, forming another layer of path structure.



*Back connection to other Pol.  
(Source: Mrinal Bhatt, 2016.)*

The third layer of path structure is formed by the back alleys accessed by the people who cleaned the city. The caste structures dictated that they were not to mingle with the residents and thus their movement was carefully restricted. Throughout the history these paths were used as alternative ways for subverting the dominant power structures. Their usefulness during the time of conflicts has been highlighted in many stories of the city.

The historic city of Ahmedabad became the first city of India in being designated as a World Heritage Site in 2017. Among many other challenges of development and conservation, it faces constant negotiation between the day to day needs of life and the extraordinary efforts required to safeguard the universal values of the site. On one hand the city has seen strict implementation of protection-based regulations and on the other there has been a surge of 'heritage projects' that would provide an authentic

experience to the visitors. In intention, the regulations are meant to preserve the cultural heritage of the place and the projects are meant to build a respectful relationship to the place and foster cultural exchange. The historic city, which is spread in 5.5 sq. kms, has more than thirty monuments protected by Archaeological Survey of India. As per the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act (2010), the area of 300 mts radius around these monuments are 'regulated' and are not to be modified without permission of ASI, 100 mts radius of this is a 'protected' area not to be modified at all. The protection-based regulation, on one hand lead to individual home owners residing in listed structures or residing in houses that fall within the 'protected zone' of the city undergo constant negotiations with the authorities for upgrading their homes to make them structurally safe and livable. The communities living in areas with 'heritage projects' face a more subtle negotiation that nevertheless affects their claims to public places of the city.

The Heritage Street Project is one such initiative that has a potential of extending itself as a full-fledged heritage led tourism economy. *Sankadi Sheri* (a place name that literally means 'narrow street') was selected to be a 'model heritage street' in 2015 and economic incentives were offered for conserving the historic structures for a potential World Heritage Site. Significant among them were four heritage residencies, three of which were *haveli* (large houses, typically with one or two courtyards) bought over by developers. One of the *haveli* was already converted into a small hotel by the owner to make it a part of his network of heritage businesses. These projects found support in municipal policies for transfer of development rights and homestay tax



## Conservation and local development

exemptions. The Heritage Street Project, initiated in collaboration between the developers, an NGO and the Municipal Corporation intended to re-structure the street to ensure better parking, streamlining vehicular movement, designating spaces for vending activities, designing lighting and most importantly, provide authentic experience of the historic urban environment to the visitors. The havelis that were adapted to be residencies for the tourists were imagined by their architects and developers as quiet places that have serene feel, much like the European streets as experienced by themselves, but very different from what a historic city in India would be like.

While the Project clearly aided conservation of the heritage sites and was very much in line with the regulations, interviews with the architects and residents of these places brought out two prominent negotiations related to the understanding of 'heritage' and 'place'. While interacting with the inhabitants, the architects found that most people inhabiting in the place were not concerned about the aesthetic decisions being made but their concerns were more about how these changes would affect their rights and accessibility to the street. Will they be able to have their own festivals and parties on the street? Will they be able to dry their clothes and pickles outside? Will their vehicles be allowed in? Will they be able to change the underground pipelines if required without taking permissions from hotel owners? Etc. The other negotiation, that did not concern many though, was of women, on what would it do to their places of loitering, the back lanes through chowks that they use on the daily basis to interact with other women.



*Women's place being pushed to the inner streets.  
(Source: Sebastian T., 2015.)*

Back alleys and other access to the *pol* are being cordoned off for a curated experience of a visitor, resulting into blocking off of a substructure that afforded women to subvert the traditional hierarchies. All of these negotiations that are seen in the World Heritage Site of Ahmedabad resonate with the contestations of other cities such as Georgetown, Malaysia; Venice, Barcelona and other cities of Europe. The need to protect the historic site for visitors to experience heritage site of an outstanding value takes over the day to day life of people living in the city.

## Equity Framework in Heritage Conservation

Graham Haughton (1999), identified Equity Principles for Sustainable Development where he argued that true sustainability of human habitats can be achieved by addressing the question of equity of access to resources among the same generation of people (within the habitat and across the nations), with reference to next generations to come and among difference species. Haughton also argued that access to decision making processes (procedural equity) is as important as the access to resources for affected people.

## Conservation and local development

While there have been many studies that have related conservation of cultural heritage as an important aspect of sustainable development, recent discourses have highlighted the value of traditional knowledge and memories as represented in built environment as enablers of equity (Hosagrahar, et al, 2016). Desai (2019) adapts this argument to develop an Equity Framework to understand how heritage as a resource is consumed by various stake holders. In this case, the terms consumed is not limited to commercial consumption, but in the sense of how places are consumed by people, through their various senses and for the purposes of defining individual and collective identities.

### Heritage and Sense of Place

'Sense of Place' is understood by the authors of books on architecture as an aesthetic concept that deals with the 'personality' of a geographic location and people's perceptual engagement with it. 'Sense of place' however, from a phenomenological perspective (Schultz, 1986), is understood as a space felt through associated memories. The concept is also related to the political and social meanings that people attach to a place, such as; sense of right to ownership; to be a part of a social world (Hayden, 1995). People's attachment to a place is also related to psychological well-being. Built heritage, with its ability to invoke memories, place attachment, political and social relationships must be studied as 'places' of economic, social and domestic engagement, rather than being studied and discussed as buildings that make places. Heritage studied and understood as 'places' rather than 'structures' or aesthetic and symbolic expressions of history, embody in them meanings that are produced through

history and their relevance today in relation to the social and economic engagement people have in (or with) them. This interpretation of heritage assumes that the people who are living in the city already have some functionality with these places and gave arrived at means of managing various aspects of change through these engagements.

### Heritage as a Cultural Resource

The broadened definition of heritage, from monuments to cultural heritage, is very specifically informed by the way 'culture' is understood in the post-modern academic discourse. Culture here, is defined as a "system of shared meanings, attitudes and values, and the symbolic forms in which they are expressed or embodied" (Burke, 1978, p.38). In this context, heritage values attached to object or built environment are not just self-conscious experiences, but are representative of everything that makes culture what it is, including political conflicts, divides within society, position of women and so on. The discourse on conservation of cultural heritage is also rooted and informed by environmentalist concerns for a 'cultural gene pool' that are important to preserve the diversity of human cultures and their relationship to the environment. These are important for human resilience in the times of environmental adversities. Adding to this is also the aspect of cultural rights and the freedom to change. A choice of continuity of a cultural practice requires continuity of cultural markers. The choice of discontinuing will make these markers as important memories of that culture.

## Heritage as an Economic Resource

The notion of visitation of heritage (or heritage tourism) is based on the idea that significant histories of various parts of the world are valuable and are to be understood by people of the modern world. In an economic sense, heritage gains a market value and tourism gets introduced as an alternative economy to the site. While this economic opportunity can give a new life to heritage structures, the restructuring involved with it can have impacts on the inhabitants. The consumption of tradition can create social spaces that can irreversibly destroy the traditional places and historic sites (AISayed, 2001).

The economic restructuring, while has the potential for improving quality of life, may also lead to increase in land prices causing gentrification.

The table below shows relationships between various attributes of heritage places to the Equity Principles, in order to draw attention to the concern that heritage values are held by people and for the reasons that may not be congruent. Transformations of heritage places thus need to negotiate between these various values and the stakeholders beholding them. More often than not, as also seen in the case of Ahmedabad, the stake of the visitors (transnational equity) is given priority due to the short term economic benefits that it provides, leading to a gradual alienation of inhabitants from their lived in environments.

	Intra-generational Equity	Inter-generational Equity	Transnational Equity	Procedural Equity
Sense of Place	Sense of Citizenship. Associations and Memories. Place Attachment.	Historic Identity. Being a part of the Social World.	Personality of a Geographic Location (Scale, Proportions, Visual Integrity).	Knowing your place. Addressing contestations. Accessibility to Heritage sites.
Cultural Resource	Associated Values and Identities. Public Histories/ Memories. Cultural innovation.	Continuity of Processes Historically Transmitted Meanings.	Survival of a cultural gene pool. Cultural Exchange.	Right to practice a culture. Right to Change. Privacy.
Economic Resource	Livelihood Networks. Affordable Living Conditions. Re-use of buildings.	Economic Accessibility through inheritance. Continuation of Cultural Economies.	Consumption of an authentic experience. Economic restructuring for tourism.	Right for economic production of meanings. Right to choice of employment. Heritage as Economic Asset.

*Heritage in context of Equity Principles (Desai, 2019, p.28).*

### Pedagogical Tools

Having set the context of the place and theoretical framework, the remaining part of this article will outline the pedagogical tools that are introduced at the University to address the identified challenges and inequities. The processes of conservation in the historic city have often been criticized for not being successful or meaningful. One sees a constant negotiation between an authoritarian diktat to protect and the need to change.

The walled city, with more than two thousand listed domestic buildings, has reported that hundreds of these were pulled down under the pretext of dangerous structural conditions. On one hand some experts demand stricter rules and better policing. Other experts cite the lack of agency given to all involved in giving any meaning to the site as the reason of apathy and point out that the heritage in question is destined to change with the society itself. It is natural that sites and structures in a city get affected by social changes. They need to adapt constantly by being in direct relationship with the people who build their memories and associations around them. This direction of thinking suggest practice of heritage conservation to be more inclusive/ participatory. It treats heritage conservation as a social and economic process of transformation rather than scientific preservation, with the acceptance of plural values of a site and multiple possible futures of it.

The agenda here is not to protect the values of the place through authoritarian intervention, but to enter in a democratic discourse of continuity and change. This discourse is done with the assumption that acceptance of plural histories, aspiration of future and issues of quality of life are bound

to create conflicts among the groups associated; and there is valid knowledge and social capital within the group to resolve these conflicts. The rest of the article demonstrates an academic exploration of transforming a site in the Walled City of Ahmedabad through such a process and examine the potential and possible limitations of an inclusive process of attributing values to a place.

Located in one of the neighborhoods in the walled city of Ahmedabad, this engagement has completed its two instances, with two more already planned by the way of teaching and research engagement through CEPT University. The first instance was done in collaboration with Centre for Environmental Education through a course - Streets for People. The objective of this exercise was to bring to the foreground the value of a street square as a public place rather than a parking place that it has become and to study the meanings of the place through various points of view. After having done the standard studies of activity mapping, use surveys, interviews etc. a one day event was planned on the street square.

The neighborhood Youth Group supported the event by helping with due permissions and collective agreement of all residents. The event was to convert the street square into a play space, a hang out space and a place for discussions on one Sunday. Activities were planned through the day to encourage residents of different age groups and gender to come out of their houses and participate. All organizational material (lights, paint, stationary, etc) was provided for by the shopkeepers of the area. By the end of the day the square was transformed into an active public place with various residents claiming their access to it. In the long run,

## Conservation and local development

through negotiations between the residents and the shop keepers it was decided that the space will be used as a parking space on week days till 7 pm. All evenings and on Sundays, the square continues to remain an area for public activities and events that the residents want to organize.

This engagement proved to be only the first of many possibilities. The Youth Group of the same neighborhood then approached us with another situation. It was a site of a fallen down house of a resident who had donated it to the Municipal Corporation for it to be run as a maternity home. The ruins were already a landmark in the memory of people living in the neighborhood. They have cleaned up the place for it to be used for political and social gatherings. Many remember it as a maternity home and wanted a new structure built there that would revive the use of the place. Some residents thought that it was time to move on and bring in a new function to the place that would help the neighborhood move to the future. A few felt that the neighborhood needed to become a part of the World Heritage narrative as it is one of the oldest neighborhoods in the city and have much to say. Among these many points of view in the neighborhood, it was also to be kept in mind that the remains on the site were of a listed building, graded by experts as of having a high historic value in a World Heritage City.

Considering the complexity of the situation and already conflicting ideas on the value of the place and the aspirations for its future, it was decided that this engagement was to be, to begin with, limited to an objective of building a consensus around the future of this place. And through that, discuss the values of history. A twelve week design studio, titled – Culture and Coproduction was planned as a part of Faculty of Architecture,

CEPT University's academic activity with this objective. As a part of this process, the group of students identified four different aspirations for the future: Women's Wellness Centre, A Co-working Space, A History Club and An open accessible space. Each future was discussed, developed and designed as scenarios. This was done through various public meetings and focus group discussions. As processes of participation go, there was a conscious effort to ensure that we get maximum representation from diverse groups from the neighborhood. One of the most useful tools to ensure this was to organize activities for children. Residents who otherwise would not socialize with one another due to class, caste or religious barriers came together for this. Though not all participated actively in public meetings and thus focus groups became important.



*Meeting with people for design discussions.  
(Source: Remya Ramesh, 2017.)*

What started off as day to day issues of conflicts between shopkeepers and residents for access to parking space, lack of opportunities for young people, lack of water and waste management, issues of discontent with commercialization and renting of houses, soon turned into meaningful debates of access, quality of life, memory and aspiration. The prominent debates, that at times got very heated, were:

## Conservation and local development

- Can the Wellness Centre for Women also look into the aspects of emotional health that are faced by women all over the city? Can it address issues of loneliness, abuse, alienation?
- Does the place have a potential to become a platform where various activities for children can be taken up by the residents themselves. Can it become a place safe for kids to play and breathe clean air? Especially in context of congestion and pollution.
- Can the place provide a space for young men and women to explore their career trajectories? Can it be a work space, close to home for working mothers?
- Should this place invoke the sense of history of the city, would that have any affect in the way people relate or belong to the place?
- Who will fund it? Who will maintain it? Should the neighborhood residents take the full responsibility? Will they have full autonomy?

After three public meetings and six focus group discussions and eleven scenarios for future, it was concluded by the residents present there that the question of who will maintain and who has access is the most important one. A large building that will need big money, would by default mean involving an external agency or giving more agency to the Corporation. This, supported by the voices that pointed out to a rationale that programs like wellness centers and co working spaces can be housed in other empty structures in the neighborhood, led to the decision that the space will have minimum intervention to support and enable children's activities. A few residents meanwhile had seen value in one of the scenarios that had a history wall. A place where residents of the neighborhood would

come and share their histories. This, as some pointed out, would also help various groups understand one another better and would help foster a sense of community. All however agreed that this place will have to be autonomous, in terms of fulfilling its resource and maintenance requirements. Everyone agreed that this was one important lesson from history that needed to be revived and emulated. Possibilities of further engagement to take up the history wall as an academic exercise, or to look at other similar places in the neighborhood are being discussed within the realm of ethical academic engagement. Outlining below are some valuable lessons that can inform further engagements and larger debates on values of historic built environment.

One of the first lessons learn in this process was that a city, a smallest of its neighborhood, is not made of a homogenous "community" that has a singular voice. The issue of authoritarian voices that reflect the attitude of patriarchal protectionism also dominate the discussions. Many women, especially of middle age and belonging to the dominant class, were able to eventually find their place in the discussion. The programs and scenarios that were meant for women helped. There however, was a group of temporary residents, young men, who were here in search of job opportunities and lived here because it was affordable, did not find a voice until the very end of the process. They participated only when the final discussions of the history wall and who has access to it were taking place.

Not all associations that inhabitants form with the place are enduring in nature, nor are they singular, clear, easily definable. The value of this place that was arrived at through this engagement included its history, its use,

emotions attached, the potentials it has for the future and many other loosely and closely held attributes. The time bound record of a certain past that is studied through sites and buildings in a city not only takes away the agency of access (emotional and social) from the people around it, but creates an alienation amongst people's consciousness of their environment. The values of the place arrived at through this process are ambivalent, plural and is a result

of a situated knowledge of the place. The values are 'active' and of past, present and future. Having said this, one then needs to reflect upon the role of an expert - as an architect of the future who will through his or her expert understanding and human sensibilities protect what is deemed valuable or as one of the co-producers of the place, with an agency to study, understand and transform historic environments.

### Note

*Material published in this article has, in parts been published at the following places:*

1. Desai, J. *The Paradox of Protection - Ahmedabad: the city and her soul*. Seminar, the monthly symposium, ed. Tejbir Singh. Publisher, Romesh Raj Trust. ISSN 0971-6742/707, July 2018, p. 26.
2. Desai, J. *Gendered Encounters, Engendered Places - Democratising Heritage*. Seminar, the monthly symposium, ed. Tejbir Singh. Publisher, Romesh Raj Trust. ISSN 0971-6742/705, May 2018, p. 41.

### References:

- Awan, N., Schneider, T. and Till, J. (2011). *Spatial Agency and other ways of doing architecture*. Oxon, Routledge.
- Bandarin, F. and Van Oers, R (2012). *The Historic Landscape: Managing Heritage in an Urban Century*, Wiley – Blackwell, Oxford, UK.
- Castells, M (1983). *The City and the Grassroots: A cross – cultural theory of urban social movements*. Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California.
- Commissariat, M. S. (1957). *History of Gujarat (Vol III)*. Ahmedabad: Gujarat Vidyasabha.
- Desai, J (2019). *Equity in Heritage Conservation, The Case of Ahmedabad*, Oxon and New York, Routledge.
- Doshi, H. (1991). *Traditional Neighborhoods in Modern Ahmedabad: Reader in Urban Sociology*. Rao, Bhat and Kadekar (Eds). Orient Blackswan.
- Forbes, A. (1856). *Ras-Mala: Hindoo Annals of the Province of Goozeral, in Western India (Vol I)*. London: Richardson Bros.
- Gillion, K. (1968). *Ahmedabad: A study in Indian urban history*. Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press
- Hayden, D. (1995). *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes in Public History*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Keough, E. B. (2011). *Heritage in Peril: A Critique of UNESCO's World Heritage Program*. Washington University, Global Studies Law Review.
- Neill, W. J. (2004). *Urban Planning and Cultural Identity*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Noberg – Schultz, C. (1979). *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*. New York: Rizzoli International Publishing.
- Parr, A. and Micheal, Z. (2011). *New Directions in Sustainable Design*. London and Newyork, Routledge
- Phadke, S., Khan, S. and Ranade, S. (2011). *Why Loiter? Women and Risk on Mumbai Streets*. New Delhi: Penguin Books.
- Pugh, C. (2000). *Sustainable Cities in Developing Countries*. Oxon & New York: Earthscan.
- Ratnamani Rao, B. (1929). *Gujarat nu Patnagar Amdavad*. Ahmedabad: Gujarat Sahitya Sabha.
- Rodwell, D. (2007). *Conservation and Sustainability in Historic Cities*. New Jersey: Wiley Publishing.
- Vakhatchand, M. (1850). *Amdavad no Itihas: isuvisan 1850 sudhino*. Ahmedabad: Gujarat Vidyasabha.

### CEPT University Course Credits:

**Streets for People:** The course was a part of the activities conducted under the UNESCO Chair for Education of Sustainable Development of Human Habitat (2014 – 2018). The course was conducted by the author of this article along with Madhavi Desai and Purvi Vyas. Students involved were: Shailja, Jankis, Khyat, Priyanka, Khushboo, Jigar and Unnati.

Details available on: <http://portfolio.cept.ac.in/streets-for-people/>

**Designing with People:** This studio was conducted by the author with Ramya Ramesh. Students involved were – Sweta Kandari, Aahna, Khushi, Komal, Prarthi, Vidhi, Maitri, Anokhi, Jui, Drashti, Archan and Tejas.





## Concluding Remarks

It was indeed insightful to see the various presentations on the subject of *Conservation and Local Development*, a topic that must be dealt with in a context where conservation and development are seen as oppositions. As all of the presentations have highlighted conservation, if thought through sensitively, can be an important trigger for local development. I live very close to the Nizamuddin Basti and I have witnessed some of these changes presented by Ratish Nanda on my way around the place. Conservation's focus on 'quality of life' as presented in the Aga Khan Development Network Project is a new direction pointed out for all conservation professionals seeking to strike a balance between concerns for historicity and demands of development. Poonam Verma Mascarenhas's presentation on projects from Amber, Shimla, Coorg and Goa bring out various roles donned by conservation professionals and the relationships they have with various stakeholders. A conservation professional is a problem solver, a collaborator and when needed an activist with the same concerns. Her examples also bring out the intrinsic relationships that conservation has with environmental issues and the urgent shift that is needed in policies to encompass these relationships. The Muzris and Allepey examples as presented by Benny Kuriakose give a very good insight on possibilities of a sensitive approach to heritage management and tourism when done in collaboration with the communities, organizations and the administration. Not only such projects bring in short term changes in the sense of place but when integrated in the developmental plans they can in the long term have effects on local economy, traditional industries and artisan activities.

The first half of this session presented projects with perspectives from ground, while the second half was about the academic perspectives underpinning some of the discussions that took place earlier. While the first half addressed the question; what conservation practice would look like if its concern was also local development, the second half addressed the concern of what education would look like if it sought to prepare professionals ready to deal with such issues. Neel Kamal Chapagain's presentation of a framework that responds to the pedagogical implications for an integrated understanding of heritage management and sustainable development recognizes culture and heritage as enabler of development. While he identified the challenges of implementing the integrated framework, Jigna Desai's presentation dwelled deeper into the pedagogical methods followed in her teaching that not only integrates the question of local development but also addresses diversities within a society that values the heritage. Her example brings out the dilemmas of conserving heritage that is layered with histories of various communities and sometimes communal conflicts. These lived-in realities when superimposed with protection-based, often rigid, regulations create complexities that need to be dealt with radical proximities to the site. One common message that comes through in all the presentations that the story of conservation, when addressed in close proximities of environments and societies, need to be painted with light brush, not a knife.

[ Written by Dr. Jigna Desai on the basis of the talk given by K T Ravindran ]

---

