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SPOTLIGHT: HOUSING FOR ALL

The vision of Hon’ble Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi towards achieving the goal of “Housing for All” by 2022 is marching forward. This flagship scheme, PMAY (U), while contributing towards the betterment of the cities, is marching forward. Comprehensive foca...
Preserving Heritage to Realise Sustainable Urban Development

For a long time, sustainable urban development had kept issues like reducing carbon footprint, energy consumption, waste management, economic aspects of a city, etc. on the mainstream and culture and heritage conservation has been sidelined. We need to understand that no sustainable urban development is possible without preserving the heritage of the city and the culture that it imbibes to it. Realising the fact, the United Nations (UN) has made sure to add preservation of the world’s culture and heritage as Target 11.4 under its Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11.

Heritage sites are way more than old and tattered buildings. These not only open up avenues for the tourism industry but each of the sites is a tangible asset that symbolises the culture of the city and its people framing its sociological setup. Moreover, heritage sites provide an identity to the city and all of these aspects are too much to be ignored when it comes to urban development. Hence, for civic authorities to carry out sustainable urban development in its true essence, it becomes imperative to preserve the heritage and culture of the city.

For a country like India that has loads to offer in the realm of heritage and culture, preservation becomes even more important. The Government of India has been proactive in this approach and has launched schemes like Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY). However, state-level Archeological bodies are not enough to preserve these historical gems as it gets heavy on the cost. Therefore models like PPP can be experimented to not only preserve the heritage but also enhance citizens’ engagement and empower the cultural bond of citizens with their cities.

This issue of the eGov Magazine is themed "Culture & Heritage for Sustainable Urban Development" is based on UN’s SDG 11.4 that states “strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage”. The issue holds insightful articles on how India is heading to achieve SDG11.4 and preserve its cultural and natural heritage. Also, the magazine holds an exclusive interview with Durga Shanker Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, on the theme.

This issue of the eGov Magazine is an initiative by Elets Technomedia and the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) to bring to light the government’s efforts, experts insights and Indian scenario on preserving cultural and natural heritage to make sustainable urban development a reality in its true essence.
Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Urban Development

HITESH VAIDYA
Director, National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA)

India’s current approach towards addressing the challenges of urbanisation is focused on four broad objectives: (i) urbanisation must generate growth and enhance economic productivity and competitiveness; (ii) it should be inclusive and sustainable; (iii) it should aim at preservation and revitalisation of history, culture and heritage; and (iv) it should contribute to the development of rural areas and strengthen rural-urban interdependencies.

Cultural heritage of cities plays a pivotal role in meeting the above objectives by not only building a sense of belonging and of identity, but also in steering economic growth. Both tangible heritage and intangible culture and heritage, not only attracts tourism and brings investment but also promotes social cohesion, inclusion and equity. The conservation of cultural heritage and traditional settlement patterns is a key element for inclusive economic and social development and poverty alleviation, for improving the livability and sustainability of urban areas, as well as for the new development of surrounding areas.

Our culture and heritage and their preservation and conservation, are the key assets which we pass on to the future generation, not as museum relics but as living changing models of adaptability. Our planning instruments should explicitly recognize the importance of these issues. We also must recognize and celebrate places whose identity is the unique result of its characteristics—the geography, the climate, their materials and their habits. Protecting and safeguarding foundations, to build new future cities, is the key to sustainability. The sustainable development goals proposed for urban culture and heritage should be seen as critically important, not only for preserving and adapting our historic places but also serve as models for new urban settlements and redevelopment.

This issue is a collection of eight articles and two interviews related to cultural and natural heritage conservation in India. They highlight the need for a holistic understanding and assessment of the cultural and natural heritage across social, environmental, and economical aspects. The broad themes covered in the articles include: heritage buildings, conservation and restoration, protecting and conserving the biodiversity and natural heritage, heritage and natural conservation policies, and expenditure on conservation of cultural and natural heritage (by source of funding and level of government). NIUA is committed to help Indian cities perform better. To achieve this objective, along with our own resources, we partner with media, industry, academia and other government and non-government organisations for effective research, capacity-building and advocacy outcomes. This collaboration is demonstration of the same. Teams at NIUA and e-Gov magazine have enthusiastically worked to collate a diverse range of knowledge-base on the cross-cutting issues on heritage sector in India for this special issue. My sincere thanks to all the authors who have contributed to this special issue and shared their knowledge to make this issue possible.
SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

SDG 11.4—Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage

SDG 11.4 Sub-Indicator
11.4.1 Total per capita expenditure on the preservation, protection and conservation of all cultural and natural heritage, by source of funding (public, private), type of heritage (cultural, natural) and level of government (national, regional, and local/municipal).

India has 40 World Heritage Sites that include 32 cultural sites, 7 natural sites, 1 mixed site, and 13 intangible cultural heritage list.

SDG 11.4 Sub-indicator—National Indicator Framework
11.4.1 Total per capita expenditure on the preservation, protection and conservation of all cultural and natural heritage.

World Heritage Sites are in danger due to:
- Rapid urbanisation
- Natural disasters
- Heavy tourist traffic
- Human encroachment
- Climate change
- Air and Water pollution
- Conflicts & war
- Poaching
The cultural and natural heritage are an integral part of urban fabric. It is imperative to appropriately prioritize its conservation while implementing urbanisation plans. This is also explicitly addressed under SDG 11.4. Highlighting MoHUA’s approach to conservation of India’s heritage-cities, Durga Shanker Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) shares his thoughts in an exclusive interview with the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA).

Safeguarding Cultural and Natural Heritage for Sustainable Urban Development

The SDG 11.4 focuses on strengthening the efforts to safeguard the cultural and natural heritage and integrates sustainable development perspectives into the processes of preservation and conservation. Could you highlight what strategies or key actions have been taken to achieve sustainable urbanisation along with heritage and natural conservation for India?

The Ministry recognised the fact that the past efforts of heritage conservation in the country were often carried out in isolation. The needs and aspirations of the local communities as well as the main urban development issues such as local economy, livelihoods, service delivery, and infrastructure provision in the areas were not considered. It was also acknowledged that heritage development of a city is not about development and conservation of a few monuments, but holistic development of the city including planning, quality of life, cleanliness, security is required for reinvigorating the city’s soul and explicit manifestation of its character. In my opinion, it’s high time that we stop addressing independent sector problems and come together on one table to look at our cities’ development collectively. Heritage conservation should not be treated as a ‘special task’ rather it should be as mainstream as sanitation, housing, livelihood, because...
it has cross-cutting implications.

With this in mind we conceptualised the scheme HRIDAY (Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana) to undertake strategic and planned development of heritage cities aiming at improvement in overall quality of life with specific focus on sanitation, security, tourism, heritage revitalization and livelihoods retaining the city’s cultural identity. The City Hriday Plans became a comprehensive document for the cities, which they can revisit every few years and plan for a sustainable future. This itself was an effort towards integrating heritage conservation with overall sustainable urban development as stipulated in SDG 11.4.

It has been more than six years since the Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY) was launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. Could you elucidate on the achievements of the scheme and what kind of interventions by the Ministry do you think would help us in safeguarding cultural and natural heritage in future?

The Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY) was launched by the Ministry in January 2015 and since its inception, the scheme had focussed on holistic development of the heritage sites for the selected cities. One of the achievements of this scheme was the preparation of the City Hriday Plans (CHPs) which mapped all the tangible and intangible heritage assets of the city and identified a shelf of projects for the city administration to implement. Some of these projects were prioritised and implemented during the tenure of the scheme but I am sure the rest will be taken up by the respective Urban Local Bodies within their yearly budget provisions. Another noteworthy feature of the scheme was the nomination of technical experts and professionals called the HRIDAY City Anchors. Most of them appointed had an extensive understanding of the city’s background and culture. This arrangement helped the National Mission Directorate at the Ministry to give appropriate attention to each of the 12 cities. Further, the City Anchors also acted as the facilitators between the City Mission Directorate and the CLAM-C (City Level Advisory and Monitoring Committee) which contributed to a comprehensive shelf of projects in the CHP.

Regarding the future interventions to safeguard the cultural and natural heritage, the Central and the State governments should work together to form policies that can help in conserving our cultural heritage. One of the ways which are not explored adequately for natural and cultural heritage conservation is the PPP model. This could be beneficial as the cities would be spared of the financial burden while getting a head start and they can later work out a financially and technically sustainable model. The Centre and the States can extend the required technical support through their own organisations such as the Archaeological Survey of India, the State Archaeology Departments and policy think tanks such as the National Institute of Urban Affairs and NITI Aayog.

The natural and cultural heritage assets play a crucial role in supporting local economies, livelihoods and quality of life in human settlements. At the same time, these are under threat and immense pressure due to the impacts of urbanisation, climate change, and human factors. In this regard, could you suggest how conservation professionals can harness heritage assets as a resource for inclusive and sustainable local and regional development?

Indeed, we are at significant crossroads, where the choices we make today to tackle urbanisation, climate change and other challenges would have a long-term
POLICYMAKER’S PERSPECTIVE

impact on the cities and their residents. Global organisations that work for the cause of cultural heritage such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) have already laid the foundation and identified approaches and tools for cities and sites to follow. For instance, the ‘Historic Urban Landscape’ approach recommended by UNESCO integrates the goals of urban heritage conservation and those of social and economic development. It also encourages cities and authorities to combat the challenges of urbanisation, climate change, excess tourism and market exploitation by defining tools for knowledge and planning, civic engagement, financial and regulatory systems. I believe a few cities such as Quito in Ecuador and Ballarat in Australia have already shown encouraging outcomes. This ought to be our way forward for dealing with historic cities and heritage sites. As rightly put, the potential of heritage assets, be it natural or cultural, further tangible or intangible, should be harnessed for demonstrating inclusive development. This could be achieved in multiple ways, tourism being one of them, where we have several states such as Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh already paving the way through. Another way is to actually link the artisans and craftsmen to the market directly, which can encourage innovation, adaptation and this eventually shall enhance livelihoods.

Indicators for achieving SDG 11.4 accentuates the ‘total per capita expenditure on the preservation, protection and conservation of all cultural and natural heritage, by the source of funding (both public and private)’. Do you think integrating public and private funding for the conservation of cultural and natural heritage would help us in achieving this target? What, in your opinion, would be ways to do this?

Integrating public and private funding for the conservation of cultural and natural heritage would prove beneficial in achieving the targets of SDG 11.4. In my opinion, there would be two important avenues that can be explored for the same: one is harnessing the potential of science and technology for enhancing conservation efforts and the other is educating people about the cultural heritage and raising awareness among the citizenry.

As we have seen in other Government of India’s missions launched and operated by the Government of India, such as the Smart Cities Mission or AMRUT, technology has played a major role in overcoming a challenge or addressing issues that had been identified in the urban environments. Similarly, many countries and organisations have led the way in engaging innovative technology to sustain efforts in the conservation and preservation of cultural heritage. Along with Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and drone surveys that are used to map cities and larger areas, several projects have also demonstrated the use of LIDAR technology for a more accurate digital documentation of historic buildings and sites. These are certainly encouraging initiatives and hence, appropriate investment in innovation, science and technology seems key to strengthen our efforts.

Another component worthy of additional investment is education and awareness regarding cultural heritage and the value they hold. We see that not many people are aware of the heritage that exists around them or the value that it holds in the city, the region, in the country or globally. We need to develop easy-to-understand knowledge imparting resources so that people themselves start to develop a sense of ownership towards cultural heritage and contribute to protecting and conserving it for future generations.

‘Atmanirbhar Bharat’ programme has given incentives to boost the economy in terms of local manufacturing, markets.
and supply chains. To truly achieve the potential of a self-reliant India and of strengthening the local economy, it is essential that we look beyond the infrastructural interventions and give equal attention to economic strategies. From this perspective, what role does sustainable tourism play in boosting local economic development?

Tourism is a complex phenomenon for every city. While it contributes to the economy, several cities have started acknowledging the fact that the present-day tourism demands need to be catered to in a thoughtful manner. Research has shown grave consequences of mass tourism in sensitive areas. This is the reason why the term ‘sustainable tourism’ was coined that ‘includes concern for economic, social and environmental issues as well as attention to improving tourists’ experiences and addressing the needs of host communities who should also be considered as important as the visitors. As stated by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), “achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process and it requires constant monitoring of impacts, introducing the necessary preventive and/or corrective measures whenever necessary”. Further, the Cape Town Declaration of 2002 alludes to sustainable tourism as something that, generates greater economic benefits for local people and enhances the well-being of host communities, improves working conditions and access to the industry, involves local people in decisions that affect their lives and life chances and is culturally sensitive, encourages respect between tourists and hosts and finally builds local pride and confidence. In my opinion, this is exactly where the role of urban authorities and experts come into play. Technical and financial aid offered by the Government can help the locals nurture market linkages while keeping their identity integral. With the world getting smaller and so many possibilities opening up with technology, local businesses can flourish sans the existence of an intermediary. With the right assistance, they can become financially more aware and self-sustainable.

While the Atmanirbhar Bharat programme has been launched to aid the country out of the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, I concur with the fact that if we focus on self-sustainability while protecting the identity of the place, we can boost the local economy, eventually contributing to the local economic development.

I think that the essence of ‘Atmanirbhart’ can be best understood in light of the tourism industry. Tourism is one of the sectors supporting the ‘economy’ pillar of the Atmanirbhar programme. But, after facing the challenges from the economic shutdown in the COVID pandemic, the tourism industry should now move towards a sustainable future. We need to focus on preparing comprehensive tourism recovery plans to rebuild destinations, encourage innovation and investment, and rethink the tourism sector. The tourism industry and local governments should strengthen their support mechanisms to the local businesses and the workers, particularly giving attention to the most vulnerable destinations in the recovery phase. These actions are essential but to reopen the tourism economy successfully and get businesses running, more needs to be done in a coordinated way as tourism services are very interdependent.
As the population in cities is surging day by day, the civic services, resources and environment take a toll. With an aim to make the urban centres across the globe more liveable, sustainable and resilient, the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 addresses the issue and provides guidelines for countries to form a framework to improve their cities. Addressing the role of SDG 11 in India, Sameer Unhale, Joint Commissioner, Directorate of Municipal Administration, Maharashtra, interacted with Adarsh Som and Harshal Desai of Elets News Network (ENN).
What is your take on SDG 11 and how does land-use planning play a crucial role in making urban centres across the globe more sustainable and resilient?

SDGs are a global consensus on important goals we all should strive for. As cities are important players in the urbanised planet in the 21st century, SDG 11 will have important implications on the impact on and of cities. Amongst various aspects of city institutions and processes, land-use planning is very significant and our cities depend on nature as well as on form of land use. Therefore, fostering any innovation in land-use planning will directly have the potential to make a city sustainable and livable. Land-use planning will be a very important tool we have in terms of implementing sustainable urbanisation. However, an issue that often comes in the discussion of land-use planning is that it is taken in a very narrow sense which I think needs to be changed. It needs to be more integrated, holistic and more inclusive considering the various interconnections of innumerable elements under the umbrella of the urban landscape. We cannot constrain land-use planning only to instruments of Zoning, Land Reservation for a specific purpose, FAR, etc. It has to be improved and enhanced. We need to bring more innovative planning tools for bettering urban land-use planning.

Moreover, there is a need to get a comprehensive view of the various purposes for which land-use planning is done. It should include social aspects; economic aspects; cultural aspects; issues of gender, child, disability, etc. Therefore, the purpose of any planning mechanism for land use or otherwise should take into consideration the essential aspects of making cities livable for all the citizens. We tend to use more and more western notions of land use and planning. They probably need to be Indianised to suit our geography and society. This is also a way through which we can make our existing land-use planning mechanism better and make it address the concerns of the common people. Sustainability and environmental planning also need to be closely integrated with the present framework of land-use planning along with the economic and financial aspects. Land use planning, along with the other aspects of city governance, administration and management can help cities realign their energies to achieve SDG 11.

How can citizen engagement impact urban planning? In what manner our present-day participatory governance system extends opportunity to citizens to share their insights in urban planning exercise?

As of now, after the draft plan is prepared then it is put out for the people to suggest or object but at the very process of drafting the plan, citizens should be engaged.

Urban development is a state subject in our Constitution. There have been a set of advisories from the Union Ministry to bring in uniformity and principles of sustainability and innovation in the purpose and functionality of planning authorities. However, States have their own town planning Acts and will have to incorporate the changes suggested by the central government. Land-use planning is an activity that essentially needs to be done at the city level. However, the technological capacities and manpower often make it conducted by the State functionaries.

There is scope wherein modern technology can be leveraged to infuse a participatory culture of the planning process. Generally, after being prepared by the technical team, the “Draft Plan” is put out in the public domain for the people to suggest or object to it. However, technology can make the very process of making this draft plan participatory. The citizens could be engaged and through crowdsourcing of draft plans. Such participation in the initial stages itself becomes important as once the plan is prepared it gets very technical and hard to understand for common citizens. Also, they do not get a chance to interact with the planning authority apart from hearings on the suggestions or objections. Therefore, crowdsourcing the planning process could make planning easy and social media can also be used to engage citizens while creating draft plans. Collective wisdom that emerges would be closest to attaining SDGs at the city level.

Innovation in urban planning is essential. Availability of many apps in the digital ecosystem, satellite maps & GIS, planning and design simulation, digital twinning of cities etc. also offers the possibility for citizens to participate in preparation of city plans and get a better idea of how a city can be built and maintained. This evolution in planning technology will make it easier to bring the citizens and communities closer to cities. It is also important because the city plan directly impacts the citizens and stays with them for decades.

Further the element of time frame in land-use planning has important implications for SDGs. When we have to achieve them as early as by 2030, we will have to make planning and its implementation fast-tracked. Land-use planning at a city needs to be in a comprehensive, holistic and integrated way. Urban planning is though not the only domain where citizen engagement plays a crucial role. Citizens participation is also required in the maintenance of a city. From cleanliness, anti-pollution measures, improved mobility, waste management, water resources, and so
forth. The city government must take up measures to attract citizens in engaging with the city and join hands with the community organisation in making the cities liveable. We, at the Thane Smart City, had collaborated with the UNGC (India Network) to make Thane the first SDG city. An effort of SDG budgeting was done at the city level. I hope that SDG budgeting and financing will also be important to achieve SDG 11 at the city level.

How is the ‘ClimateSmart Cities Assessment Framework’ that the Government of India has launched to achieve its targets under the Paris Agreement being implemented?

The impact of the urban world on the climate and environment is substantially higher than the geographical footprint that they actually occupy. Therefore, the Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework has been an important educational exercise for cities to clarify the set of actions that need to be taken to make a city "Climate-Wise". It provides the city administrators with a set of indicators on how to move ahead imbibing sustainability in a city’s core structure and operations.

This framework is a noteworthy strategy at the national level to help cities run their civic operations in an environment-friendly manner. The features on the national rankings of the various ClimateSmart cities are welcoming measures as they will make the cities and citizens aware and try to incentivise them to work towards various elements included in city planning. The 15th Finance Commission has also extended funding exclusively and specifically on some ClimSmart targets through a tied grants mechanism. Financing for water and solid waste management, amongst others, are the two areas that have been linked and funded for various cities in India and would help in achieving the targets associated with the SDGs.

From 2015 onwards, we’re seeing many efforts towards citizen engagement to the New Public Management Framework. So making a platform for citizens to participate and engage with the government authority on city issues is important. The sheer importance of citizen participation can be viewed in ‘Swachh Bharat Abhiyan’ which played a major role in improving solid waste management across the country. This momentum can be used also in the ClimateSmart cities.

Please share a few best practices for civic bodies to improve the overall sustainability in their respective cities and work on developing a healthy, clean and sustainable environment to make cities more liveable?

There have been many best practices in Indian cities across the States and efforts to document them and publish them will help. In Maharashtra, a ‘Majhi Vasundhara City Competition Framework’, conducted under the Department of Climate Change and Department of Urban Development is being implemented. It aims to preserve the five elements of the environment in cities and towns of the state. ‘Majhi Vansundhara’ can be dubbed as ‘My Earth’ Mission. It also has a city ranking mechanism that ranks cities on the basis of their work in preserving the natural and clean environment and sustainable development. Community engagement with individual e-Pledges along with the ‘City Reward’ mechanism is creating traction for this mission in both urban and rural habitats of the State.

While I was working as the CEO of Smart City Thane, we had developed a mobile application called ‘DigiThane’. It was an idea to digitally facilitate the citizens to connect and experience their city. We also innovated a feature for plastic waste management in the city. The app enabled the civic administration to connect with more than 800 rag pickers to the end-recyclers and connecting with the citizens at the locality or the area level. Community engagement should help in achieving SDG at the city level. We prepared a small network of automated weather monitoring and AQI monitoring stations. The data from these stations were made available on the public platform through the DigiThane app. Thus, we could bring climate and sustainability data directly to citizens. The Digithane was also awarded the National Smart City Award in 2021 by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA).

Apart from technological interventions and innovative approach, there is one area that remains untapped and that is using our traditional knowledge. We are blessed to have a long tradition in knowledge related to the environment & sustainability available across the country. We can make urban lives better and live in harmony with our nature and planet. The SDG framework also resonates with our constitutional philosophy as amplified in the Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles of State Policy. Therefore, not only technology, citizen engagement and community participation but our traditional knowledge could also be utilised to make our cities Climate-Wise and help Indian cities to achieve not only SDG 11 but also other targets in the SDG framework related to the urban living.
Culture is regarded as the fourth pillar of sustainable development as it contributes transversally to many Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – safe and sustainable cities; decent work and economic growth; reduced inequalities; environmental conservation; gender equality; and peaceful societies. With growing international sensitivity around the topic, cities around the world have started considering cultural heritage management as the nexus for cross-disciplinary inquiries on biodiversity, ecosystem services, and human well-being challenges in these changing social, economic, and environmental conditions of today.

In the past, cities have leveraged local cultural resources to inspire, catalyse and drive socio-economic change, and enhance local resiliency and development potential. Nowhere is it more apparent than in India where culture has interfaced with the political economy through its various manifestations of local practices, oral traditions, and cultural expression to influence policy decisions on the local economy or the provision of critical services (water, housing, public transport, etc). But unplanned expansion and construction in the face of rapid urbanisation threaten to derail the historic areas and heritage assets of our cities, and their evolution. Despite wielding a huge influence in the past, the rich heritage legacy of our cities is underutilised in modern infrastructure development. A sector-based approach ignores the cross-cutting benefits that incorporating urban heritage brings to a city's socio-economic development. 

Legislative frameworks, policies, and programs have traditionally been tailored to different sectors of urban
infrastructure, while culture and heritage have been limited to ‘mainstreaming’ efforts. For ensuring sustainable development, it is important to address cultural heritage management as a domain in its own right. ‘Mainstreaming’ should not imply that culture is just a transversal dimension and hence less visible and less present for development projects and in people’s minds.

Urban heritage is understood as the historic layering of values that have been produced by successive and existing cultures in cities. It is an accumulation of traditions and experiences, recognised as such, in their diversity. For such culturally rich cities, it naturally follows that culture must be at the heart of development policies to ensure human-centred, inclusive, and equitable urban development. There are examples from around the world (Matera in Italy; Ouro Preto in Brazil; Ostersund in Sweden; HRIDAY cities in India) where an integrated approach has proven to be successful in provisioning critical infrastructure in those historic areas which generally tend to be overpopulated and under-serviced. It has also led to greater buy-in from the local communities and has proved effective in reducing urban poverty.

This is relevant in the case of Ujjain which is one of the oldest cities in the sub-continent. One of the seven janpads of ancient India, there was a time when this city was the capital of a big empire and a central node for land and water trade routes. Enjoying immense political and economic importance, Ujjain served as a centre of science and culture in northern India; for instance, since the fourth century B.C.E., it has served as the first meridian of longitude for Hindu geographers. It is no surprise to find that Ujjain is also very rich in natural resources and biodiversity. There are seven water bodies in the city named as Sapt-Sagar. River Kshipra, which was once majestic and massive, was an important means of trade and transport. The city had huge forests of various indigenous species, housing a plethora of bird populations. Today, Ujjain is a leading heritage city in the country with prominent temples such as the Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga and Harsidhhi Shaktipeeth adorning the cityscape. Varahmir. Ujjain is also very rich in natural resources and biodiversity. There are seven water bodies in the city named as Sapt-Sagar. River Kshipra, which was once majestic and massive, was an important means of trade and transport. The city had huge forests of various indigenous species, housing a plethora of bird populations. Today, Ujjain is a leading heritage city in the country with prominent temples such as the Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga and Harsidhhi Shaktipeeth adorning the cityscape. In fact, Ujjain has hundreds of temples, and the sizable economy of the city is directly linked to tourism and trade.

The Mahakaleshwar temple area succinctly captures all the challenges and opportunities of incorporating heritage in urban development. A very densely populated area with old structures, natural resources and high archaeological value, the temple and its surrounding areas need to accommodate the already stretched infrastructure and public management systems for a disproportionately high population during festive days. To put this into context, approximately 75 million pilgrims visited the city within a month during the Kumbh Mela (Simhast) in 2016, i.e., around 2.5 million pilgrim visits per day. Over the years, this overstressing and increasing urbanisation has also had severe impacts on the city’s water bodies.

Decision-makers and stakeholders in Ujjain recognised that managing the underlying tangible heritage and the archaeological treasure trove around the temple premises was important, especially when we recollect that the temple (along with the city) was pillaged several times in the past for its riches. Additionally, there was cognisance that the natural heritage of the city, i.e. water bodies, and flora and fauna, were also at risk and needed to be conserved. It was therefore imperative that we considered the redevelopment of the Mahakaleshwar area as the core focus.
of the city’s efforts in the Smart Cities Mission (SCM) through the Mahakal-Rudrasagar Integrated Development Approach (MRIDA) project. The objective was to sustainably increase the carrying capacity of the area while enhancing the cultural experience of pilgrims and tourists and preserving/restoring the public spaces and temple precinct. Distributed into three phases, the MRIDA project is a flagship project in the Indian urban domain. The second phase of the project, MRIDA-II, is co-financed by the CITIIS program (funded by AFD and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs).

CITIIS is a joint program of the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs, The French Development Agency (AFD), the European Union and the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA). USCL is one of the twelve cities that won the CITIIS challenge in 2019 and it has been awarded a grant of Rs 80 crore from the Government of India for this project. While efforts were being made under phase 1, it was only under the influence of the program objectives of CITIIS that we were able to thoroughly conceptualise a coherent strategy for Cultural and Heritage Management planning in Ujjain.

The core objective of our planning was to provide adequate civic amenities for the floating population with minimum impact to the riches of the historic town. Integrating culture into local sustainable development contexts adds additional complexities of place and socio-cultural resonance to urban planning. The challenges must be explicitly addressed. Assumptions and prevailing myths about the culture that continue to seep into policy and project discussions stall progress in integrating culture into urban development in more systematic and comprehensive ways. This was the approach undertaken in Ujjain.

We realised that heritage conservation and management must be carried out on a continuous basis, and a comprehensive listing and grading are required to achieve the task of effective conservation. Long-term management of heritage requires a nuanced understanding of measuring and evaluating the impact of cultural policies, plans, and projects. Culture cannot be measured and monitored like other areas of urban development since it has important non-quantifiable and invisible dimensions. To know that culture is contributing to strengthening and enriching local sustainability, resilience, and holistic development, the measurement or assessment criteria must focus on stages of improvement (qualitative criteria) in combination with quantitative criteria.

As part of the CITIIS program, Ujjain Smart City Limited (which is the executing agency for the project) prepared a Cultural and Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) as part of the Environment and Social Management Plan (ESMP) commitments made in relation to the management of cultural and natural heritage during the construction and commissioning phase of the project. This was done in accordance to the World Bank’s Environmental and Social Standards (ESS 8) which form part of the World Bank’s Environmental and Social Framework.

As a part of the planning process and with the guidance of renowned experts in the field who were part of the Technical Assistance provided by CITIIS, we used the following benchmarks to guide our activities:

- Heritage conservation is best understood as a socio-cultural activity, not simply as a technical practice; it encompasses many activities preceding and following any act of material intervention.
- It is important to consider the contexts of a heritage conservation project—social, cultural, economic, geographical, administrative—as seriously and as deeply as the artefact/site itself is considered.
- The study of values is a useful way of understanding the contexts and sociocultural aspects of heritage conservation.
- Traditional modes of assessing ‘significance’ rely heavily on historical, art historical, and archaeological notions held by professionals, and they are applied basically through undisciplined means.

The CHMP prepared defined the avoidance, minimisation, and mitigation measures necessary to ensure that negative impacts to known and
unknown cultural heritage features/sites because of project activities are prevented or, where this is not possible, reduced to as low as reasonably practicable during the execution phase of the project.

The approach used by USCL considered the relation between tourists and residents, aiming to address it as a relationship rather than focusing on the potential tensions and seeing art as something that can facilitate that relationship, particularly when residents are given a voice as creators. The local or regional tangible and intangible heritage is easy for people to relate to through their own memories. That means that this kind of heritage—especially in the recent past—becomes a very efficient tool when it comes to creating learning experiences that can really reach people in community, culture, and pilgrims.

All aspects of the project were considered and activities were defined during each phase of the project. In all, more than 100 ‘Mitigation Measures’ across 19 ‘Impact Types’ were identified across 48 sites contained within the project boundaries. In complement, a detailed ‘Chance Find’ procedure was established that outlined actions required if previously unknown heritage resources, particularly archaeological resources, are encountered during project construction or operation.

Emphasis was laid on stakeholder consultation and engagement, scholarly research about the site to know of any event or a significant site associated items, detailed survey, and assessment of the site to know of any potential unknown cultural heritage and finally training of the working staff along with a monitoring specialist to make sure no harm is caused to the heritage of the city. In addition to the above, USCL has employed a Conservation Architect (CA), whose responsibilities include:

- Promoting compliances with the Heritage Management Plan and procedures for the project activities.
- Ensuring that all required approvals for archaeological work have been obtained from the appropriate government bodies.
- Coordinating, scheduling, developing the scope of work and supervising the archaeological works of the contractor.
- Verifying and establishing the cultural heritage significance of any finds during the project with help from the third party subject experts or agencies as may be applicable.
- Carrying out cultural heritage training.
- The monitoring of archaeological works, trial trench investigations and rescue excavation work will be the responsibility of the conservation architect.
- Undertaking archaeological excavations and investigations.

By experiencing diverse cultural practices, young people are provided with favourable conditions for a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral, and spiritual existence, having the chance to live, work, explore, communicate, create, and express themselves in unconventional and completely unknown ways. The project is realised in a dialogue between identity and diversity, individual and group contributing to cultural diversity through a common process of shared activities, interactions and exchange between the elderly and the young.

The recognition that heritage relates to the environment and to landscape and that it is conveyed in knowledge, beliefs and values, places heritage in close connection with a wide range of practices and places. This also points to the need to acknowledge the place of heritage in several policy fields and indeed to the policies and strategies that relate to sustainable development at the local, national, regional, and global levels. We, in Ujjain, realise that it is not just the local government that has an integral role to play in holistic heritage conservation, but also citizens, civil society organisations, and heritage professionals, among other stakeholders, that contribute to the prominent role of cultural heritage in society and the economy. To continue to value, protect and preserve it, we must strengthen the existing links between cultural heritage and sustainable development, and incorporate the appropriate rights-based, people-centred practices.
Protecting Cultural & Natural Heritage of Cities Worldwide
With special reference to India

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 aims ‘to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable’. But is it possible to make cities inclusive, resilient, sustainable and, therefore, safe, without recognising the natural and cultural heritage of cities? Hence, target 11.4 has been rightly laid down to include protection of the world’s cultural and natural heritage. And to achieve SDG target 11.4, countries have pledged to ‘strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage’, writes Gurmeet S Rai, Founding Director and Principal Conservation Architect, Cultural Resource Conservation Initiative (India) Pvt Ltd.

GURMEET S RAI
Founding Director and Principal Conservation Architect, Cultural Resource Conservation Initiative (India) Pvt Ltd.
Almost every Indian city has a rich legacy of cultural and natural heritage. While protection is accorded by national and state-level bodies to monuments and sites of national and regional significance, there is inadequate agency within institutions, particularly urban local bodies and community-based organisations or community groups, to engage with the heritage of local significance. A key challenge in the protection, conservation and management of the cultural and natural heritage in Indian cities is the absence of a clear recognition of this ‘heritage’. In most cases, the lists of heritage have not been prepared while in others, the lists are not comprehensive. Inclusive processes are necessary for drawing up a list of what comprises ‘heritage’ for a particular city and its people, and these processes need to be participatory, continuous and dynamic. Such an integrated approach can only be possible if the urban local bodies take it upon themselves to support the identification, protection and conservation of heritage through policies, plans, programmes and procedures. Partnerships between organisations and communities are critical to achieving a sustainable outcome supported by measurable indicators.

Recent initiatives in India for heritage conservation and development within historic cities through various programmes supported by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) along with its technical advisory arm, the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) have demonstrated to the local governments how to integrate heritage conservation and revitalisation within a development framework. In Puri, recognising the natural and cultural heritage of the temple town, three heritage zones were identified under the HRIDAY programme. Little is known about the unique water resource of the town in which millions of devout Hindus visit the Shree Jagannath Temple to pay their respects annually. In spite of being located on the coast of the Bay of Bengal, Puri has sweet groundwater. This could be attributed to its geological characteristics as well as the river Musa which defines the northern, eastern and western limits of the town. Several pokhris (natural and man-made ponds) in jagaghars (traditional community centres) on the northwestern part of the city are also responsible for holding the rainwater which recharges the groundwater. Over time, the groundwater has steadily become brackish due to the backflow of the seawater, as more water is being pumped out of the ground than the quantities recharging the aquifers. Protecting these pokhris and jagaghars is critical for the sustenance of this historic town. The significant attributes of this historic town’s planning include the built heritage of temples, mathas, etc. and also vernacular buildings such as the jagaghars with their pokhris, something that needs to be recognised by the urban local body.

In the city of Amritsar, under the HRIDAY programme, a wide range of buildings that are significant heritage were identified for conservation and adaptive reuse. The Old Office of the Deputy Commissioner was conserved as designed by Bhai Ram Singh, the carpenter-designer-architect from Amritsar, who was renowned for his Indo-Saracenic style of architecture, and who became the first native principal of the Mayo College of Arts in Lahore.

The project was to ‘recognise’ the unsung architect, conserve the building, and further, to reposition it within the community as a library, a gallery to Bhai Ram Singh (to house drawings of works undertaken by him), and a cafeteria. The building is located within the compound of the newly built district mini secretariat. The colonial-period gates of the city were conserved to house public libraries for children. The British-period
pump house and powerhouse on the Upper Bari Doab Canal were restored and repurposed to become recreational facilities for the local communities.

Rambagh Gate, the only surviving 19th-century city gate from the times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, was restored along with the remnants of the ramparts which house a primary Government School and a hundred-year-old Municipal Printing Press. This ensured that heritage conservation was a ‘people-centred’ project as it impacted the lives of children and teachers by improving the quality of their classrooms and play areas, alongside the working environment of the staff at the Municipal Printing Press. The Gate itself was revitalised into the Lok Virsa or People’s Museum.

However, despite the local interest, these initiatives failed to engage the local entrepreneurs, community groups and citizens in the sustainable management of the renewed heritage assets, as the legal tools and organisational structure of the urban local bodies are not adequate enough to address the required processes and procedures.

The heritage of a city is not constituted merely by its buildings but by all such attributes that represent the cultural continuum of people and that are manifest in its material culture. In Srinagar, the historic core is popularly known as the ‘downtown’. The crafts of the region are widely practised in this area that is a cultural lifeline of the city. While the water systems comprising the lakes, canals, backwaters and river Jhelum is the natural heritage, the floating garden, houseboats and shikaras as also the heritage of the city and its people. These also need to be recognised, and conservation of these components of the historic urban landscape needs to be part of the development processes. Meticulous planning along with financial tools to support conservation and sustainable management are both critical as several custodians of this heritage lack adequate resources for their conservation.

Cultural heritage includes both tangible and intangible heritage. While tangible heritage comprises both movable and immovable heritage, including buildings, structures, spaces such as gardens, plazas, nodes such as riverfront ghats, avenues, public squares, etc., intangible heritage includes cultural practices and industries such as handicrafts and handmade products. The livelihood of large sections of society and communities is directly dependent on these practices which have led the United Nations forums to recognise heritage as an important driver of the economy. Prior to the current travel restrictions and closure of heritage sites due to COVID-19, people travelled the world to visit cultural and natural heritage sites, thus contributing to the local economies. In the midst of the current pandemic, the culture sector has been hit hard, thus severely jeopardising the livelihood of many artists and communities.

While the SDG indicator 11.4.1 for protecting cultural and natural heritage is defined as total expenditure (public and private) per capita spent on the preservation, protection and conservation of all cultural and natural heritage, sustainable management can only be achieved through institutional reforms at the level of the urban local bodies, supported by financial resources from both state and national government programmes. However, plans, policies and procedures need to be put in place within urban local bodies for the identification, safeguarding and protection of cultural (movable and immovable) and natural heritage. Local-level programmes for heritage management must address the needs of communities and stakeholders, and generate diverse educational, awareness-raising, and research programmes. Partnerships must be strengthened at local levels for the protection and sustainable development of cultural and natural heritage.
“Culture is who we are and what shapes our identity. No development can be sustainable without including culture. UNESCO’s work promoting cultural diversity, and UNESCO’s Culture Conventions, are key to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,” Shikha Jain, Director, DRONAH and Chairperson, DRONAH Foundation quotes UNESCO, as she writes about how Jaipur has conserved its culture and craft capturing the true essence of sustainable development.
While it is easy to prescribe the applications of SDGs at the policy level, its actual implementation in various cultural heritage sites, cities and settlements specifically in the context of complex Indian cities remains a huge challenge. Jaipur City has achieved two urban-level UNESCO designations as a World Heritage City (2019) and as UNESCO Creative City of Crafts and Folk Arts (2015). One of the primary objectives of these inscriptions is that they serve as tools to achieve sustainable development goals for the city.

Jaipur envisions itself as a city that fosters the creativity and imagination of its people using its rich cultural heritage to showcase a model of sustainable development that has continued and adapted since centuries.

While the World Heritage tag for a city often focuses on the conservation of its tangible attributes, urban characteristics, monuments and iconic landmarks; in the case of Jaipur, an extra initiative was taken to recognise it additionally for its intangible value of crafts under criteria (vi). Much before this celebrated inscription for World Heritage in 2019, Jaipur was already a part of the UNESCO Creative City Network in 2015, a designation that is mooted from the Municipal Corporation itself for the entire city to celebrate and sustain its creative economy; the rich repository of crafts and folk arts in case of Jaipur.

The UNESCO Creative Cities Network was a unique opportunity for Jaipur to highlight its myriad crafts and folk arts and ensure that these traditional forms of creative expression are equipped to meet the needs of the present and the future. In long term, Jaipur’s participation in the network will further the growth and development of local arts and crafts ensuring a direct impact on the socio-economic sustainability of the city.

Jaipur pottery

Jaipur was conceived as an urban planning model in the early 18th century, and also as a city designed to promote trade and commerce. It has flourished as a centre of arts and crafts since then. Historically, the city is said to have housed ‘chhattis karkhanas’ (‘36 industries’) majority of which included crafts like gemstones, lac jewellery, stone idols, miniature paintings and others each with a specified street and market designed for each craft that continues to date. During the 19th century, the local crafts received further momentum with British period influences in special exhibitions held in the UK, the establishment of institutions such as Rajasthan School of Arts and Albert Hall Museum. While the local traditions of guilds continued, formal institutions for crafts, policies and programmes by Government and private sector further contributed to national and international recognition of Jaipur crafts and folk arts in the 20th and 21st centuries.

As a centre for crafts and folk arts, Jaipur offers a thriving economic environment based on tourism as well as trade and commerce. Crafts, one of the leading industries in Jaipur, contributes significantly to the local economy. It is for this reason that even crafts that were not established during the 18th century in Jaipur have found their way to the city as recently as the 1960s. Jaipur is unique among other creative cities of crafts not only because of the large number of crafts being practised actively but also because crafts as utilitarian products are an intrinsic part of the daily lives of locals and domestic visitors. Jaipur has 53,460 craft units with a total of 1,74,972 artisans and craftspeople.

While informal training of entrepreneurs continues in Jaipur through master craftspeople and guild systems, there...
are formal educational institutes for degree programmes. The Rajasthan School of Arts was institutionalised by the Government in 1988 to provide Bachelor and Master degrees in visual arts. Indian Institute of Crafts and Design (IICD) in Jaipur is a unique institution that synergises traditional knowledge and craft skills with contemporary needs to evolve methodologies relevant to modern India. It provides undergraduate and postgraduate programmes addressing a range of crafts. It also has special programmes and incentives to encourage children of traditional artists and craftpersons. Institute of Gems and Jewellery provides programmes on Jewellery design. Jawahar Kala Kendra started by the government have allocated spaces to organise short term training programmes in arts and crafts which are used by NGOs to host programmes.

While the World Heritage tag for Jaipur presented an additional commitment of mapping and protecting all crafts streets in the walled city as significant attributes contributing to its Outstanding Universal Value, the Municipal Corporation was already committed to enhancing and upgrading these crafts streets as part of aligning the creative city projects to sustainable planning.

Jaipur Nagar Nigam Heritage for walled city is developing Heritage Walks in specific streets of Jaipur to provide direct access to local craftpersons and their workspace. Chowkri Modikhana Heritage Walk showcasing thatheras (brass utensil craftsmen) and lac bangle making is one such initiative. The walk is being conducted since 2005. Jaipur Municipal Corporation upgraded the walk area in 2014-15 thus improving the living environment for artisans and extended it further under the Smart City program in 2019-20. These works could be monitored through the Heritage Cell of Municipal Corporation to ensure appropriate conservation as per commitment for World Heritage. Furthermore, the Municipal Corporation is committed to enhancing more crafts streets such as the Khazanewalon ka Raasta including havells and houses of stone craftspeople to be undertaken in the next phase of works under Creative City Projects (2021-24).

Besides this, adaptive reuse of historic buildings such as the Rajasthan School of Arts into a Crafts Museum under Smart City Projects is a good example of collective safeguarding of the tangible-intangible or the living heritage of the city.

Developing major crafts streets of Jaipur as special heritage walks to promote direct access to artists and craftspeople in the walled city along with conservation and upgradation of these historic settlements and traditional industries aims to establish Jaipur Crafts City as a role model of sustainability. The project will directly benefit artisans living and working in the area, local residents and visitors to Jaipur. It will enhance the overall living environment of the artisans and will give direct access to sales of crafts products once the heritage walks are promoted through tourism. Upgradation of services in these areas have improved the general living conditions for craftspeople while regular heritage walks by a wide range of visitors provide greater accessibility for direct sales. This when replicated in other crafts streets of Jaipur will greatly enhance socio-economic sustainability for the city.
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India's Urban Heritage Management Conundrum
The Need for Transformative Reforms

The World Heritage Convention aims to protect the most outstanding cultural and natural heritage places on Earth. Countries (States Parties) that have adhered to the World Heritage Convention accept an obligation to manage World Heritage properties on their territory to the highest standards of protection and periodically report on actions taken. Globally, UNESCO has enlisted 1154 sites as “World Heritage Sites”, of which, India has a total of 40 such sites till July 2021, writes Prof. Saswat Bandyopadhyay, Team Leader, World Bank - Cities Alliance Funded, Inclusive Heritage Cities Development Programme, Phase-I, India and Coordinator of Heritage Cities Group, Peer to Peer Exchange Network (PEARL).
The recent nomination of Dholavira as the 40th UNESCO World Heritage Site in India was received with greater enthusiasm and celebration all over the country. Similar enthusiasm was also displayed during the nomination of the Historic city of Ahmedabad in 2017 and the walled city of Jaipur in 2019. However, after the initial euphoria of being inscribed as a “UNESCO World Heritage site”, very few follow up actions are visible on the ground in these front running “world heritage cities” in India.

According to some local news reports, the city of Ahmedabad today lags far behind fulfilling its commitments as a UNESCO World Heritage City. Similar reports are also emanating from the walled city of Jaipur. Like the recent case of Liverpool, both these two cities are glaring at the risk of losing their world heritage status, if no substantial follow up actions are initiated towards managing their heritage assets.

According to the census 2011, India had over 7935 urban settlements, of which 4041 were statutory towns majority of which are endowed with incredibly rich cultural, built and natural heritage assets. However, India in general, and its cities in specific, continue to struggle to manage these assets and continue to lose them at an alarming pace.

Interestingly, India has a long legacy for the protection of heritage assets. The Archaeological Society of India was founded in 1861 with the mandate of “superintending a complete search over the whole country and prepare a systematic record and description of all archaeological and other remains that are unique for their antiquity, historical interests and beauty”.

This was followed by the Indian Treasure Trove Act of 1878, which is still operational and helpful in building its antiquarian wealth. The act pertaining to ancient monuments was enacted in 1904, followed by the Antiquities Export Prohibition Act of 1947. The Ancient Monuments Act was re-enacted as the Ancient Monuments Act and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act of 1958. This was further amended and updated in 2010.

Similarly, item 67 of the union list, item 12 of the state list and item 40 of the concurrent list of the constitution highlight the need for heritage conservation and protection.

While these legislative instruments together were largely successful in safeguarding India’s ancient sites and monuments, however, the legal and financial instruments towards the management of heritage assets in urban areas, have remained quite sketchy.

Over the decades, the very definition of heritage has also undergone fundamental changes from its earlier confinement of tangible monuments to a variety of tangible and intangible elements, located in diverse contexts. The laws creating municipal corporations in India do not specifically mention that the protection of heritage is a subject within the jurisdiction of the municipal corporation. Consequently, municipalities do not consider it their responsibility to safeguard the heritage assets and properties.

When the 74th Constitutional Amendment was passed, a list of 18 functions was enumerated in the 12th Schedule under Article 243W which would devolve to the Urban Local Body. However, there is no mention of “heritage”, except for entry 13, which mentions, “promotion of cultural, educational and aesthetic aspects”.

In response to this regulatory void, some states like Rajasthan Gujarath, Andhra, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Puducherry and municipal corporations like Hyderabad, Ahmedabad and Mumbai have attempted to develop their own context-specific regulatory and institutional frameworks. In 2011, the Town and Country Planning Organisation (TCPO), Government of India, has also launched a Model Heritage Regulations to guide these state-specific initiatives. However, these initiatives have mostly remained sporadic and case-specific.
national-level mainstreaming have not been attempted so far.

In India, the public discourses related to heritage management are largely dominated by Conservation Architects who generally specialise in the conservation of facades, historic buildings, and artefacts. In the present-day context, the subject of urban heritage management demands a complex set of skills and knowledge pertaining to structural engineering, municipal laws, infrastructure technologies, disaster management, urban planning, finance and governance, besides the knowledge of conservation.

So far, the professional education and training of conservation professionals have not been able to respond to these emerging complexities and challenges of urban heritage management in the context of emerging economies like India. Much of the heritage conservation narratives and discourses are drawn from the northern contexts like Europe and America and local theorisation have not developed.

Limited exposure to the issues of climate change, poverty, public systems and governance, infrastructure, combined with the ultracrepidarian attitudes, have led to narrowly focussed discourses, without making any major value addition to the overall urban heritage management paradigm in the country. The other major challenge of heritage management in India is the issue of heritage economics and finance. Conservation and management of heritage assets are resource-intensive. For example, the majority of the 3000 listed heritage buildings in Ahmedabad are under private ownership. A very conservative estimate towards the conservation of these buildings would vary anywhere between Rs 2100-3000 crore. Added to this is the cost of restoration of public spaces, utilities, fire and disaster safety equipment etc. An area of approximately 2.50 sq km of the core precincts (out of the total 5.50 sq km area inscribed) may require investments to the tune of Rs 1000-1200 crore.

There exists a policy vacuum about the role of the society and the state in maintaining these "privately-owned" heritage assets. Although, there have been some sporadic attempts to use land value capturing tools like "Heritage TDRs" to incentivise the private heritage homeowners. However, to date, no credible analysis of how to finance heritage conservation actions at an urban scale is available.

**New Life for Historic Cities-Paradigm Shift in Heritage Management Approach Needed**

Recognising the complexities and pressure associated with the historic cities due to rapid urbanisation, climate change, economic meltdown and growing poverty and inequality, in 2011, UNESCO launched the "historic urban landscape (HUL)" to strike a new balance between the urban development and heritage management.

In its "New Life for Historic Cities", in 2013, this historic urban landscape approach was further explained through the iconic image, called "Layers of the City", where the need to understand the broader urban development and geographic contexts were emphasised:

"Cities are dynamic organisms. There is not a single 'historic' city in the world that has retained its original character: the concept is a moving target, destined to change with society itself. To preserve the urban historic landscape, strategic and dynamic alliances need to be built between various actors in the urban scene, foremost between public authorities that manage the city and developers and entrepreneurs that operate in the city."

The "Layers of the City" clearly highlights the multi-disciplinary and collaborative nature of modern heritage management which intertwines the disciplines of Architecture, Engineering, Technology, Planning, Management, Finance and other related subject areas.

Target 11.4 under SDG 11 calls for strengthening efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage. To achieve the SDG 11.4 targets, India needs a paradigm shift in its approach towards urban heritage management.
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Urban heritage conservation presents unique challenges, especially in the Indian context. Many of our heritage assets are living structures, deeply entwined in the lives, rituals, livelihoods and aspirations of millions of residents and visitors alike. The Dwarkadhish Temple in Dwarka, Gujarat, derives its value from the deep sacred bond that devotees all over the world have with it apart from being a historical architectural marvel of its time, write Manvita Baradi, Director, Urban Management Centre; Anurag Anthony, Chief Technical Officer, Urban Management Centre; and Kaninik Baradi, Strategic Initiatives Officer, Urban Management Centre.
Urban heritage conservation is a balancing act between preservation and development for its diverse stakeholders. Growth, urbanisation and evolving needs of their users are to be perceived as a threat and yet, without these pressures, the structures would languish in disrepair and ignobility. In many parts of the world, local governments serve as anchors for heritage management and this role has been evolving in India as well.

The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11.4 - ‘strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and heritage’ - highlights the importance of sustainable measures to protect and safeguard cultural and heritage assets. Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY), a central sector scheme of the Government of India was launched in June 2015 by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) for 12 heritage cities in India, including Dwarka, Gujarat. The HRIDAY Mission appointed Urban Management Centre to conceptualise, plan, design and handhold Dwarka Municipality to execute heritage and civic development works worth Rs 28 crore in and around the heritage assets of Dwarka.

Although designed with a noble mission, HRIDAY faced several challenges in its sustainability. Some of which includes:

Disproportionate assets transferred to the municipality

At present, the Dwarka Municipality does not have the financial capacity to operate and maintain the assets. Their annual budget was around Rs 31.59 crore or Rs 7,890 per capita in the year 2015-16. The per capita budget for the resident population is comparable to Ahmedabad at around Rs 7,500 per capita. However, with a floating population 100 times the resident population in Dwarka, their budget seems dwarfed. Upon completion of the New Gomti Ghat and Samudra Narayan Beachfront Development in 2015, the Dwarka Municipality incurred Rs 6 lakh energy bill in its first month. The civic body could not afford such expense and hence switched off the lights thereafter. If operated regularly, only the street lighting bill for these projects would cost the municipality nearly 13 per cent of their own income. Repair, maintenance and housekeeping costs of all the assets worth Rs 120 crore would be at least Rs 6 crore or 2/3rd of the annual income of the civic body.

No sustainable financing of O&M expenses

The Municipality’s annual income from their own sources (tax and non-tax based) is less than 30 per cent of their total budget while the rest comprises state government grants. With such high dependency on the state government grants, sustainable operations and management of civic and developmental projects is questionable. As per the Service Level Benchmarks (SLB), 2016 for water and sanitation, the cost recovery in solid waste management was only nine per cent.

Lack of municipal technical capacity

A staffing assessment reveals that the Dwarka Municipality is working with just half of the sanctioned posts. With the restriction on fresh recruitments imposed by the state government and poor financial health for outsourcing, the civic body finds it challenging to hire facilities management agencies for operations and management of the projects.

The Dwarka Municipality could also levy entry fees for vehicles, similar to the environmental/tourism/pollution fee charged by places like Mount Abu, Mahabaleshwar and Matheran.
Lack of political will to charge for services

The municipality faces constant opposition from their elected officials against levying of user charges for facilities, including the Sudama Setu, a footbridge across the Gomti River built on public-private partnership (PPP). The lack of political will towards sustainable operations and management is adding to the neglect of these assets.

With these challenges, the recently created assets by the HRIDAY Mission face a grim future with only 20 per cent of the operations and management requirements being fulfilled of the revenue sources generated by the HRIDAY projects.

To strengthen the sustainability of operations and management, we recommend the following:

**Revenue enhancement:** The Dwarka Municipality must rationalise their taxes, tariffs, rentals and user charges on its services to improve the cost recovery. In addition, it should create an inventory and monetise its assets including land holdings, vending spaces, advertising spaces, parking and introduce a development fee on the hospitality services including transport, hotels and restaurants. Dwarka Municipality operates a ‘Dwarka/ Bet Dwarka Darshan Bus Service’ successfully and claims it to be sustainable, if not profitable.

**Establish SPVs for special projects:**

The local administration could set up a special purpose vehicle (SPV) for operations and management of HRIDAY and other recently completed projects in Dwarka.

Lessons from such examples may be adopted in other paid services to improve its financial sustainability. The Dwarka Municipality could also levy entry fees for vehicles, similar to the environmental/tourism/pollution fee charged by places like Mount Abu, Mahabaleshwar and Matheran.

**Revolving fund:**

The MoHUA may also create a revolving fund to enable borrowing by HRIDAY cities for hosting special events/festivals/fairs which may generate additional income for the municipalities. The borrowing may be supported/supplemented by respective state tourism departments.

**Convergence with tourism and transport departments:**

The Tourism Department of Gujarat may contribute a share of the revenue towards the operation and management of assets proportionate to the visitors to tourist destinations such as Dwarka. Likewise, the Gujarat State Road Transportation Corporation (GSRTC) may also contribute a share of their revenue from the bus fares to and from Dwarka for local development.

**Enhancing urban heritage management capacity:**

The local administration must build the capacity of their staff in urban heritage management. At present, continued learning options in heritage management are limited to conventional master's degrees in conservation. The Urban College offers a course in heritage management focusing on the local government's needs to address these specific challenges.

Dwarka Municipality must conduct a detailed feasibility study to assess the enforceability and fix taxes, tariffs, fees and charges for each of the above recommendations. Structural reforms like these may help to protect and safeguard the world's culture and heritage in alignment with SDG 11.4.
Heritage Concerns & Cultural Ethos of a City

Architectural development can change the cultural scene of any landscape even if the geographical context remains the same, hence it is important to understand the cultural value of a place. Culture is a non-tangible entity with no single methodology to affect its continuity. The ambience of a historic area to some degree has culture generating properties. An effective method would therefore be to have a comprehensive inventory of the significant architectural features of an area. Whatever vicissitudes the passage of time may bring to a site, a complete and accurate heritage record permits the survival of the site meaning forever, writes Vipul B Varshney.

Large-scale migration and big investments in the infrastructure with a political heat suddenly transported this oriental town of Lucknow to a city of national importance with train and air links to other parts of the country. The expansion was so fast and enormous that the original character and face got lost and marginalised in the process. The need to pursue development opportunities with which to sustain the local economy at optimum levels eclipsed the urgency of heritage concerns. In some cases, the heritage had to bow out of existence to literally pave the way for the modern. Clearing of the old has not eased the movement of the traffic, on the contrary, it has sealed the option to explore alternative ways of dealing with it. Kaiserbagh – the once palace precinct which was surgically cut open by the British after the first war of Independence but had vastitude of heritage buildings lost its grace and elegance in this race of development lately.

The Two-Layered Policy of Independent India

Protection of national-level monuments by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and the state level monuments by the State Archaeology Department is proving to be inadequate with a large-scale renewal of the inner cities that have taken place in the recent past. The loss of heritage fabric of our cities is severely damaged and unless some drastic action is taken immediately we may not have much to conserve. Although legally the position has not altered much, yet the public and administration’s response

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towards the issues of heritage has softened and the urgency of the situation is rapidly dawning upon them. The environment in favour of conservation is much more favourable today than ever before.

In this situation, INTACH with its over 40 years of experience has a vital role to play. It is the largest single body outside the government with technical, emotional and managerial capacities to suggest solutions to tackle heritage issues. What is most important is that it has a membership and people who have heritage concerns in mind can join the organisation. This way it represents the general public who expect it to be more effective in the field of heritage conservation.

**Planning Initiatives**

One of the most important early steps in any conservation project is the preparation of an as-found record. Heritage recording may be carried out to many levels of detail and information and may employ a broad range of techniques. The determination of appropriate levels and methodologies requires a clear understanding of recording needs within the agency or individual authorising the work. INTACH has been currently preparing a national register of heritage buildings and monuments in the country and under this program listing of several cities and towns has been completed. In Lucknow, heritage listing was done in 1997 and then again in 2015 with a better understanding of the technique, level and methodology. This created an authentic record of not only the existence of such monuments at a particular time but also the status and loss of the heritage monuments over the years. There is, however, a need to develop and refine the recording process with inventory linkages to some of the physical and cultural attributes which establish the city's character. Therefore aerial mapping carried out by using stereophotogrammetric cameras to establish three-dimensional plots to go with the listing, which hand-records the document and notes down the features, materials and conditions, would raise the level of inventory to a higher plane and increase the chances of its incorporation in the development plan documents.

The restoration and redevelopment of Chattar Manzil Palace complex into a City Cultural centre where amenities from a food court to arts and crafts bazaar – Meena Bazaar, museum, cultural interpretation centre and to add a Boat trail on River Gomti is proposed by INTACH Lucknow Chapter and is underway. It would also place the monuments in their larger context and enlarge the conservation vision beyond monuments to streetscapes, areas and regions. Placing the historical research, which the listing is, in its geographical realm would root it better in the development planning framework and the chances of its incorporation in large reality would be improved.

**Public Participation Initiatives**

It has to be kept in mind that the historic areas have an ambience that generates culture and sociological patterns. Ultimately, it is the continuity of these fragile cultural and sociological patterns that conservation is all about. Most of the old cities of India such as Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Indore, etc. have areas (usually bullion markets or sarafa bazaars) that get converted into eating joints in the evening. Myths associated with the culinary specialities such as the exact quantities made by so-and-so, or the fifth generation of such-and-such recipe etc. attract customers to these joints.

At Lucknow's Chowk, especially Hussainabad - the Moharram
processions have a special meaning to the people and of course Imambaras. The matams and the jaloos with sozkwani drown this city part in total gloom whereas, at Khirniwala Maidan in Bhopal, people get together to play chess every evening. Sometimes there are twenty to twenty-five chess boards placed along a ledge in an evening. People come great distances on their scooters to participate. The popularity of the event can be seen from the graffiti on the wall that warns chess players to end their game before twelve.

Heritage areas are also decaying areas and have been considered as slums in the planning documents. This may be because the inner cities that house most of our heritage have a human scale and treat with sympathy the not-so-abled. The meandering narrow streets provide corners of shelter to the tired and the weak. Socially disabled and discards often seek shelter in the decaying body of the old structures.

The concept of the BID is based on the lines of areas like Times Square in New York, where local businesses get together to assist the government in cleaning up their area, improving public facilities, installing street furniture, creating better security and thereby enhancing their own neighbourhood. This model could be quite successful in Indian cities, given the limitations of the municipal agencies in our country. The restoration and redevelopment of a business district of Hazratganj in 2011 in Lucknow is one of the finest examples of public participation.

Legal Initiatives

The case of encroachment brings to the fore the importance of a legal framework for the protection of the heritage buildings and areas that are not in the possession of the government. What is also required is the preparation of development plans for heritage areas, buildings and precincts by bodies other than the government. The concepts like heritage Zones, Archaeological Parks and others may have to be deliberated upon with the legal framework in mind. Experience of Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Pondicherry, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad etc. can provide frames of reference for other towns and cities to work out their specific cases.
Heritage-led Urban Revitalisation in India: An Integrated Approach

India has experienced fast urbanisation since its independence. Urbanisation is best defined as ‘messy’ due to the unplanned, spontaneous growth and the resulting city sprawl. Very few greenfield planned cities have been developed in the post-independence era and there has been unrelenting population pressure on the existing cities. This has resulted in urban decay, exacerbated due to less than adequate response to the demand for urban services, writes Dhiraj Ajay Suri, Senior Adviser - Inclusive Development, National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA).

Indian cities are also characterised by historic city core areas with dense populations but also a high concentration of the city’s heritage assets. Urban heritage in India includes tangible assets such as manmade heritage structures and natural landscape, and intangible assets such as traditional crafts and practices. The urban heritage not only provides a distinct identity to the city but has also provided critical services, such as housing and water supply, for example, the historic step-wells and ponds.

Varanasi best exemplifies the relevance of heritage assets in core dense settlements. Historically, the city had over 100 ponds which not only provided water for household use and open spaces in the neighbourhoods but also formed the flood management system as these were interlinked and connected to the Ganges.

The unplanned expansion of Indian cities in the face of migration-led fast urbanisation has resulted in chaotic construction to accommodate the growing population with little concern for the significance of historic areas and heritage assets for the city’s character formation and evolution. There is a conflict in historic city cores between retaining the city-defining heritage and meeting the habitat needs of the growing population. The ponds in Varanasi, for example, have been lost over the years to the demands of urbanisation. The city core areas historically had mixed land use – serving as the economic hub and also housing the city’s elite class. Over the years, these areas have become commercial hubs with reverse gentrification – the elite moved out to better planned residential neighbourhoods in the city and the poor migrants moved in due to low rentals of the dilapidated buildings and

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proximity to employment opportunities.

Addressing the Challenge – Integrating Urban Heritage Management with City Development

The approach to preserving the heritage-defined city identity may be to move from the exclusive focus on conservation and preservation of heritage structures to the inclusive approach to use the rich heritage legacy for contemporary social, ecological and economic development in cities. In effect, it would mean an expansion of the monument-centric approach to cover historic precincts and improve the urban services to the benefit of the communities (local area development); use the tangible and intangible assets to catalyse the local economic development; and, stronger linkage of heritage-based economic enterprises with the city value chain. The endeavour should be to promote an integrated rather than sectoral approach for the provision of critical infrastructure and services in historic cores and integration of these areas and the heritage in the broader city-wide socio-economic and physical development. The approach will also contribute to the reduction in urban poverty since historic areas in many cities have a large concentration of the urban poor. The cities need to be equipped with the requisite knowledge, application tools and skillsets for integrating cultural heritage management with city development.

There is the need to adopt a people-centric, area-based approach to heritage conservation and city development “inclusive urban renewal”, which places heritage valuation and conservation at the core of city-wide development. The aim should be to unlock the assets of the local communities for improved living standards and socio-economic opportunities for poor residents while promoting a culturally dynamic growth pattern at the city level and stewarding its unique heritage.

The urban heritage not only provides a distinct identity to the city but has also provided critical services, such as housing and water supply, for example, the historic step-wells and ponds.

The integrated approach requires that the national policymakers, state governments, urban local bodies and sector professionals in India are equipped with knowledge on good practices; there are appropriate institutional arrangements in cities; and, financial and management incentives are designed to enable them to revisit their development strategies and manage their unique heritage as a vital element of inclusive city development and investments.

An institutional set-up, at the city level, needs to be designed and implanted for multi-stakeholder engagement and integration of cultural heritage management with city development and local economic development. The communities in the cities need to be mobilised and engaged with other stakeholders in the valuation and profiling of city heritage assets, preparation of city heritage management plan and an investment plan for the management of prioritised heritage assets and local economic development.

The Integrated Approach - Expected Outcomes

- Adoption of an integrated heritage management and city development approach will enable cities to better manage urbanisation and distribute its benefits by valuing and leveraging their existing heritage assets.
- The integrated approach will contribute to urban revitalisation while being sensitive to the preservation of city heritage by improving urban services for the communities living in the historic precincts.
- Easy access to information and appropriate tools with enhanced capacities will help cities to effectively utilise funds earmarked for “urban renewal” – earlier under JNURM and currently under the Smart Cities Mission of the national government.

Chand Baori in Abhaneri, a small village near Jaipur, Rajasthan
With Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG 11), countries have pledged to “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”. Within this goal, target 11.4 aims to “strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage” with the objective of making cities and human settlements more sustainable, economically vibrant and more climate-resilient, writes Manu Bhatnagar, Principal Director, Natural Heritage Division, Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH).
The UNESCO Institute of Statistics defines cultural and natural heritage, pertinent to SDG 11.4, as - Cultural heritage includes artefacts, monuments, a group of buildings and sites, museums that have a diversity of values including symbolic, historic, artistic, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological, scientific and social significance. It includes tangible heritage (movable, immobile and underwater), intangible heritage (ICH) embedded into cultural and natural heritage artefacts, sites or monuments. The definition excludes ICH related to other cultural domains such as festivals, celebrations, etc. It covers industrial heritage and cave paintings.

Natural heritage refers to natural features, geological and physiographical formations and delineated areas that constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants and natural sites of value from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty. It includes private and publically protected natural areas, zoos, aquaria and botanical gardens, natural habitat, marine ecosystems, sanctuaries, reservoirs, etc.

Conservation of cultural heritage refers to the measures taken to extend the life of cultural heritage while strengthening transmissions of its significant heritage messages and values. In the domain of cultural property, the aim of conservation is to maintain the physical and cultural characteristics of the object to ensure that its value is not diminished and that it will outlive our limited time span.

Conservation of natural heritage refers to the protection, care, management and maintenance of ecosystems, habitats, wildlife species and populations, within or outside of their natural environments in order to safeguard the natural conditions for their long-term permanence.

This article addresses SDG 11.4 in relation to urban areas with regard to built and natural heritage only. Going further, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) developed the Indicator 11.4.1 which is defined as the “total per capita expenditure on the preservation, protection and conservation of all cultural and natural heritage, by the source of funding (public, private), type of heritage (cultural, natural) and level of government (national, regional, and local/municipal).” This indicator is a proxy to measure the target and monitor the changes over the years.

A perusal of the Central Government Budget [2019-20] shows that the allocations to the Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change [MoEF&CC] stand at a paltry 0.001 per cent each out of which the bulk amount is earmarked for revenue expenditure and little is left for plan expenditure. Examining the annual budget of a major north Indian state for the same year the Culture department’s budget is a mere Rs 14 crore which is less than a tiny fraction of 1 per cent and for environment and forests stands at a mere 0.0003 per cent mostly allocated to revenue expenditure. The private sector allocation could not be ascertained but surely, presently, cannot be more than peanuts. Thus, the per capita expenditure towards SDG 11.4 is exceedingly minuscule.

India, with more than 8000 urban settlements, is on an urbanisation spree. The man to land ratio in India is 460 persons per sq.km.[2019] whereas the USA with just 36 persons per sq km or France with 120 persons per sq km do not face similar pressures on their cultural and natural
properties. Moreover, India is at an early stage of infrastructure and housing development which is resulting in massive urban expansion and re-densification which in turn is putting built and natural heritage in urbanisms and their peripheries under enormous pressure.

A further challenge is the order of priorities amongst administrators, public representatives and the business community as well as the awareness of heritage in the public mind space. There is a feeling amongst the former that heritage premises and river floodplains are inefficient utilisation of precious urban space, landforms should be levelled for easy absorption in the urban matrix and that forests can be compensated for in other locations. The public is far too engrossed in their daily struggles to be sensitive to heritage. An aspiring middle class often goes in for crass commercialisation of heritage properties whereas land hunger drives encroachment of water bodies, riparian zones and ingress into forests.

The last challenge is both the weak institutional and regulatory framework combined with a reluctance in enforcement. While there are well-articulated laws for the protection of natural heritage the laws regarding the protection of built heritage do not extend to premises beyond notified monuments. The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 2010 was enacted by the government to stop the rampant encroachment and construction around monuments and sites of archaeological importance. However, this law has been sought to be diluted and it is noted that beyond metropolises there is little awareness of this law which is mainly honoured in the breach. Laws/Regulations for heritage protection are seen as hurdles in development.

How can these daunting challenges be overcome? There are no silver bullets or short term solutions. However, the following policy directions could have positive outcomes.

Enhancing the budget outlays of central and state governments for culture and environment to substantive levels, say even 0.5 per cent of the overall budget, with a judicious division between revenue and plan expenditure, and with significant allocations for reorientation of stakeholders, can go a long way in mainstreaming of heritage as an engine of development. The monetisation of ecosystem services can also alter the cost-benefit ratios in favour of protecting natural heritage. A similar tool to monetise the abstract values of built heritage can change decisions in favour of built heritage.

Generating awareness of the economic value of built heritage in terms of tourism, generating pride in the urban character and historical identity are essential building blocks in protecting and conserving heritage. Similarly, our administrators, public and political representatives even during training/early stages of a career as also in the public at large must be sensitised to the benefits of nurturing natural heritage by way of recognizing ecosystem services, health and recreation and psychological benefits. Awareness of benefits, particularly economic, is the first step towards safeguarding heritage.

Embedding conservationists and ecologists in planning departments, urban local bodies and relevant committees is another vital step that should help in mainstreaming concerns for heritage in the decision-making processes.

Development pressures on heritage need to be neutralised by a combination of imaginative planning, economic incentives such as transfer of development rights, a massive effort to list/document heritage and vigorously enforce heritage protection regulations/laws.

There is a long road ahead but as is famously said ‘the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.’
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The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were conceived at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 (Rio de Janeiro). The objective was to formulate a set of universal goals that meet the urgent environmental, political and economic challenges facing our world, writes Junhi HAN, Chief, Culture Sector, UNESCO New Delhi.
intensified since the 1990s on all levels of international stakeholders. However, it would be important to underline that the very idea of the role of culture in sustainable development was already there in 60-70s, the “age of decolonisation”.

René Maheu, the then Director-General of UNESCO at a Conference in Venice, highlighted, “The idea of development has, in fact, gradually become broader, deeper, and more varied so that going beyond the purely economic aspects of improving man’s lot, it now also embraces the so-called social aspects... Man is the means and the end of development.” In the concept of development, the centre of gravity thus began to shift from the economic to the social, and mental well-being of individuals.

A decade later, UNESCO member countries, in the intergovernmental UNESCO Conference on Culture in 1982, adopted the “Mexico Declaration”, one of the most important landmark documents in culture since the end of the Second World War which recognises the role of culture as a driving force for sustainable development. The Declaration affirmed that “Man is the origin and the goal of development, it is vital to humanise development, the ultimate goal of which is the individual in his dignity as a human being and his responsibility to society. Development implies for every individual and every people access to information and opportunities to learn and to communicate with others.”

The acknowledgement of the role of culture and cultural heritage for Sustainable Development in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 (Rio De Janeiro) was indeed the result of several decades’ efforts deployed by the international community, notably UNESCO.

**World Heritage Convention And Sustainable Development**

The linkages between heritage protection and development have deep roots in the World Heritage Convention, where the concept of heritage protection is not only based on the inseparability of culture and nature but is firmly integrated with comprehensive development planning which is enshrined together in this international legislation.

The World Heritage Convention was one of a group of environmental treaties adopted after the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm, Sweden. The Stockholm Conference, which for the first time placed environmental concerns on the international agenda, brought a global focus to the understanding that environment and economic
importance in the 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**Urban Heritage Conservation**

Urban Heritage, including its tangible and intangible elements, is a key social, cultural and economic asset for cities. It constitutes a complex and dynamic layering of heritage meaning and values, created, interpreted by successive generations in the past. In adopting the Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations Member States committed to 'make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable' (SDG 11). One of the concrete actions to achieve SDG 11 is to safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage and this includes naturally historic towns, embedded of their intangible and tangible heritage which are assets of every historic town bridging local communities into economic, social and environmental dimensions of development.

The loss of cultural heritage, tangible & intangible, provided by urban heritage can therefore undermine the community’s potential to share benefits of development among its members.

By bringing together the conservation of cultural and natural heritage under a single legal instrument, the World Heritage Convention pioneered some of the thinking which during the later 1970s and 1980s evolved to become the core of the concept of sustainable development, first articulated in the report of the Bruntland Commission Our Common Future (1987) and later elaborated in Agenda 21 of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 20 years after the Stockholm Conference and more recently in the outcome document "the Future We Want to Live" adopted in the UN Conference in Rio De Janeiro in 2012, which served the basis of the SDG 2030.

The importance of the nomination process lies not only in ensuring the adequate protection and management of potential World Heritage Sites but for the process to serve as a means to encourage the adoption of comprehensive and integrated policies and actions to conserve and manage other sites of national, regional or local importance. States Parties are encouraged to involve the local communities as well as all ministries within the central government in the nomination process. At all levels of authority, the World Heritage Convention can and should be used as a tool for linking heritage protection and development, in addition to socio-economic benefits to be received from tourism perspectives for local communities.

**Policy Document On World Heritage And Sustainable Development (2015)**

In 2015, the General Assembly World Heritage Convention adopted a policy document "POLICY FOR THE INTEGRATION OF A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE INTO THE PROCESSES OF THE WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION".

The World Heritage Committee considered that the role of World Heritage properties, as a guarantee of sustainable development needed to be strengthened and their full potential to contribute to sustainable development needed to be harnessed. To this end, the Committee advises the States Parties to consider in their implementation of the Convention the three dimensions of sustainable development, namely environmental sustainability, inclusive social development and inclusive economic development, together with the fostering of peace and security. These reflect the concern for "planet, people, prosperity and peace", identified as areas of critical
capacity to accommodate contemporary demands while keeping the attributes that confer its heritage values.

Perhaps one of the most viable urban policies and valid conservation strategies that can balance in harmony urban heritage conservation with development would be to promote the adaptive rehabilitation of heritage monuments for contemporary uses. The assets of this approach are to allow the historic buildings and urban heritage to retain a social and cultural memory of cities through sound adaptive reuse of its material urban heritage. The current trend: monument-based, and government-financed approach that restricts the use of protected properties and relies on public funds cannot continue to be viable at the long term level in dealing with the vast urban heritage of most communities and of sustaining conservation efforts.

It is essential for cities to engage in debate about their heritage, identify its multiple layers of values as well as the threats to its preservation, and strengthen the value of its contributions to sustainable development, as suggested by the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape. To this end, the regulations affecting the use of tangible heritage must progress from preventing changes to its attributes and uses towards promoting the sensible adaptive rehabilitation of the urban heritage to satisfy contemporary requirements. Private owners of monuments and buildings should be provided with some incentives such as tax-reduction when they undertake either conservation/restoration or re-adaptive use of their historic houses/buildings which is already in practice in many European countries.

The re-adaptive use of historic monuments also greatly contributes to environmental issues. Currently, the construction industry is one of the most polluting industries in the world and the construction of new buildings and infrastructure development are today the biggest contributors to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Indeed, embodied energy of conventional construction materials such as cement or energy required throughout a building cycle to extract, process, transport, assemble, maintain, repair, demolish and dispose of a building – makes the construction sector the most energy-intensive of the global economy. It represents over 35 per cent of global energy consumption and accounts for 40 per cent of global CO2 emissions. Most countries still use massively concrete because it is the cheapest material in construction but concrete makes the planet sick.

So conserving historic buildings and using them by maximising their re-adaptive use is not only important because it is part of our history and feed us with cultural identity but also the first ecological choice for sustainable development and for the future of cities.

Indian cities face unprecedented urbanisation and will have to absorb 416 million more inhabitants into urban areas by 2050. This may result in rapid and uncontrolled infrastructure development which often takes place at the expense of natural ecosystems and citizens’ wellbeing.

India is one of the richest countries in the world in terms of built heritage and a great number of historic centres still remain preserved offering a great opportunity for India’s historic cities to unlock the potential of their urban heritage for sustainable development.

In addition, India is the sixth most vulnerable country to climate changes in the world as per the risk index of COP 23. Core areas of historic cities of India are also often a concentration of poverty. 21 major Indian cities are going to run out of groundwater soon if not already run out. Bangalore and Chennai have already lost around 80 per cent of their water bodies over the last 40 years. Currently, most of European cities biggest concern is how to make their cities greener and more resilient.

Isn’t it high time that Indian authorities should brainstorm collectively on an environment-friendly urban development strategy, making its cities more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. According to a 2010 Report, over 70 per cent of the infrastructure that will exist by 2030 in India is yet to be built which means there is an urgent need to propose a new paradigm to make urbanisation sustainable, particularly in line with the SDG 11.4.

India is one of the richest countries in the world in terms of built heritage and a great number of historic centres still remain preserved offering a great opportunity for India’s historic cities to unlock the potential of their urban heritage for sustainable development. Indian historic towns will benefit hugely by putting urban heritage in its proper place as a development asset; time for urban heritage to become a fully integrated component of the sustainable development of cities.
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