

# Community Participation in Cultural Heritage Management

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**Abstract**—Cultural heritage of any country is the legacy that people carries with themselves. Community which is related to any cultural heritage in any form be in tangible or intangible is a direct stakeholder in the up keeping of the heritage. Management of our built heritage, which is the archeological monuments, historical sites or town, is not only Government job, but it is the responsibility of the local people who are directly or indirectly dependent on that. Managing a heritage property is a mammoth task in terms of technical resources, monetary resources or manpower resources. Also the monuments which are far from the city or does not have enough potential to generate revenues on its own, are often the most neglected monuments. It is difficult to raise fund or to get manpower to maintain these far reaching properties. Often, if any heritage building is owned by a private owner, the owner is unable to maintain the property alone. To manage a heritage property by community participation, the locals need to be educated of the values, the technicalities and also need to be empowered to take the onus of the heritage. A well maintained heritage property fetches more revenue. It helps to increase the job opportunity and livelihood among the local people by developing infrastructure and business around the monuments.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Cultural heritage of any nation is of utmost importance for its people. Without a very strong cultural past a country cannot move forward. The intangible heritage of a nation is as important as its tangible heritage. Built heritage which consists of monuments, shrines, historic cities and gardens, or any other place which can be tracked back in the history possess great importance for its archeological, historical, cultural and technological importance.

Maintaining a heritage property is a mammoth task and often taken up by government or by NGOs. Conserving heritage is more of a social work rather than any revenue generating task. Therefore it is difficult to treat, manage or finance any heritage property in traditional manner. Maintenance of heritage property requires huge money whereas the yield is not that promising. Therefore, heritage properties often fail to attract private investment and also they fail to become self sustaining.

The life and livelihood of people often depend a great lot on their surroundings, in which heritage properties or the built heritage is also of great importance. A heritage property, when maintained and marketed properly, often becomes a great source of cultural tourism. Throughout the world, heritage

tourism is ever increasing and generating good revenues. Built heritage have enough potential to attract national and international tourist and revenue. The ever increasing tourism industry creates enormous impact on the life and livelihood of local people as well. It is the duty and responsibility of local community to protect, conserve and operate heritage monuments in a sustainable manner so that it becomes major source of their living and simultaneously built heritage becomes self sustaining.

## 2. THREATS TO THE BUILT HERITAGE

Before we talk about the protection and management of heritage property, it is important to know, why the required are and why managing built heritage is becoming critical. Built heritage are, at large, under threat from different sources. Sometimes the source is natural sometimes manmade.

- i) Natural / environmental sources of threats: Monuments are under constant threat of rapid change in environmental condition, natural calamities like earth quake (ex: Bhuj in Gujarat), Flood, natural fire, environmental pollution, solar radiation, biological growth, natural wear and tear etc.
- ii) Man made threat: Manmade threats are of different kinds. The most common of them is vandalism, which is, sometimes the result of communal or social difference. Then there is uncontrolled urban sprawl and inappropriate development around the monuments, unplanned tourism to monuments site etc adding to the problem.
- iii) Threat from inappropriate restoration: Often the restoration process is not in coincidence with the need to the structure. Often the solution provided to the run down structures are not appropriate either architecturally or structurally. Lack of proper technology, expertise or due diligence are the main reasons behind it.
- iv) Lack of education and awareness: Sometimes people living in or around of any heritage monument for several generations are unaware of the value of the monuments. Lack of education and awareness regarding the importance of the heritage monuments often results in the misuse of the property.
- v) Financial Threat: As stated earlier, managing heritage property is a huge task. It requires the amount of money which the owner of the property unable to bear. Often

there is shortage of inflow of money even with the Government run projects. In most of the cases, lack of maintenance, improper marketing strategy, distance from the urban centre etc. bar a monument to generate sufficient revenue and become self sustaining.

### 3. PROTECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE : HUMAN RIGHT

Human rights are based on the fundamental ideas, which human beings are born with equal dignity and rights. Human beings have, therefore, equal rights and freedom to fully develop and enhance their intelligence and life with the proper use of their natural and cultural heritage. Article 51A in The Constitution of India 1949, describes Fundamental duties which every Indian citizen should abide by. It mentions to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture along with the protection and improvement of the natural heritage. Looking back in history we can find that the process of conservation started in India when Emperor Ashoka took initiative to conserve wild life which dated in 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. Then in 14<sup>th</sup> century AD, Feroz Shah Tughlaq ordered to protect ancient buildings. In 1863, during the British rule, Act XX was passed to authorize the Government to "Prevent injury to and preserve buildings remarkable for their historical and architectural value". "The Ancient Monuments Preservation Act," was passed in 1904 to provide effective preservation of monuments.<sup>1</sup> We, as Indian citizen, are duty bound to protect and conserve the natural and cultural heritage of India. Although the duty has been distributed between the union and state Government, but the urban local bodies, NGOs, professionals like urban and town planners, conservationist, architects and artists are always should be at the disposal for the for the conservation work. It is equally important to train and educate local community for the conservation and management work of the built heritage for the general growth of the society.

### 4. HERITAGE VALUES

Conservation of heritage properties helps not only in elevate educational and cultural values but also in economic up gradation.

- i) **Educational Values of Heritage:** The educational values associated with cultural heritage are manifold. Heritage monuments are important and informative to the students and academicians of history, archeology, architecture, civil engineering, town planners etc. It also carries traditional, social, cultural, historical, spiritual values with it.
- ii) **Local and universal values:** The cultural heritage sites are often a immense source of local values. Local communities feel identified with the monuments they live

in and around. It possesses great values to the local life and livelihood. It behaves sometimes as their place of worship, sometimes a place for their livelihood. Cultural heritage is in a way an integral part of the lives of the indigenous people. At the same time it carries with it the universal values.

- iii) **Economic values of heritage:** Heritage properties, when maintained and marketed professionally become a source of economic growth for the local community. Maintaining heritage site calls for onsite and offsite infrastructural developments like road and mass transit network, water supply, sanitation, electricity, waste water and solid waste disposal etc. Promoting a cultural heritage in turn promotes the local art and crafts, generates earning through promotional events, generates business of different scales like hotels, motels, restaurant etc.

### 5. CULTURAL HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Tourism is a growing industry, not only in India but also at international level. All over the world, cultural tourism holds a very prominent place in the tourism industry. India, being rich in cultural heritage, has very bright opportunity in terms of cultural tourism growth. The tourists in cultural tourism sector are mainly students of different cultural fields or cultural enthusiasts, researchers etc. Therefore the chances of repetition of their tour are more and also the duration of their stay. Repetitive tourists and longer stay have long term effect on the life, livelihood and culture of the local community. Also the revenue generation from the cultural tourism is more with repetitive tourists and from their longer stay. With the onset of the growth of the tourism industry, the benefits are twofold. First, with the increase in the footfall of tourist, there is increased need for the world class infrastructure like road and railway connectivity, heritage railways, hill railways, waterway, hotels etc. In 'National Tourism Policy, 2002' India, betterment of infrastructure was one the strategies for growth in tourism. Also with the increased revenue generation, the maintenance of the heritage property is more frequent and a chance of a monument becoming ruined is lessened. Also with the increased tourism, the most benefitted is the local community through the increased revenue generation. Tourism helps in the growth of small and medium scale business like hotels and restaurant, local handicraft etc. it helps in great deal to promote local art and culture. Heritage hotels and home stays are widely in use nowadays, which allows local community to be benefitted and also the heritage property becomes self sustaining.

### 6. ADAPTIVE RE USE: A WAY TO SUSTAINABLE HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

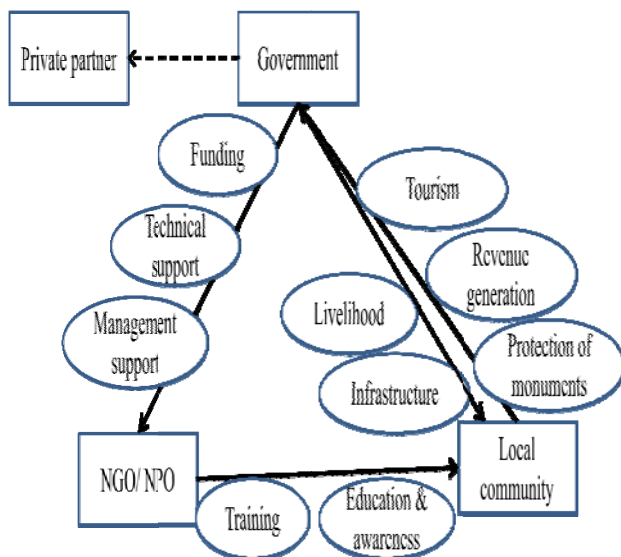
Adaptation or Adaptive Reuse means modifying a part of the monument, or a place inside or outside it, to suit it to a

<sup>1</sup> Handbook of conservation of Heritage Buildings, Directorate, CPWD, July 2013

compatible use, involving no loss of cultural heritage value.<sup>2</sup> As mentioned in the draft of “National Conservation Policy for Monuments, Archaeological Sites and Remains Protected by Archaeological Survey of India (May, 2013)” a sympathetic reuse can be taken for the ancillary portion of the monuments for use as ASI’s field offices, interpretation centres, inspection rooms, storage space, public amenities, etc. by a systematic and controlled adaptive reuse the economic and functional life of the building increases. But at the same time there is threat of the uncontrolled reuse of the buildings with the historical, archaeological and architectural importance. Uncontrolled use of heritage properties or uncontrolled tourism not only will destroy the importance of the building but also will ruin the character of the city as a whole.

## 7. ROLE OF GOVERNMENT, NGOS AND LOCAL COMMUNITY IN PROTECTING CULTURAL HERITAGE

Managing cultural heritage is a public or Government affair apparently. There are several nonprofit organizations as well who champions the cause of the heritage management. Local community could be the third party in heritage management.



Source: Author

**Fig. 1: A three party collaboration in heritage management**

To sum the community participation for heritage management can be listed down as below:

- i) Awareness and education provided by NGOs or government to the local community
- ii) Training to be provided to the local community so that they can take part in the conservation process

- iii) Local community to become identified with their cultural heritage and legacy
- iv) Empowerment by providing job opportunity
- v) Enhancement of the life and livelihood of the local community, so that they provide protection to the heritage instead of vandalizing them.
- vi) Growth of controlled heritage/ cultural tourism at national and international level, which generates opportunity for local business
- vii) Enhanced infrastructure service provided to the city level and on site, which in turn enhance the living condition for the local community.
- viii) Provision for the adaptive reuse of the heritage property for sustainable revenue generation

Government may involve private parties to get the expertise in technical, marketing, managerial or financing purposes. There could be a predefined structure for the PPP model to operate in heritage management. Government may involve NGOs for to train, educate and generate awareness among the local community.

## 8. CONCLUSION

Often the property which is near to city or in the heart of the city is very easy to be marketed and able to generate revenue on its own. Challenges come with the lesser known heritage, in rural set up where the basic infrastructures are not properly provided. The monuments are poorly protected and often susceptible to vandalism and threat in terms of uncontrolled sprawl, reuse etc. People are less aware of their own cultural legacy. The Government fund also not sufficient for these kinds of properties as they generate very less revenue and the cost for maintenance is huge. They fail to attract tourist also as there is shortage of good connectivity and other physical infrastructure like roads, hotels, electricity etc. Utmost care is required for these properties and Government to involve more NGOs to train and educate local community for the protection and operation of the property. Involvement of private partners is required more for the marketing of these far reaching properties, as good marketing can fetch more revenue through tourism and bring about an up gradation in living of the local community. World class infrastructure development and good connectivity will attract more tourists and in turn the heritage property becomes self sustaining and the community which is dependent on it gets immense benefit.

## REFERENCE

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