

Course Name: An Introduction To Urban Ecological Heritage: Theories and Applications

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Urban Heritage - The Indian Context

Urban Heritage, the Indian Context. In this presentation, I will be covering history of the historic cities of India and then talk about how nature culture protection had been part of our ancient efforts and since days of antiquity natural and cultural protection had been one of the core tenets and principles so far as the Indian society is concerned. Then I would be talking about some organizations, initiatives and interventions that were crafted during the colonial period when India was under the British rule. After this we will learn that how heritage for several decades remained you know something which really talked about the preservation and safeguarding of the monuments or the relics of past of history, but then there we can see a shift from this monument centric approach to efforts, to preserve palimpsests and presents. So, we see that there has been an expansion and elaboration of the concept of heritage and also conservation from mere protection to rejuvenation, renewal and regeneration. So, let us start from the history of the historic cities.

So, from this, from these pictures you can understand you know that I am actually drawing your attention to the seed bed of the Indian civilization the Harappa and Mohenjo-daro the Indus valley civilization of India. So, and all of us know about the Indus valley civilization all of us had learned about you know the great developments so far as very important cities such as Mohenjo-daro and Harappa you know are concerned. Now what is very important is that you know these cities can be considered as heritage cities not only on the basis of the relics or particular sites or you know the monuments that these cities possess, but also so far as their settlement pattern or the evolution of the settlement pattern you know is concerned. And because it sheds light and it brings to the fore the re living relationship between the city and its wider settings.

So, we see that you know the heritage value is not only on the monuments or specific relics, but the heritage value is on the relationship on the evolving you know interrelationship between the urban and it and its you know larger settings and infrastructures. And for example, in the form of traditional neighborhood and in the form of water bodies, public spaces, streets, artisans, crafts, communities and their customs, traditions, beliefs, belief systems etcetera. Now as I just mentioned in the route map the renovation efforts you know like it dates back to you know, kind of like 150 AD for example, because this is an example of the Sudarshan lake and the dam which was constructed on the Sudarshan lake around 4th century BC by Pushya Gupta the one of the governors of Chandragupta Maurya who was a very famous you know king or he is also known as sometimes as the founder of the Mauryan empire, but he also drew his lineage from Bimbisara, King Bimbisara. So, Chandragupta Maurya's governor Pushya Gupta he it is from the inscriptions it comes out

that you know he constructed a dam on the Sudarshan lake and during the 4th century BC and here you see the image of king Rudradaman and this is the picture of the garner or the Junagar pillar inscription. Now the garner or the Junagar pillar inscription talks a lot about this dam and the lake Sudarshan and we come to know from this inscription and also from other inscriptions from the time of Skanda Gupta that king Rudradaman after 800 years you know of the construction of the dam he actually, he pursued and he facilitated restoration activities because he wanted to restore the structure.

So, it is a very age old phenomena. Then this is another structure which is known as Surajkund it Surajkund and it is in Haryana, present Haryana one of the northern states of India and Suraj from the name if you just you know decode deconstruct the name Suraj plus kund Surajkund. So, Suraj means sun and kund means water body right or reservoir. So, you see that this reservoir or Surajkund it said that this was constructed mainly you know this semi circular amphitheater like embankment structure encircling it. This was the brainchild of one of the kings Surajpal from the Tomar Rajput dynasty.

And this lake it is said that it was refurbished during the Tughlaq era and by king Firoz Shah Tughlaq who refurbished it by building steps and terraces with stones in lime and mortar. So, you can see and you can understand how you know even after many centuries actually these renovation and reconstruction efforts and initiatives were kind of executed on these structures which were considered to be very important. This is quite interesting because you know you understand from the caption of the title preservation as power. So, the preserve through the preservation of monuments I think the kings the statecraft also could legitimize the rule of different dynasties right. And in similar lines the colonizers the British colonizers also they came up with effective conservation policies which is totally manifested in the formation of the Archaeological Survey of India ASI which was established in 1861.

And after few decades this ancient monuments and preservation act was passed in 1904 and then followed by this the next major act was the ancient monuments and archaeological sites and remains Act which was passed in 1958 in post independent India. And in the preservation and power and you can see from here that this is a stamp this is an Indian stamp, 10 rupee stamp and this is I think the picture was also there on the currency and you see that the heritage elements. So, different structures important tombs and relics and statues and monuments. So, one can understand that to a great extent heritage preservation and if you go through some of these acts or some of these documents and laws you will see that how monument centric you know this heritage conservation approach was. And unfortunately the outcome was that many a times it seemed that the monuments just stood alone and they were preserved, but they remain very disconnected from the broader site or the wider setting of which they were part and parcel of.

So, what happened is that sometimes you could see you know this monuments being preserved and standing alone in the middle of like very bad quality or poor condition setting and where you see the relationship the interrelationship between these living monuments and the wider settings were totally you know kind of cut out. So, that is why you know there are of course, inadequacies and limitations. So far as this monument

centric approach of heritage conservation and protection is concerned. So, now, we move on to the larger understanding of heritage and heritage preservation beyond the monuments perspective and lens. So, this particular example the Champaner world heritage site in the state of Gujarat, I think it is one of the very early efforts in independent India.

So, in 2005 this Champaner Pavagar world heritage area management authority bill was passed and it is like a class apart because this Champaner world heritage site in Gujarat as I was mentioning it is one of the early sites where you know not only monuments or relics as separate structures, but also the entire area has been taken into consideration. So, you see the Champaner archaeological park here and this is a massive park it like constitutes 6350 hectares and on top of that like 300 meters further are also protected as part of you know this heritage conservation initiative. So, we see for the first time in India in this particular state and so far as this particular site is concerned this area has been protected so far as her natural cultural and human resources are concerned. So, now, we see how heritage conservation then gradually started shifting from the monument centric approach to the protection of urban palimpsests and presents. So, we also see you know some of the like acts were also passed and some of the acts were revised.

So, for example, AMASR Amendment and Validation Act of 2010 where this like where as part of which the National Monuments Authority was constituted and this is important by because the focus was still on monuments, but again not only on monuments, but the entire area. And so far as several other cities are concerned Mumbai, Hyderabad, Nagpur, Kolkata, Delhi. So, we see that how heritage regulations were formulated so far as some of these cities were concerned in the first decade of the 21st century and under the provisions of town and country planning acts. Then the next major program was the JNNURM so far as urban heritage is concerned because this JNNURM it is on the name of our first prime minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru. So, this program is Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission, National Urban Renewal Mission and this was a kind of like a 7 year project where several city modernization efforts and initiatives were launched for a period of like 2005 and for the next you know few years.

And ultimately the program I mean came to an end in 2014 because by the time already you know the smart city program was launched by the India government in 2013. And so, JNNURM program one very important part was the integration of heritage into master plans. So, as part of this program we also see design and development of heritage toolkits, we learn more about heritage toolkits also so far as a HUL program, the historic urban landscape program and you know the Indian nation is concerned. We had also discussed a bit on the HUL program in one of our previous lectures, we have to resonate with that as well. And apart from all these programs and revision of acts important roles had also been played by organizations such as INTAC, Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage, Aga Khan Trust for Culture, Indian Heritage Cities Network Foundation which had played very prominent roles in executing some of the pilot projects and in you know kind of implementing heritage management plans so far as some of the cities are concerned.

Now also we need to remember that in 1991 the government of Maharashtra also became very active and because the government of Maharashtra in 1991 gazetted the draft heritage

regulation act and the committee. And as part of that initiative several sites in Mumbai or within greater Mumbai you know, became a part of the heritage conservation action plans. Now, apart from the national initiatives India the nation has also been supported by several international initiatives. So, here we see some of the international initiatives and support that our country has received so far as heritage conservation and preservation and safeguarding of our you know builds and natural heritage infrastructure and structures are concerned. So, one very important program like one important funding program has been launched or was launched by Asian Development Bank, ADB under its flagship program like Infrastructure Development Investment Program for Tourism.

And then World Bank had also collaborated with different state governments and also you know this ULBs the urban local bodies because by this time we have to know that the 74th amendment act it provided power as because there was devolution of power. So, during this time you know decentralization was very much on top of the discussion of everything. So, and it was very important to like I mean the capacity building of urban local bodies you know so, to strengthen municipal governance was on I mean was on the priority list. So, UNESCO and UN habitat designed and developed toolkits to build capacity of urban local bodies so, far as different you know towns even some peripheral towns were concerned. And World Bank started collaborating with the state governments and the ULBs you know to execute some of the most important projects.

And apart from this in India there is also something unique which is known as Industrial Heritage Initiative. So, I will explain it because India you know is very renowned and India has a very long history of different industries and industrial initiatives from wool and silk to I mean which is also known as muslin to like copper and very importantly tea. So, some of these items you know putting a limelight on these items and commodities the these initiatives Indo international initiatives try to kind of preserve the history of a site and the space by focusing and by emphasizing on certain commodities that it also produce. Apart from that you know there are other initiatives like for example, the mountain railways of India. So, under the UNESCO heritage list this has been enlisted this mountain railways of India and under this initiative some very important hill station and where like railways had an early history.

So, like Darjeeling Himalayan Railways in 1999, Nilgiri Mountain Railways 2005, Kalka Shimla Railways 2008 all these you know railways and the hill stations had been had come under you know this Mountain Railways of India Program which is part of the UNESCO heritage list. So, apart from that there is another interesting like program which happened in 2013 is the Cotton Exchange Program which took place in Ahmedabad. So, international experts and scientists and heritage conservationist they came from some cities of the UK, United Kingdom. So, Lancashire and Manchester and then they had workshops and

exhibitions to curate you know stories and artifacts from the days from the head days of the you know cotton mill or cotton industry in Ahmedabad. So, finally, you know this presentation I think has already provided an entry plane to the relationship between the HUL initiative we already know about hull historic urban landscape and what is the present scenario so far as our country India is concerned.

So, I will wrap up the presentation with this and in the next presentation we would discuss about the HUL approach and the HUL initiative and India's position and situation so far as this particular initiative is concerned. So, these are some very important references I would especially request or ask you to go through this National Institute of Urban Affairs. So, they had published a Compendium of Best Practices in Urban Heritage Management which has been published just last year. So, it is a like I think 80 page document. So, and this is an open access document.

So, please go through it and you can also go through the other references, but most importantly this National Institute of Urban Affairs go through the 2002 sorry it is not last year, but 2002 publication. So, last year they have also come up with a publication there, but that is on historic Urban Landscape and India so, which we will cover in our next lecture. So, to conclude if I try to cover the key highlights that had been covered in this lecture. So, we have discussed here the history of urban heritage in India remember those historic cities and how like the heritage laws acts and institutions were also passed under the colonial rule where the whole understanding was yes preservation is also important because preservation is also part. And then we also talked about the shift in perception and measures from monument centric to natural cultural landscape approach and then we could finally, establish the entry plane for a wider understanding of heritage through the historic urban landscape approach and the Indian context which we will cover in the next lecture.

But Just one thing before we end this presentation here I would like to say that why you know this expansion of the concept of heritage is important and what happened with this expansion of the concept. So, heritage from just being understood as built structures now the broader definition and the wider understanding of heritage it incorporates and include built structures, natural infrastructures, nature culture and also living traditions. So, there also has been like broadening or an elaboration and expansion of the of this idea or the connotation of conservation only from protection and safeguarding to regeneration, rejuvenation, revival, restoration and sustainable development.