

# REVIEW OF SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES OF URBAN HERITAGE CONSERVATION

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## **Abstract**

*India is a country which is blessed with rich and vast heritage but the current trends of urbanization have focussed mainly on the new and modern structures and ignored the importance of heritage sites while developing or redeveloping the cities. In the recent times; efforts have been made by the government and non government organizations in conserving and preserving the heritage and cultural values associated with the cities; although various methods of conservation are practiced there is still a lack of acknowledgement of heritage as an important aspect of the city development plans and the economic potential of urban heritage sites at local levels remain untapped.*

*Heritage conservation methods cannot be uniform for all the sites and locations due to variances in the social, physical and cultural aspects of the sites; this research paper deals with the most effective and successful methods of urban heritage conservation to achieve a successful balance between the various aspects of urban heritage conservation as stated by Steinberg in his paper ‘Conservation and rehabilitation of urban heritage in developing countries’, 1996. This study also includes secondary case studies of best practices as mentioned by UNESCO and INTACH.*

1. *Implementation of buffer zone: case study of Hiroshima peace memorial, Japan.*
2. *Community participation approach: case study of Nizamuddin basti , New delhi, India.*
3. *Integration of urban heritage in the master plan of the city: case study of Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.*

**Key Words:** Urban Heritage Conservation, Buffer Zones, Community Participation, Integrated Approach.

## **1. Urban heritage conservation**

*“Today India’s one billion plus population lives in 7935 towns and over 475 urban agglomerations which is approximately 31.16% of it’s total population (census of India,2011). According to the UN state of the world population report 2007, by 2030, 40.76% of India’s population is expected to reside in the urban areas. This urbanization resulting from demands of new housing, industries, commercial establishment and civic infrastructure is putting high pressure on the existing urban areas. Further the change in land use , the needs and aspirations of urban population and corresponding uncontrolled development is transforming the nature of historic urban areas and their settings”(INTACH,2015).*

Urban heritage sites are built structures that of aesthetic or cultural importance locally or at national level. In India and also around the world due to industrial revolution in the late 19th century there has been a rapid urban growth of population ; this growth has though improved the economic status of the society but at the same time diminished the value of space. Both existing and new built spaces have suffered tremendously due to unplanned urban sprawl. In India there are various agencies that look into the matter of UHC<sup>1</sup> but there is a lack of integrated system and involvement of heritage zones in the master plans that makes the entire concept of heritage conservation in India ineffective and difficult(INTACH,2015).

<sup>1</sup>UHC: Urban Heritage Conservation

## 1.1 Need for urban heritage conservation

In India, planners and urban developers define urban heritage as monuments or sites which have historic significance or importance. This definition is insufficient as it does not include the city centres which are the focal points and the originating points of a settlement. City centres have an equally important heritage value as other preserved urban heritage sites (Steinberg,1996). Another issue with the current trends of UHC is the lack of integrated conservation system that aims at development of city master plans by incorporating heritage sites as an important economic dimension of the urban area.

### 1.1.1 Case of Mumbai Inner city.

Indian planning agencies have always focused on the issues of new developments; however due to rapid urbanization these new developments also suffer from overcrowding, infrastructure deficiency and unhealthy environment. Inner cities<sup>2</sup> transformed into slums after urbanization due to the sudden change in the land use pattern of the areas and negligence of the authorities on the existing housing stock. New and modern constructions were appreciated and developed over time and anything tradition or historic was not considered worthy. Inner cities gradually became valuable in terms of economy generation which led to deterioration of the physical infrastructure as their potential for housing was not utilized. All the existing urban areas in India and abroad have a core city; this may be small and undefined or significantly large and defined (Steinberg,1996). An example of large defined inner city is in Mumbai.

Inner city of Mumbai is a city in itself with an area of 500 acres; this area consists of the non functional mills which were set up during the British regime and now lay in distress. The central areas of Mumbai - Parel , lower parel , Worli and Mahalaxmi were once the prime CBD<sup>3</sup> but after 1980's they became the centres of slums , squatters and ignored structures. In

2000 due to private investments in these areas there was an economic boom and the land values increased; this however did not solve the problem of slums and ill managed structures instead it led to inner migration to zone further complicating the issue. Today these area are a mixture of stray residential buildings and private offices and lacks planning or conservation techniques though the development potential of the region is very high.

However the concept of removing the old structures to construct new housing has many disadvantages (economic, social, political) hence a more sustainable approach to utilize the potential of the region is required (Steinberg,1996).

## 1.2 Aspects of urban heritage conservation

This section introduces various aspects ( Tangible and Intangible ) of Urban Heritage Conservation as suggested by Steinberg in his paper '*Conservation and rehabilitation of urban heritage in developing countries*', 1996.

### 1.2.1 Political aspects

Political aspect of urban heritage conservation is crucial for effective planning and management of UHC plans (Steingberg,1996). In India however there has been lack of political inclination towards the concept of UHC and no integrated planning is followed. In case of Delhi though there are rules and regulation regarding heritage sites; practically anyone can demolish structures in the city core (exception is for heritage sites of national and international importance)

### 1.2.2 Cultural aspects

This aspect of urban heritage conservation deals with the value of the site or location culturally to the local area or at national level. It also deals with the prospects of the site becoming a tourism spot. Cultural aspects have been given important place in conservation by almost all the international and local organizations due to the most evident fact that heritage and cultural are interlinked with each other ; also another major factor of culturally significant sites are the

<sup>2</sup> the area near the centre of a city, especially when associated with social and economic problems.

<sup>3</sup> CBD : central business district.

potentials it holds for economy generation through tourism(Steingberg,1996).

### **1.2.3 Economic aspects**

This aspect deals with the capital investment required to rejuvenate and revitalize the heritage structures; sources of generating the investment and the amount of capital tourism can generate. It plays a very crucial role in the overall development of the project. In the case of India; government has not initiated the process of an integrated policy development and funds allocation for the conservation and preservation of historic structures. Tourism generation depends upon the characteristics of the heritage structures and vary accordingly thus no particular policy is applicable for all heritage sites and the economic policy should be fabricated according to the location and heritage value of the site.

An example of economic policy for the conservation of inner heritage cities is in Bombay wherein the concept of TDR is applicable to privately owned listed monuments in prime locations which have high development pressure (Steinberg,1996).

### **1.2.4 Urban aspects**

Urban aspect plays an important role in conservation and integration of heritage structures in the cities. Every heritage city has unique spatial features like density, heights, circulation, typology of structures and colors; these components form the urban structure of the city. The urban structure can either be implemented through byelaws or by public participation; and plays a very important role in conservation of the historic areas and should be followed in all the city level plans (Steinberg,1996).

### **1.2.5 Social aspects**

Social aspects deal with the illegal housing of the urban poor in the old housing areas of the cities. In most cases the original owners of the houses have moved to the outer areas or new developing areas and the inner cities are stocked up with deteriorating heritage structures and migrants squatting. Slums are also one of the major negative aspect of undervaluing the

heritage sites and ill planned cities (Steinberg,1996).

## **2. Strategies of Urban Heritage Conservation**

This section elaborates how Buffer Zones, Community Participation, Integration of Heritage areas into Development Plan, all can be used as commandants in making Heritage as a visible vocabulary in city renewal process.

### **2.1 Buffer zones**

The basic document which defines the issues of buffer zone is “Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention” from UNESCO World Heritage Centre which aim to facilitate the implementation of the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. The concept of the buffer zone has been inscribed in every version of this convention since the first version in 1977 until to the latest version in 2005. The definition of the buffer zone is completely reviewed in this latest version as “*A buffer zone is an area surrounding the nominated property which has complementary legal and/or customary restrictions placed on its use and development to give an immediate setting of the nominated property, important views and other areas or attributes that are functionally important as a support to the property and its protection (UNESCO, 2008).*”

From this definition, buffer zone is an important management tool in protecting the value of cultural heritage places from the potential threats to them. However, in practice the buffer zone should not be a separator or barrier, but it should be a management tool to deal with the transition from cultural heritage places to its surrounding setting through added protection, which safeguards certain aspects of places (ICCROM, 2009; ICOMOS, 2009). Although, the original intention of the buffer zone implementation is used for protecting the outstanding universal value of the World Heritage site, but it is also necessary and applicable to conserve other cultural heritage places.

## 2.1.1 Hiroshima Peace memorial: case study for successful implementation of buffer zone

During the world war in 1945, atom bomb was dropped in the city which led to mass destruction of life and property; the only standing structure in Nizamuddin basti is located near Humayun's tomb the city was the Hiroshima industrial promotion (a world heritage site) in New Delhi, India. The centre in skeletal form. After the reconstruction of basti is a slum which was initially a temporary the city; this building was preserved in the similar settlement for the sufi saints visiting the famous state as a peace memorial. In 1966 a proposal to Hazrat Nizamuddin dargah. In the 1962 master plan preserve the dome; known as Genbaku dome was of the National capital territory Delhi the area of put forward. The peace memorial park and Hazrat Nizamuddin dargah is considered as an museum were laid out and the Genbaku dome was urban village. Over time due to migration and lack retained as the landmark of the park. The dome has of legislative framework the area transformed into a a buffer zone around it in which no other slum; as of today it has 1500 houses with over construction except the park facilities is allowed. 20,000 population living in poorly maintained 12% of the park area can be utilized to provide houses and drainage filled streets. The impact of the facilities; apart from which no structural slum can be seen directly on the physical conditions constructions are allowed. Regulatory guidelines of the Dargah which is diminishing at a rapid pace. control the construction around the park.

(ICOMOS,2009)

- For a property of 0.4 ha, a buffer zone of 43.1 ha is nominated. This buffer zone does not disintegrate the city boundary and the property instead it acts as a transition zone; a person who enters the site will first visit the museum and the park before visiting the dome.
- The entire region stands for peace and anti war and the transition zone acts as an important component to express this value of the structure(ICOMOS,2009).

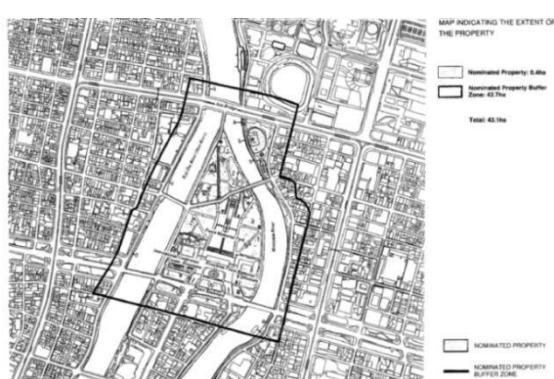
Hiroshima peace memorial is a successful model in integrating the heritage zone with the master plan of the city ; here the buffer zone is treated like a transition phase with museum , parks and sculptures depicting the value of the main structure. Another major feature of the site which is appreciated by the UNESCO is area of the land under the buffer zone is very large as compared to the main structure. This type of conservation techniques are not existing in our country.

Source : ICOMOS document on Hiroshima buffer zone ; (Appendix 3A,2009)

## 2.2.2 Community participation approach: case study of Nizamuddin Basti, New Delhi, India.

The project of renewal was initiated by Agha Khan trust for culture (AKTC) in 2007 with the involvement of Archeological Survey Of India, Municipal Corporation Of Delhi , Delhi Development Authority , Central Public Works Department. The key feature of this urban renewal project was the involvement of the local residents of the basti in the process of revitalization of heritage site. A committee was formed with the agencies and the local residents which practiced transparency in the project design, implementation and management. Following is the list of initiatives

- Street imporvement plans were developed and implemented with the help of local community support.
- Educational interventions by training the local school teachers to impart knowledge regarding hygeince , sanitation , community issues to the students.
- Sanitation facilities for the local residents as well as the pilgrims who visit the shrine. The plans for public sanitation needs were developed with constant involvement of the local residents and by analyzing their needs and prioritizing the projects.
- Employment related vocational training programmes were implemented for the sustainable growth of the local residents. These training programmes focussed on skill improvement of local artisans and workers (INTACH,2015).

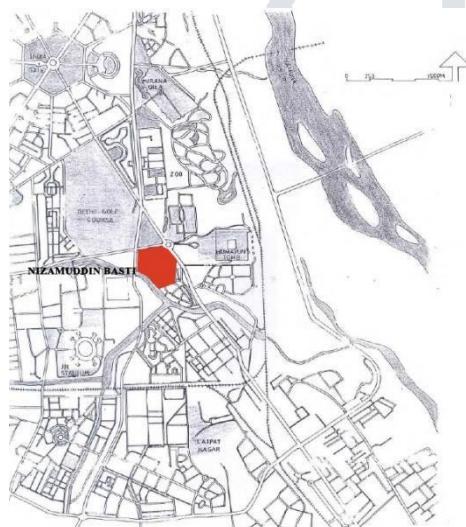


**Image 1: Buffer Zone Of Hiroshima Peace Memorial.**



**Image 2: Google earth image of Nizamuddin Basti locational setting.**

Source: Google Earth



**Image 3: Basti Nizamuddin Layout.**

Source: Nizamuddin basti conservation project report 2007.

### 2.2.3 Integration of urban heritage in the master plan of the city: case study of Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

Jaipur plan is treated as a benchmark for town planning in India; it has been a tourist hub for the longest time. Due to the growing population of the city and the need to change the land uses there has been tremendous pressure on the historic fabric of the city. Government of Rajasthan promotes tourism policies that help in preserving the heritage value of Jaipur. Tourism is the most important economy generator in the city and 30% of the people residing in the walled city are dependent on it. Tourism of the city relies directly on the authentic heritage value of Jaipur.

Government of Rajasthan formed JHERICO (Jaipur heritage committee) in 2006 for heritage conservation. It developed the heritage management plan for the city ; which highlights the core of the city and tries to plan it with modern day requirements. The plan was formulated by Jaipur virasat foundation (JVF)

Important aspects of the heritage management plan are:

- It helps in recognizing and delineating the heritage objectives in Jaipur.
- The plan prepared a list of heritage structures in the city along with individual policies and programs for each site.
- The plan transforms the heritage vision into framework and policies.
- It highlights the economic potential of each site and an action plan is prepared for different levels of planning involved in the conservation process.

Jaipur heritage management plan (JHMP) is an extended document of the master plan and the report is revised every five years along with the master plan of the city. This led to various changes in the process of heritage conservation in Jaipur. Heritage is now considered to be a part of the urban planning framework and included in the urban project programs and schemes. An action plan along with a comprehensive list of existing heritage sites in Jaipur was prepared and a number of successful projects are implemented in the city. A

comprehensive connectivity plan for transportation is also developed to improve the conditions of traffic and roads in the city. Heritage professionals are involved in preparation of plans and they help in identification of typology of heritage structures along with development of conservation plans. Heritage management plan also helped in employment generation for the locals along with increasing the tourism levels of the city. Jaipur heritage plan is integrated with the Jaipur master plan for 2025; it also acts as a catalyst for other cities to follow the same examples of heritage conservation (INTACH,2015).

### 3. Conclusion

The value of heritage in urban planning is immense and it needs to be tapped for the sustainable socio-economic and physical growth of the cities. From the studies following conclusions can be made:

- Buffer zones are an important tool in the process of conservation of urban historic sites

and they need to be implemented to avoid, control or restrict constructions around heritage sites in urban areas. Buffer zones should not be treated as a boundary; instead they should act as a functional transitional zone.

- For comprehensive planning of urban heritage sites; public participation plays a very crucial role. It helps in the integrated growth of the urban heritage zones along with mitigating the impacts on the lives of the local residents and providing rehabilitation facilities.

- Integration of urban heritage in the master plan of the city helps in overall development of the urban region along with tapping the economic potentials related to the sites and thus heritage must be considered an important dimension of city master plans.

- This way we can further increase the cultural, social, political, economic potential of the conservation sites.

Although the government of India has taken steps towards the conservation of heritage sites of metropolitan cities; there is lack of inclination towards the conservation of heritage sites in small and medium cities ; this issue needs to be tackled and a holistic approach towards urban heritage conservation is the need of the hour.

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