

Role of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and Archaeological Survey of India in Heritage Conservation of India

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ABSTRACT:

India is a beautiful land of rich heritage and cultural values. . Heritage is important because, it helps in shaping our identity; our heritage becomes part of what we are. Our expression of this identity shows others what we value; it highlights our values and priorities. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) seek to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity. The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has a large work force of trained archaeologists, conservators, epigraphist, architects and scientists for conducting archaeological research projects. Heritage Conservation work is carried out under three broad categories, chemical preservation, Structural Conservation and Awareness programme.

KEYWORDS:

Heritage, UNESCO, ASI, Chemical Preservation, Structural Conservation.

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INTRODUCTION:

India is a stunning country with a rich cultural history. From Kashmir to Kanyakumari, India is home to temples with ancient art and architecture, sculptures, and significant historical structures that provide insight into the social, political, economic, and cultural aspects of the time. As Winston Churchill correctly stated, "A Nation which forgets its past has no future." "Heritage" is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as "property that is or may be inherited; an inheritance, " "valued things such as historic buildings that have been passed down from previous generations, " and "relating to things of historic or cultural value that are worthy of preservation. " In this regard, since the beginning of Indus Valley civilization, our country has supported a huge heritage value.

Recognizing the importance of culture and heritage Indian constitution under Fundamental duties has envisaged, 'To value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture' as one of the Fundamental Duties under Article 51A. Government of India through its Ministry of Culture, department of Archaeological Survey of India as a whole and every state in India trying to preserve the heritage of India in one or other way. International bodies like UNESCO- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Global Heritage Committee, International Institute of Conservation are striving to preserve heritage in one or other way.

Let us know why Heritage is important. Heritage is important because, it helps in shaping our identity; our heritage becomes part of what we are. Our expression of this identity shows others what we value; it highlights our values and priorities. Our heritage provides clues to our past and how our society has evolved. It helps us examine our history and traditions and enables us develop awareness about ourselves. It helps us understand and explain why we are the way we are. Heritage is a keystone of our culture that plays an important role in our politics, society, business and world view. It informs influences and inspires public debate and policy both directly and indirectly. Heritage Tourism is a boon to economy which indirectly contributes to the growth of Gross Domestic Product of the Nation. Keeping this in view there is an urgent need to preserve our rich heritage.

Let's try to understand what the initiatives are taken by various agencies like UNESCO, and Archaeological Survey of India to conserve the Heritage of India.

Role of UNESCO:

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) seek to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity. This is embodied in an international treaty called the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by UNESCO in 1972. At present there are 36 World Heritage Centers in India as recognized by UNESCO. UNESCO through its mission helping nations to sign World Heritage Convention and ensures the protection of their heritage. It also

helps in safeguarding World Heritage Properties by professional training and providing technical assistance. UNESCO has given huge importance to local population in order to preserve the World Heritage sites. Heritage walks for both public and tourists including foreigners. Establishment of Heritage Club in Schools, Colleges and Universities. Conducting of Seminars, Workshops, Conference and lectures to create awareness of heritage. Holding various competitive activities like debate, essay writing, exhibition of photos, publications of books and brochures related to Heritage.

Role of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI):

For the maintenance of ancient monuments and archaeological sites and remains of national importance the ASI has divided the entire country into 24 Circles. The ASI has a large work force of trained archaeologists, conservators, epigraphist, architects and scientists for conducting archaeological research projects. Earlier a lot of laws and acts had been passed by the government to protect these monuments, but major of them were done on structures that were beneficial to the contemporary society. Also, the work that was carried out had a dearth of funds, enthusiasm and awareness. Later the 'Ancient Monuments and Preservation Act, 1904' was passed with the prime objective to ensure the proper upkeep and repair of ancient buildings in private ownership excepting such as those used for religious purposes. Under this program, the conservation work is carried out in three main broad categories:

Chemical Preservation: The ASI's Science Branch is responsible mainly for the chemical conservation treatment and preservation of some three thousand five hundred ninety-three protected monuments besides chemical preservation of museum and excavated objects countrywide. The main aim of the Science Branch includes – Material deterioration process, basic studies of intervention technologies, basic studies on materials and diagnostic technologies.

Structural Conservation: The workers in the field are acquiring cumulative knowledge of several generations and gaining expertise on the ways to improve and stabilize the structures by maintaining their pristine looks. The structures are given additional strength and reinforced to undo the harms done by pollution, acid rains, and other chemicals over the years. The foundations are so improved so as to make these structures

natural-disasters resistant.

Contemporary Awareness Program: The citizens of India in general and students in specific are being roped in by the government to spread awareness and advertise about the preservation of the heritage. Many seminars are being organized every year where the students are lectured not only about the basic steps each can take individually on this issue but also are made familiarized with the amount of money, time, expertise and labour that goes into protecting these structures via chemical and other methods.

Since its inception (UNESCO) The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization at international level and ASI-Archaeological Survey of India at national level and state level are trying their best to preserve the rich national heritage of Mother India. The responsibility of preserving the Heritage also depends on the citizens of the nation, their awareness level and the respect they shoulder to our heritage.

Conclusion:

Hence to conclude United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and Archaeological Survey of India both these institutions are playing significant role in preserving the cultural heritage of India and Indian history. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) seek to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity. The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has a large work force of trained archaeologists, conservators, epigraphist, architects and scientists for conducting archaeological research projects

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