

Conservation of Heritage Sites

Heritage Conservation is very important for the following purposes.

1. Conservation of heritage sites and buildings provides a sense of identity and continuity in a fast changing world.
2. Heritage sites and buildings represent the past history and culture of a nation
3. It is important to support the tourism industry.
4. A heritage site is a place that preserves the cultural, social and political history of a place.

Heritage Sites - India

As per UNESCO rankings, India is ranked 5th globally in the list of countries having the maximum number of World Heritage Sites.

1. There are 38 UNESCO world heritage sites in India
2. 30 world heritage sites in India are cultural sites.
3. 7 world heritage sites in India are natural sites
4. 1 world heritage site in India is a mixed site

Heritage Sites Protection - Indian Law

The heritage sites in India are protected by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act 1958, which was amended in 2010. As per this law it protects the following.

1. Heritage sites
2. Monuments
3. Archaeological sites
4. Sculptures

The Protection of Heritage sites in India is undertaken by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) working under the Ministry of Culture.

Heritage Sites - Reasons behind Deterioration

There are various reasons behind the deterioration of Heritage sites. The 2 main factors for deterioration are Natural Causes and Anthropogenic Causes.

Natural Causes

The many factors which are responsible for deterioration of Heritage sites, which can be classified as natural causes are listed below.

1. Air Pollution
2. Changing Temperature
3. Floods
4. Biological factors like Fungus, Moss etc
5. Ground water, salts and minerals
6. Solar Radiation
7. Moisture

Anthropogenic Causes

The various factors that can be classified as anthropogenic causes are listed below.

1. Fire - It could be due to electric short circuit, improper burning of material
2. Urbanisation
3. Vandalism

Heritage Conservation - Problems Faced by India

As per some reports there are multiple reasons behind the problems faced by India in conservation of its heritage sites. Some of these reasons are listed below.

1. Lacking skilled and adequate manpower to carry out the conservation activities.
2. Lack of importance given to pre-disaster management of heritage sites.
3. Conservation requires Engineers expertise from inter-disciplinary perspectives.
4. Private sector is involved only in aesthetic maintenance, important issues are unaddressed due to unavailability of skilled resources.
5. Lack of Modern and traditional engineering methods

Heritage Conservation - Techniques that can be Implemented

The 2 main techniques that are used for heritage conservation are

1. Structural Conservation
2. Chemical Preservation
3. Awareness Program

Structural Conservation

Over time the structure starts weakening due to weakening of foundation pillars, columns, ceilings, growth of vegetation, mostly weeds over the older buildings, and water seepage. In structural conservation technique, reinforcement work is carried out on foundations, repairs are carried out on walls, ceilings and removal of weeds from the buildings.

Chemical Conservation

1. Protects the monuments from organic and inorganic gases.
2. Helps to eliminate moss, algae, lichens.

Awareness Program

1. Organising seminars, events, workshops across India
2. Community participation must be encouraged to prevent vandalism.