Finding workable solutions to the issues adversely affecting the preservation of built cultural heritage in India

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The primary postulation of this thesis is that preservation of built-cultural heritage is being affected by certain factors that have led to the present situation in India. By analyzing the relationship between preservation and development analyzed in the three case studies in different parts of India, this thesis seeks to gain an enhanced understanding of the link between people and integrated development. Simultaneously, an attempt will be made to interpret the definition of success in the case of a preservation effort and the various factors that affect it.

Inadequate planning, lack of resources, overbearing legislation and its poor implementation, can be held responsible for many of the adverse impacts, including apathy towards historic buildings and their dilapidated condition, mushrooming of unregulated growth near heritage precincts and, most importantly, disparate civic and social infrastructure. Since independence in 1947, the approach towards conservation has been to simply protect vestiges of a leftover era, which are gradually fading away from public memory. This past is partly or majorly detached from its surroundings and severed from active participation in the present. The past is removed from its immediate surroundings, removed from active participation in the present, removed from the scope of appropriation and of everyday interpretation, and it is placed on a pedestal, to be
admired from a distance creating a disjointed experience between the observer and the observed, the object and its context.¹

The governmental realm is another key factor, which has direct and indirect impacts on the outcome of the preservation projects in the Indian context. Heritage legislation in India is based on mid-19th British legislation and, with the exception of minor changes, has not been overhauled. Thus, the approach towards conservation is both antiquarian and contextually alien, as it segregates the participation and contact with people. This approach results in direct consequences for the residents and the historic fabric as well. Similarly, urban and rural infrastructure has been the prerogative of the government. The political and administrative will play an important role in determining the outcome of any successful preservation project.

Nestled in the desert area of Rajasthan, the Shekhawati region is renowned across the world for its frescos that adorn the surfaces of innumerable traditional buildings. ² It will serve as our first case study. Shekhawati is claimed to have the highest concentration of painted structures anywhere in the India,² spread over the three districts of Jhunjhunu, Sikar and Churu. Fresco-painted havelis (mansions) are a distinct feature of towns in the Shekhawati region, constituting the bulk of its heritage. Mostly built in the period between the 1850s until the 1930s, Shekhawati’s havelis have withstood adverse conditions.

However, in the absence of patrons, havelis are now in a derelict state. A large number of these structures are privately owned and do not come under ambit of heritage regulations for the protection of built-cultural heritage. The typology of these buildings has outlived its usage. With changing socioeconomic and political conditions, and preferences for a contemporary lifestyle, these buildings have fallen into disrepair. Lack of periodic monitoring and regular maintenance has led to the theft of historic wooden and stone architectural elements that are being sold in the antique markets. Simultaneously, unplanned development, inappropriate additions and alterations have accelerated the deterioration.

Nizamuddin Basti, located in the city of New Delhi, is a compact, self-contained urban settlement with high count of landmark structures dating from the 14th to 17th centuries. It will serve as our second case study. Due to severe developmental pressures, inadequate social and physical infrastructure has led to the serious decay of the built environment, with heritage structures being impacted in a major way. As a result, the historic settlement is constantly undergoing socioeconomic, political and spatial changes.

The third case study, the village of Nako, is located in the foothills of Himalayas. The village contains seven temples that reflect a refined and complex culture of Western Tibetan patronage. These buildings are a witness to the history of the region, and also occupy critical importance in the community’s religious life, where a Tibetan form of Buddhism is still practiced. The buildings have sustained damage due to a number of extrinsic and intrinsic factors. These temples were endangered due to the structural
fragility of their architecture, geological events, changing seasonal conditions and inappropriate past alterations.

The analysis of these three case studies will help achieve the objective of how social, economic and political conditions affect the state of built fabric and the resident communities living in the vicinity. From the inferences extrapolated from the analysis, approaches that need to be adopted to mitigate adverse effects and achieve integrated development will be discussed. Preservation goals in synergy with developmental objectives will no doubt assist in achieving sustainable conservation of heritage buildings in various parts of India, which have been languishing in disrepair due to lack of monetary support and non-existent physical infrastructure. It is expected that benefits will result to local communities in the form of improved quality of life, economic growth through capacity building, and potentially, also lead to inclusive growth. Therefore, a mechanism is needed that can not only effectively tap into India’s vast potential of heritage monuments, but also result in the socioeconomic, cultural development of the setting in which the structures are situated.

1.2 Research Questions

For the scope of this thesis, the larger issues that affect the built-cultural heritage in India, and probable mechanisms to cope with them can be funneled into the following questions:
• How do we define a successful preservation initiative and is success an intermediate goal, whose importance is contingent on what it finally contributes to human life?
• Is the link or disconnect between heritage conservation and people, fundamental or perceived?

1.3 Problem Statement

Six decades of planning efforts in India have been successful in producing agricultural production to the level that the country is now self-sufficient. At the same time, a considerable increase in productive capacity of the industrial sector is apparent. The services and infrastructural facilities over this period have improved significantly. Thus, in aggregate terms, the results of India’s planning present a pretty rosy picture. However, in reality, India still suffers from the basic problems faced by any developing nation, such as lack of social and physical infrastructure, lack of employment, and poverty. Professor AG Krishna Menon, an eminent conservation consultant states in his article that “It is also apparent, that in the Indian condition that one is more concerned with improving the quality of life than preserving authenticity.”

Thus the question that one should pose is that “whether conservation and development are mutually exclusive; should they be part of a single planning process?

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The basic objective of a successful preservation project is to substitute economic and social challenges with new latitude, based on informed consent and awareness adept at preserving and guiding the transformation from socioeconomic distress to an upgraded level of quality of life positioned on choice and opportunity. These projects espouse knowledge and appreciation of relevant issues affecting the residents and their built environment, appropriate know-how and solutions. India is culturally and geographically diverse, and varied in socioeconomic and political contexts. This diversity requires the projects to be sensitive not only to local needs, but to local capacity and resources available to meet those ends.́

To validate a conservation project as a “success,” certain criteria for evaluation need to be introduced. Based on three case studies, the evaluation criteria will be composed of certain common themes, which are important indicators of positive change, with a few germane variations, which may or may not have an inadvertent effect on the final outcome. The common evaluation criteria will consist of direct and indirect impacts on the life of the people as a result of the heritage conservation projects and their affect on the quality of life. Whether the intended project objectives have been achieved fully or partially can be figured out by analyzing the final impact on the people. Ideally, a quality of life assessment at the completion of project would have been prudent, but this has not been done in any of the three case studies. The effects of the governmental realm will also be included in the evaluation criteria.

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The measure of success of a conservation project is assessed by quantifying whether the project objectives have been achieved. The intended goal of improving quality of life is appraised by addressing the social and physical environment and strengthening the core areas of health, education, employment and sanitation.

The issues addressed by successful preservation projects have been used to establish the evaluation criteria for case studies with regard to quality of life. These conservation projects deal with important aspects of life, including social, cultural, economic, physical and environmental. Previous experiences have shown that if carried out successfully, these projects result in a raised quality of life and a reinforced sense of community for the residents. The evaluation criteria are a mode of understanding the direct and inadvertent changes that are experienced by the community as a result.

In his *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik de Sitten*, Immanuel Kant argues for the necessity of seeing human beings as ends in themselves, rather than as means to other ends: “So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of any other, in every case as an end withal, never as means only.” This principle has importance in multiple contexts – even in analyzing the definition of “success” in the case of community-driven preservation initiatives.

Instead of just focusing on empirical evidence related to quality of life as the essence of progress, changes can also be judged from improvement in capabilities to function. If life

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is seen as a set of “doings and beings” that are valuable, the exercise of assessing the quality of life takes the form of evaluating these functioning’s and the capability to function. Amartya Sen claims that functions are constituents of a person’s wellbeing, and an evaluation of a person’s wellbeing has to take the form of an assessment of these constituent elements. Capability is a combination of functions (doing or being), he or she achieves. Based on empirical evidence and enhancement of people’s capabilities to function as a direct result of a preservation initiative, “success” in each of the case studies will be evaluated. This approach will also augment the understanding of the preservation-development matrix. It will additionally explore an alternate and more inclusive definition of both “development” and “success” in the case of community-based preservation initiatives discussed in this thesis. An analogy can be drawn between the dichotomy existing between the empirical approach and capabilities approach, and the difference between tangible and intangible heritage. One is effortlessly quantified, while the other could prove difficult, but both are important for the immediate environment. Just as the preservation of culture cannot take place independent of the public sphere, similarly there should not be a fundamental disconnect between the people and the monuments.

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6 Sen, (2003), 43-44.
7 Ibid.
1.4 Scope of Study

This thesis covers various aspects of preservation scenarios of heritage buildings in India, as well as the developmental aspect and its coupling with preservation goals. This thesis encompasses two main topics as follows:

- Understanding the nature and implication of “success,” and evaluating social change in terms of the richness of human life resulting from it.\(^9\)
- Integrating development of heritage sites in India through participatory initiatives and developmental activities.

Each of these issues involves multidisciplinary skills and includes the inputs of a number of stakeholders from various concerned efforts.

1.5 Methodology

This thesis adopts an interdisciplinary, comparative case-study methodology to understand under what circumstances has decay of built-cultural fabric taken place in India? In turn, the socioeconomic and historical systems, and impact created by people will be reviewed in the three case studies. The rationale behind these comparisons will be to segregate the individual factors, and interrelationships with other factors as the reason for perceived contrariety. Based on individual case studies, by offering factual observations validated with theoretical assumptions, the research paper hopes to augment the ongoing debate between conservation, development and its connect/disconnect with people. Additional evidence has been gathered through extensive library research and

informal discussions with a number of professionals directly involved in the planning and execution of the three projects. Literature review about each of the three case studies will aid the analysis. By conducting literature review, documentary analysis, supported with consultations with primary advisor Pamela Jerome, concepts started to emerge regarding the link between conservation, development and its direct and inadvertent impacts on the people. Finally, the analysis will be coordinated into the augmenting of an understanding for meeting preservation and development ends.

In addition, a two-week research trip to India sponsored by the Kinne Travel Fund and Dorothy Miner Travel Fund, both of Columbia University, was conducted from January 05, 2014 to January 18, 2014. Fieldwork consisted of approximately two weeks of field observations in two of the three case studies. The third case study, situated in the Himalayan region will be addressed through literature review and discussion with the team leaders, as it is inaccessible during winter months. Observation, photographic and limited literature surveys were conducted for a period of eight days in the region of Shekhawati, Rajasthan. It was followed by a 200-mile road expedition through a dozen towns in this region. Observations in the historic settlement of Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti, New Delhi occurred over a five-day period. The case studies were selected based on a specific criteria, with certain similarities and dissimilarities between the individual cases. All of the information accumulated was documented through field notes, photographic survey and informal discussions. Information was gathered, refined and analyzed for a period of four months.
1.6 Limitations

Most of India’s historic sites are so varied in nature that a policy of "one size fits all" is not applicable. This investigation needs to be seen in the context of overall integrated development of the areas in which heritage structures are situated. Therefore, a single pilot project to substantiate the validity of this study is not possible as up until now, not many projects have been conceptualized and orchestrated, where the integrated development of local communities living around heritage buildings has been linked together. The study is also limited because an exhaustive inventory of historical sites in India is not available, and thus, it becomes very difficult to assess the complexity and magnitude of the problems facing the vast majority of built-cultural heritage there.

There are numerous issues concerning the kinship of conservation and development and not all of them have been extensively covered. Due to the limitations of time, the imperative will be to stick to a few explorations throughout this investigation: analysis of inferences from preservation efforts in India impacted directly and inadvertently by the government realm. It will be interesting to see how these inferences are used to solve the pertinent issues affecting the built-cultural heritage in India. Due to lack of training in market and welfare economics, deeprooted further explorations in a complex concept, like the capabilities approach, was hindered.
2.1 Background

Translating into the Land of Shekha’s clan, the region of Shekhawati covers the administrative districts of Churu, Jhunjhunu, and Sikar. In the 14th century, Shekhawati was an important trading post for goods originating from the ports of Gujarat. Shekhawati’s history covers six centuries and ranges from the fierce expansionist battles...
of Rajput\textsuperscript{11} rulers to consolidate their land holdings, to the keen trading of Marwari\textsuperscript{12} businessmen who stemmed from its soil and flourished center-stage in the economy of modern India. Despite this astute merger of power with commerce, Shekhawati has been identified more as a geographical region than as a kingdom.\textsuperscript{13}

Shekhawati is renowned across the world for the mural paintings that adorn the surfaces of thousands of traditional buildings.\textsuperscript{14} This region is said to have the largest concentrations of painted structures anywhere in India.\textsuperscript{15} Nowhere else in India\textsuperscript{16} is there such a profusion and concentration of high-quality frescoes as in Shekhawati. The principal towns of Shekhawati are Mandawa, Fatehpur, Ramgarh, Nawalgarh, Bissau, Khetri, Mukundgarh, Parasarmpura, Lachhmangarh, and Alsisar. Although the area is well-connected by roads and railways, it remained relatively unexplored until the early 1980s.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{11} Descendants or members of the Kshatriya (warrior ruling) class, located mostly in central and northern India, especially in the historic region of Rajputana (“Land of the Rajputs”) that also included portions of present-day Pakistan. The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. "Rajput (Indian History)." Encyclopedia Britannica Online. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/490157/Rajput. Accessed November 11, 2014.


The havelis (mansions) are the remnants of the vast riches controlled by the business community. Though the Marwari merchant personally never stayed in these for long, the haveli came to represent the scale of his prosperity. The more prosperous had bigger mansions, replete with the best frescoes, painted by the best artisans. When practical considerations curtailed the size of a haveli, the quality and number of paintings on each wall became a mark of their affluence. All available space, every nook and corner was painted in the seemingly unending game of one-upmanship.\(^{18}\)

![Sketch map of Shekhawati region](image)

**[2.2] Sketch map of Shekhawati region\(^{19}\)**

Shekhawati has a vast number of small towns and urban settlements. The local architecture consists of a variety of residential havelis, as well as forts, temples and many communal buildings. It also includes mixed-use buildings with shops lining the street façades and living quarters on the upper level. It incorporates a vast number of community structures, such as baolis (stepwells), kuans (wells), and dharamshalas (lodges for

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pilgrims and travelers), in addition to funerary structures locally known as *chhatris*. The Marwari traders were devout Hindus. A trader would contribute a quarter of his income to philanthropic acts. In addition to his haveli, a merchant would also provide for his community a temple, chhatri, baoli, kuan and dharamshala. In an arid climate with scarce vegetation and limited sources of water, construction of communal water reservoirs earned religious merit and social affirmation.

The word haveli is Persian in origin and means an enclosed space. Their erection took off in the 1830s, when the Marwari merchant began profiting handsomely from the commerce promoted by India’s British overlords. A flourishing business in opium, rice and textiles was moved to the burgeoning ports of Mumbai and Chennai, thus making the fortunes of men whose names remain synonymous with Indian and global industry: Mittal, Birla, Goenka, Poddar. Many of them have created global conglomerates, and acquired prestigious brands, such as Jaguar and Land Rover, and also figure in the top five richest men in the world.

The haveli originated from the Rajput architectural tradition of introverted planning or rooms around a central courtyard, a natural response to the harsh climate of Rajasthan, which also catered to the social customs that demanded the segregation of male and

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female areas. The residential architecture is typified by courtyard-type haveli planning, with multi-cusped archways and painted frescoes. The number of courtyards increased as the economic status of the family permitted. Scale and ornamentation of the entrance doorway was also often a measure of the family’s social and economic status. While the entrance doorway was lofty and ornately embellished with a multi-cusped arch, carved-timber jambs and elaborate paintings, the internal courtyard provided the screened space for the household’s women.23

The haveli is a unique cluster of many different types and hierarchies of spaces, a mix and match of various scales, that was entered from the neighborhood streets by way of projecting plinths and blank walls. Inadvertently, all walls and corners became surfaces for paintings and images. Havelis do indeed form the central morphological motif of the Shekhawati towns,24 as Shekhawati is best known for its elaborately painted havelis resplendent with murals in vibrant colors. The artist usually chose the subject matter in the paintings, but sometimes, the owners selected the subject matter. The subject of the murals included religious figurines, mythology, historical events, flora and fauna, erotica, maps and places, arabesque designs, the surrounding environment, and the latest British contraptions of the time.25

[2.3] Exterior façade of Nevatia Haveli, Fatehpur, Rajasthan

[2.4] Interior courtyard of Nevatia Haveli, Fatehpur, Rajasthan
Depiction of religious themes dominate the visual aesthetics of Shekhawati. Even though originally a large number of the artists were Muslims, they sympathetically catered for their patrons who were Viashnavite Hindus. The oldest surviving murals in Shekhawati date back several centuries. These murals in vibrant colors are a testimony to the lifestyle and aspirations of the community at time, and they have their unique place in the evolution of Indian art.

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This case study relates to the broader issues of Indian heritage. Literally, every district and *taluka*\(^{28}\) of this country is bestowed with a number of heritage buildings, which instead of being properly cared for, are languishing in disrepair due to lack of attention and funds. Moreover, due to growing developmental pressures and insufficient knowledge about appropriate restoration with traditional construction technology, inappropriate alterations and use of cement cause much damage. Shekhawati Virasat Abhiyan’s initiative raises awareness about Shekhawati’s rich built heritage and extends technical assistance to local people for conservation, repair, maintenance and development of heritage buildings in the region. These kinds of initiatives are pretty useful as due to the apathy of the governmental realm in safeguarding the majority of unprotected historic buildings,

\(^{28}\) Each taluka or tehsil is part of a larger district within a State or Union Territory.
replication of cost-effective awareness programs can drastically reduce the degradation of the historic environment throughout the country.

2.2 Stakeholders and Demographic Overview

Historically, Shekhawati had a layered social order based on the Hindu religion’s four old-order caste system.\(^\text{29}\) Traditionally, Rajputs formed the ruling warrior class (Kshatriyas) and were politically powerful, and the economic reins were firmly in the hands of the Baniya merchants and wealthy traders of the Vaishyas (merchant) class. Apart from acting as bankers to the rich princely states, these families were an important link in the caravan-trade routes on which Shekhawati is located. The merchant community with their business acumen reaped the benefits of the strategic location of Shekhawati under the protection of the Rajputs, and contributed to their coffers too.\(^\text{30}\) The artisans belonged mostly to the lower castes, and many of them were Muslims. Even today, the feudal mode of social relations as a dominant force guides everyday life of the people of Shekhawati region in Rajasthan.\(^\text{31}\) The Marwari community forms the majority population of urban areas of Shekhawati, whereas, the rural areas have a large number of Jaat\(^\text{32}\) (Kshatriya) farming communities. Jaats also form the largest single caste in the state. This region has the highest literacy rate in the state of Rajasthan.

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The purview of the Shekhawati Abhiyan is aimed at raising awareness of Shekhawati’s rich built heritage and extending technical assistance and capacity building to local people for conservation, maintenance, repair and development of heritage buildings in the region. The Rajasthan state government’s role has been to promote Shekhawati’s historic havelis and frescoes for potential World Heritage status, as this recognition would aid in the process of heritage-based development by attracting huge investments from tourism influx. It would become the most prominent advertising of Shekhawati as a global tourist destination. The federal government has shown interest in funding the initiative to preserve the traditional construction technology and ornamentation techniques. Learning the correct techniques and appropriate construction technology, as a part of the Shekhawati Virasat Abhiyan, fall under the community’s purview.

2.3 Threats

The situation of heritage preservation in Shekhawati is alarming. Today, unplanned development, coupled with insensitive additions and alterations, are seriously affecting the rich heritage of Shekhawati. A significant number of havelis have been damaged due to lack of knowledge of compatible repair and maintenance for traditional buildings. Quick solutions using cement and other contemporary materials have proved disastrous. Multiple ownerships and a rampant antique trade have already added to these woes. The rise in real-estate values is also threatening the existence of havelis. With the functional

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pragmatism of the building being transformed due to changes in lifestyle, the traditional spaces are not being used frequently and suffer due to inadequate maintenance. Many havelis are deliberately being neglected, so that they can be declared unsafe and demolished to make land available for new construction. The reclaimed land is being used to construct buildings that are non-contextual, visual eyesores, erasing an important link with the past. The surge in tourism activity is negatively affecting this heritage as well.

[2.7] Encroached and partially demolished haveli, Nawalgarh, Rajasthan
[2.8] Inappropriate addition, Nawalgarh, Rajasthan

[2.9] Inappropriate repairs and unsympathetic addition, Churu, Rajasthan
2.4 Objectives

To combat these conditions, the Shekhawati Virasat Abhiyan’s (literally meaning Shekhawati Heritage Initiative) Haveli Owners Awareness Program was initiated by conservation architect, Urvashi Srivastava, with the support of Department of Science and Technology, Government of India and the New Delhi Office of UNESCO. The aim of the Shekhawati Virasat Abhiyan’s initiative is to raise awareness of Shekhawati’s built heritage and extend technical assistance to local people for conservation, maintenance, repair and development of heritage buildings in the region. The project area is endowed with a large number of culturally significant buildings and was chosen for its potential for

a conservation effort to be coupled with an awareness-raising program, training of traditional craftsman, and better management of historic resources. The project exposes haveli owners, caretakers, tenants and craftsman with the concepts, methodology and issues surrounding the conservation, repair and maintenance of havelis. Less than 2% of the local buildings, including the havelis, come under the ambit of the state and federal heritage laws.

2.5 Narrative

As early as 2009, the Rajasthan state government was planning to propose the havelis, frescoes and other built-heritage assets of Shekhawati for World Heritage status. A sum of INR 7 crore (equivalent of USD 1.15 million) was set aside by the central government for the upkeep of the havelis. The outcome of the allocation of these funds on the upkeep of havelis is not known. At the time, it was planned that UNESCO would be approached after formulation of a project for conservation of these buildings.37

A vision document, titled On The Merchants Trail in Shekhawati,38 was prepared by conservation architect Urvashi Srivastava under the Indian Heritage Passport Program of UNESCO’s New Delhi Office for the Department of Culture and Tourism, Government of Rajasthan. The publication presents another story of Rajasthan, the story of the famed merchants of Shekhawati. The document included charting a vision of heritage-based

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development for the Shekhawati region; identifying, safeguarding and managing the heritage resources; encouraging local-level entrepreneurship and public participation in conservation; and developing a framework for tourism related investment.  

Subsequently, the campaign for Shekhawati Virasat (Heritage) Abhiyan (Initiative) was started by conservation architect Urvashi Shrivastava. The majority of the buildings in Shekhawati are not under the purview of the existing heritage legislation, and securing funds for the initiative from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) or Ministry of Culture, Government of India would have been extremely difficult. The Shekhawati Virasat Abhiyan received funding from the federal government’s Department of Science and Technology’s project: Revival and Sustenance of Traditional Building Construction Technology and Ornamentation Techniques of Shekhawati.

The primary collaboratory groups – haveli owners, caretakers, tenants, and craftsman are integral to the objectives of the Shekhawati Virasat Abhiyan. Under this initiative, all the four stakeholders were brought together onto a common dais. A contributory strategy including management of historic resources and preventive conservation was intended to augment in safeguarding of built cultural heritage, including havelis and other structures in Shekhawati. In order to make a significant addition to preservation in Shekhawati, individual stakeholders were made aware of their individual obligations and part in the process. By holding numerous interactions between the stakeholders, it was determined

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40 It is the government of India agency mandated for the preservation of national heritage

that the government would safeguard buildings, owners would repair the buildings, craftsmen acquire appropriate knowledge of restoration and maintenance of buildings, and the tourism industry aid in creating awareness. It also includes understanding the issues adversely impacting the structures and wall paintings. These include the ill-effects of inappropriate repairs using cement plaster, and current status of changes made to the physical fabric. Risk assessment and resource procurement are also factored in. Shekhawati Virasat Abhiyan recommended that haveli owners to undertake regular inspection, upkeep and repair according to the guidelines proposed in the program. It was the government’s responsibility to upgrade and upkeep the civic infrastructure, and introduce incentives for heritage preservation.

![Stakeholder Awareness Program diagram](https://shekhawativirasatabhiyan.wordpress.com/2013/09/12/haveli-owners-awareness-program/)

[2.11] Stakeholder Awareness Program diagram

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In 2012, UNESCO and the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India also supported a multimedia narrative on the built heritage of Shekhawati, Rajasthan. The short film was produced by the Center for Advancement of Traditional Building Technology and Skills (CATTS),\(^43\) Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.\(^44\)

Awareness materials for haveli owners and occupants of havelis have been formulated by conservation architect Urvashi Srivastava as part of the Haveli Owners Awareness Program, and were published in September 2013.\(^45\) The Conservation Notes are aimed at increasing appreciation of Shekhawati’s architectural heritage for strengthening local-community involvement in heritage conservation. The intention is to help owners appreciate the significance of their havelis, be able to identify common problems, and assess what needs to be conserved. The Notes specify the process for preserving structures and restoration of the decorative wall plaster. Special emphasis was paid to make all the stakeholder groups aware of the appropriate construction and repair knowhow regarding wall plaster, which is the defining feature of Shekhawati. The Notes highlight the disadvantages of using cementitious plasters in havelis and the benefits of using lime. The information provided in the Conservation Notes would help facilitate effective communication between owners and the team undertaking conservation, repair and maintenance works, and enable the achievement of quality work.\(^46\)

In December 2013, state-assembly elections took place in Rajasthan. The incumbent government lost its mandate, and the principal opposition party came into power. With the change in government, the newly appointed officials have stopped any future initiatives and there has been negligible progress due to the lack of political will.

2.6 Interventions

In 2013, a Craftsmen Training Program was initiated by conservation architect Urvashi Srivastava with the support of the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India and UNESCO’s New Delhi Office. The training program focused on wall plasters, as they are the most outstanding feature of havelis. The program included reviving the traditional technology of plastering through awareness campaigns and hands-on training. This program literally became the common platform where all the four stakeholders could interact with each other, and were made to understand the perils faced by Shekhawati’s

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heritage and the appropriate measures to rectify them. For this purpose, a temporary office was opened in Nawalgarh town. It was located next to the wall where the training on wall plaster was conducted. A training kit, comprised of a series of five *Conservation Notes and Code of Practice* for traditional lime plastering and ornamentation works, was formulated in the local language specifically for the craftsmen.

![Traditional Building Technologies Training, Navalgarh, Rajasthan](image)

[2.13] Traditional Building Technologies Training, Navalgarh, Rajasthan

### 2.7 Critique and Impact on People

In Shekhawati, due to absence of major financial resources and lack of political will, no significant conservation-based interventions have been carried out. The initiative has not

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contributed positively to the life of the local people. In fact, as a direct byproduct of the governmental realm, progress has been stalled since December 2013. But, it is to be duly noted that the project objectives never listed socioeconomic development as a primary goal, which was to be achieved at the end of the initiative. The project objectives do list heritage-based development as one of its future goals, but due to the sudden stalling of the project and lack of new funds, it seems unlikely that any progress will be made on the socioeconomic front. The local community has not benefitted from the initiative in terms of quality of life. Despite this, acquainting haveli owners, caretakers, tenants and craftsmen with the concepts, methodology and issues surrounding conservation, repair, reuse and maintenance has been a significant contribution of the Shekhawati Virasat Abhiyan in the town of Navalgarh.51

2.8 Analysis

The current status of built heritage in Shekhawati is ambiguous. Efforts of various stakeholders are not coordinated, and there is a lack of a coherent vision. It will be impossible to make any progress in the direction of heritage conservation, if there is no coordination and consensus amongst the stakeholders. Only successful partnerships between owners, the local community, tourism industry, visitors and government can help preserve the cultural legacy of Shekhawati.52

Due to the emotional value attached to the historic sites, conservation activities can acquire broad support in local communities, especially when undertaken on community assets. Adaptive reuse of historic sites in semi-urban India is a developmental service catering to the people, just as heritage tourism does. This statement aptly confirms the need for the initiative carried out by the Shekhawati Virasat Abhiyan in the current scenario. Local communities need to understand the potential benefits arising out of conservation of monuments, which in turn will lead to emotional and pragmatic attachment to heritage sites, and ensure long-term preservation.53

Despite the pressures of unplanned urbanization, Shekhawati does not fail to attract modern-day travelers. In the absence of a coherent strategy, however, the changes might become irreversible. The single biggest contribution of the Shekhawati Virasat Abhiyan has been to create awareness amongst the stakeholders and public at large about the immediate issues facing the built heritage. More importantly, it brought the various stakeholders together through discussions for the very first time. Through participatory workshops, appropriate and scientifically correct training with traditional materials and technologies is imparted to the craftsmen to both prepare and repair the murals. This is a cost-effective method of successfully safeguarding the murals and also aids in the continuity of traditional building and artistic skills.

One critique of the initiative is that no major restorations or adaptive reuse projects have been conceptualized or executed. Thus, there is no immediate impact on the quality of

life of the community. Due to very limited funding resources and negligible government support, it would not have been prudent to aim for major conservation or urban rejuvenation. The lack of political will has also hampered the project in its last phase. Heritage tourism is the principal source of revenue for a developing state like Rajasthan, and political will in conserving the heritage will not only provide large-scale employment, but will also have a long-term impact on the quality of life for the people. Tourism has a huge potential for generating jobs in the state of Rajasthan, India. In 2012, over 30 million domestic tourists and 1.5 million foreign tourists visited the state.\footnote{Sharma, Anukriti. "A Swot Analysis of Rajasthan Tourism." \textit{Spectrum: A Journal of Multidisciplinary Research}, (June 1, 2013). http://prj.co.in/setup/socialscience/paper60.pdf. Accessed September 17, 2014.}

Referring to the capabilities approach, few inferences are drawn in the case of Shekhawati Virasat Abhiyan. Generation of self-confidence through the awareness initiative and the changed attitude towards the cultural heritage embodies a complex mix of emotional and pragmatic needs, and this becomes increasingly relevant in the non-monumental historic fabric of Shekhawati.

\textbf{2.9 Discussion with Community and Feedback}

Interaction with the community and relevant stakeholders took place in three different phases. Initially, individual stakeholders were informed about the Haveli Owners Awareness Program initiated by the Shekhawati Virasat Abhiyan. They were made aware about their individual responsibilities. This was done through a number of formal discussions between the representatives of the Shekhawati Virasat Abhiyan and the
haveli owners, caretakers, tenants and government officials. In the second phase, a training workshop was conducted in 2013, where scientific knowledge and appropriate construction technology were imparted, and logical solutions to the issues faced by the craftsmen and caretakers addressed. In the last phase, a manual of conservation notes and specifications was prepared and distributed to the community members. The feedback from community would have been far greater had the project not been abruptly ended due to the political atmosphere.

**2.10 Difference in Project Approach and ASI’s Approach**

The project does not involve execution of any conservation work but instead, limits itself to conducting training workshops for the craftsmen, haveli owners and tenants. By contrast, the Archaeological Survey of India does not conduct training for the local craftsmen and community. The training provided an interactive platform to understand the concerns and issues of the stakeholders and, in turn, they could learn appropriate solutions in different contexts from master craftsmen and conservation professionals.

However, there is a precedent for ASI. These workshops are comparable to the joint-training workshops conducted by the Archaeological Survey of India and Aga Khan Trust for Culture as a part of the restoration of Humayun Tomb in 2009-2010. Over 100 officials were drawn from all over India and trained for a duration of one week in preparation of traditional lime and its uses. Training was also imparted for the use of high-definition 3D-
laser scanning of the historic buildings.\textsuperscript{55} This approach stems the exclusion of people from their historic precincts, which has been the traditional approach in India of heritage management.

\textbf{2.11 Capabilities Approach}

Scientific stewardship is perceived as productive in this case, and heritage seems pertinent in solving the immediate urgent needs of the society. Due to non-implementation of any socioeconomic and conservation-based initiatives, no critical capabilities were created to provide a functional basis for evaluating living standards and the resultant quality of life.\textsuperscript{56} Interestingly, introduction of a logical approach in conservation of historic preservation as a direct result of the training workshop is a positive aspect, as it also relates to human development.


\textsuperscript{56} Sen, (2003), 41.
Chapter 3: Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti Urban-Renewal Initiative, New Delhi, India
Implementing Agency: Aga Khan Trust for Culture

[3.1] Streetscape, Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti
3.1 Background

Located in the heart of New Delhi, adjacent to World Heritage Site of the Humayun Tombs, Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti\(^{57}\) is named after the revered Sufi\(^{58}\) saint Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya, who lived here in the early 14\(^{\text{th}}\) century. This settlement developed during the saint’s lifetime and it has been continuously inhabited ever since. Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti is the densest ensemble of medieval Islamic buildings in India, occupied by a vibrant local community with 700 years of living heritage.

This case study like many other historic cities in India represents a concentration of a large number of the abject poor in urban environments. Due to these circumstances, it is not just a case of socioeconomic issues that has to be addressed as these people, owing to their poor conditions, further aggravate the problem faced by historic cities in India and other parts of the developing world. This project relates to other case studies in terms of the community’s aspirations for development, a raised quality of life, and the process that has been undertaken by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture to address the issue.

The importance of its legacy and the environs are not lost on the people of Delhi or India. The area is visited by millions of tourists and pilgrims from across the world each year. Since the 13\(^{\text{th}}\) century, this area has boasted a unique living culture that not only led to the construction of grand mausoleums, mosques, stepwells, and enclosed gardens, but

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\(^{57}\) **Basti** essentially refers to a “settlement” in Indian conditions.

\(^{58}\) Sufi or Sufism is a tradition coupling traditional Islamic mysticism with Hinduism and its belief system. It is practiced by millions of Muslims living in the Indian subcontinent.

also to the creation of cultural traditions of music, poetry, food, and rituals that have defined both Hindustani\textsuperscript{59} culture and Sufi traditions. The Humayun Tombs, Sunder Nursery and various other grand garden-tombs were built here for 700 years, as it was considered auspicious to be buried near the Sufi saint’s \textit{dargah}.\textsuperscript{60}

In the midst of the historical monuments and posh colonies of South Delhi, the dense tangle of streets known as the Nizamuddin Basti is an anomaly. As one approaches from Lodhi Road to the west, the basti presents a worn but determined face of crooked brown houses, pushing out over the dried-up \textit{nallah}, or storm drain, that forms the western boundary of the neighborhood. From this vantage point, the crowded assemblage of narrow buildings appears no more penetrable than the locked, gated, and guarded walls of the wealthy colonies along Lodhi Road. That the Nizamuddin Basti is its own self-contained world, something apart from the Delhi that surrounds it, is obvious at first glance. The dargah of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya is the unquestionable historic, religious, and geographic origin of the neighborhood, the reason it came into existence, and the reason it continues to draw visitors from the world over; it has survived through seven hundred years of Delhi’s turbulent history.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{59} It essentially means of or relating to the culture of northwestern India.

\textsuperscript{60} A dargah is a shrine that houses the tomb of a particular Muslim martyr or saint; pilgrims and locals visit these sites to seek blessings or to attend specific religious festivals associated with the life of the saint. Purohit, Teena. "Introduction." In \textit{The Aga Khan Case. Religion and Identity in Colonial India}, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 1.

Nizamuddin Basti is dotted with several monuments of significant historic value. Years of neglect and uncontrolled urban growth around the monuments have taken their toll on these structures and their settings. The project area was chosen for the high density of historically significant buildings and for the potential of conservation initiatives to be coupled with a socioeconomic-development program that would benefit the resident population, the unique ‘living culture’ exemplifying religious tolerance within a prominent location in the capital, as well as for the development of an ecological zone of significance to the city.

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The Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) was established in 1988 in Geneva as a non-profit foundation, with the mandate to coordinate and implement the cultural initiatives of His Highness the Aga Khan, the 49th hereditary Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims. Over the years, the main focus of the Trust has become the improvements of built environments in countries with predominant or significant Muslim populations, where societies are currently going through a critical period of transition and adaptation. By acknowledging architecture as an important instrument of cultural identity, the Trust seeks to encourage architectural-renewal processes, which are based on both local traditions and a sensitive integration of contemporary facilities and techniques. This site is the largest of the 20 major projects developed in nine countries by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture’s Historic Cities program over the past decades.

Before going into detail about the urban-revitalization initiative, I must first briefly explain the events that led to the conception of this project, in a chronological manner. This is essential for the narrative, as it provides relevant background to the interventions, which will be explained and analyzed later in this chapter. The garden-restoration project at the World Heritage Site of the Humayun Tomb in Delhi was the first project undertaken by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture in India. They funded the US$ 750,000 project, and together with officers of the Archaeological Survey of India, this was the first privately

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funded effort at any of India’s protected or World Heritage sites. The project was conceived by R.C. Agrawal, then Director of Monuments, Archaeological Survey of India; the funding by AKTC was seen as a gift by His Highness the Aga Khan to India on the occasion of our 50th anniversary of independence. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Archaeological Survey of India, Aga Khan Trust for Culture, National Culture Fund, the Oberoi Hotels, and the Indo-British 50th Anniversary Trust (the catalyst agency that brought ASI and AKTC together) was signed in April 1999.

Upon the successful completion and widespread impact of the garden-restoration project in 2003, the federal government requested that the Aga Khan Trust for Culture carry on with further initiatives in India. In 2004, Humayun’s Tomb was the venue for hosting a function to give away the Aga Khan Awards for Architecture. Speaking on that occasion, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh emphasized the importance of local-area development as an approach for conservation. It was this call by the prime minister in the presence of the Aga Khan that prompted AKTC to take the restoration forward. In response to this request, as well as to build on the success of the garden restoration and to demonstrate the potential of coupling conservation efforts with socioeconomic development and environmental-development initiatives, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture expressed a desire to return to the Humayun Tombs-Nizamuddin area to implement an urban-revitalization initiative that would showcase Indian heritage, while improving the

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67 Oberoi Hotels are a luxury chain of hotels, which paid for the illumination of Humayun Tombs.
quality of life for local communities, and significantly enhance tourism potential.\textsuperscript{70} A number of sites were shortlisted, but eventually it was decided to return to the original site area.

The urban-revitalization project, with primary objectives of heritage conservation, environmental and socioeconomic development, commenced with the signing of a public-private partnership Memorandum of Understanding on July 11, 2007. This non-profit partnership includes the Archaeological Survey of India, Central Public Works Department (CPWD), Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), and Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC).\textsuperscript{71} Just like its predecessor project, this was the very first time that in India, a private organization was carrying on an urban-revitalization project with multiple components. The primary role of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture was coordination between various government agencies. This has been a daunting task, as the multiplicity of agencies in India’s myriad bureaucracy setup makes it next to impossible for anything to be implemented successfully. A 2012 report published by the Hong Kong-based Political and Economic Risk Consultancy, Inc. ranks India’s bureaucracy as the worst in Asia.\textsuperscript{72} Simultaneously, follow-up Memorandum of Understandings have been signed with several other agencies, such as the Delhi Development Authority, Delhi Government’s Department of Women and Child

\textsuperscript{71} Jodedio, (2011), 184.
Development, Public Works Department, and Department of Archaeology, amongst others. The project is still ongoing and has a scheduled completion date of 2017.

3.2 Stakeholders and Demographic Overview

The Nizamuddin Basti has a resident population of approximately 20,000. It has one of the highest densities of populated areas in the city of New Delhi. Apart from the resident population, there is also a floating pilgrimage population, which resides there for shorter periods. The pilgrimage population runs into the millions. The majority population of Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti is Muslim, with Hindus accounting for approximately 10%.\(^{73}\)

Approximately 64% of the populace is in the productive-employment age group, but only 41% participate in work. Over 50% of the families in Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti have a single wage earner.\(^{74}\) It is a conservative society with the majority of women observing purdah;\(^{75}\) they are typically not allowed to leave the basti without a male escort. There are impediments to women becoming educated and having equal opportunities for income generation. This acts as a barrier for women to improve their conditions or be involved in income-generating activities. It is to be noted that economic and social conditions are quite interdependent on each other. The men in the basti are mostly self-employed and work as vegetable vendors, tailors, or butchers.\(^{76}\)

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\(^{74}\) Jodedio, (2011), 189.

\(^{75}\) Purdah is the practice involving segregation and isolation of women in public interaction by means of clothing that conceals the female form, including a veil.

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture is the principal implementation body and also facilitates between the various partner agencies. The public partners in this project are the Archaeological Survey of India, Municipal Corporation of Delhi and Delhi Development Authority. The institutional purview focusses on interventions in health, education and sanitation in order to address the most immediate needs of the women, children, disabled and the elderly. Simultaneously, renovation of open spaces and landscaping of parks, coupled with community mobilization and making these spaces safe for the women and children to access, are high on the priority list.

3.3 Threats

Rapid physical densification and uncontrolled population growth have put enormous strain on Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti, especially in terms of environmental sanitation, waste management and infrastructure. One of the principal challenges that immediately affect the area is the low level of household income, where there is a single wage earner in approximately 50% of the families. Most of the men are employed in petty trades or as casual workers. Women living here fare even worst. Only 6% are employed in jobs.77 There is a severe lack of life skills and vocational-training opportunities.

Similarly, the area suffers from lack of access to quality clinical facilities, resulting in extremely poor health conditions. One of the baseline surveys conducted in 2008 suggests that illness reported in females was 54% and 29% among males.78 In addition, lack of access to drinking water and proper sanitation facilities compounds the challenges.

It is to be noted that the existing household-water supply is unreliable and a third of the households draw water from public taps. Access to open space is severely limited due to encroachments and misuse of open areas by unscrupulous elements.\textsuperscript{79} Low levels of literacy, high numbers of immigrants, rampant drug usage and peddling have led to a high crime rate.

In addition, there are grave threats to some of the historic monuments located in the Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti. Baoli Nizamuddin is a 13\textsuperscript{th}-century stepwell that suffered major damage in early 2008, when its eastern wall partially collapsed on account of illegal constructions over its edges and inappropriate repairs carried out on the structure earlier. Structures like Chausath Khamba, which were neglected both by the agencies and the resident community, needed to be conserved and their settings enhanced by landscaping in order to make the spaces attractive and usable to the community.

\textbf{3.4 Objectives}

The primary objectives of the project are to integrate heritage conservation, socioeconomic development and improvement of urban environment in consultation with the people and key stakeholders.\textsuperscript{80} The intent is to improve the quality of life for the residents by strengthening basic services through interventions in the field of health, education, environmental sanitation, and engaging community through regular interactions and cultural activities.

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\textsuperscript{80} Jodedio, (2011), 185.
Developing a historic neighborhood

When faced with an urban historic district or area in decline, what are the appropriate responses and remedial actions required? There are a variety of approaches to consider. Amongst these are wholesale demolition and reconstruction; abandonment and construction of new centers elsewhere; replacement of low-rise with high-rise; and re-densification, preservation and selective reconstruction within carefully prescribed guidelines. Inaction and combinations of these different strategies are found in practice. What are the benefits of the more patient process of preservation and selective
reconstruction, coupled with physical and environmental improvements, adaptive reuse and community development?\textsuperscript{81}

In keeping with the Aga Khan Historic Cities Programme’s projects worldwide, this conservation-led project adopts an integrated approach to combine conservation, urban improvements and socioeconomic-development initiatives to achieve the stated United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Aga Khan Trust for Culture’s Historic Cities Programme (AKHCP) was established in 1991 to foster and support conservation and development efforts in historic cities throughout the Muslim world, by providing planning assistance to national institutions, local government bodies, and community groups. Achieving sustainability is central to planning for historic cities, particularly in developing countries. In these parts of the world, because of the dynamics of often explosive urban development and rapid social and economic transformations, historic areas, typically inhabited by the poor, have become unsightly and depressed and are considered an embarrassment by local planners and government officials.\textsuperscript{82}

All interventions are carried out under the authoritative framework of a public-private partnership, which includes the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, Municipal Corporation of Delhi, Aga Khan Foundation and the Central Public Works Department, whose MoU was signed on July 11, 2007. The contractual framework is based largely on the “Build-Operate-Transfer” (BOT) partnership model, and has been suitably adapted to the

\textsuperscript{81} Jodedio, (2011), 26-27.
peculiarities of the Indian legal situation regarding protection of historical sites and the problems faced in enforcement of property contracts.\textsuperscript{83}

The immediate priorities of a depressed historic area like Nizamuddin Basti are first and foremost social and economic. The other major concern is to connect people with existing employment opportunities instead of creating new jobs to foster employment. The Basti Nizamuddin area is now one of the most congested, underdeveloped, poorly served ghettos in this otherwise prosperous part of the capital. Like most communities occupying historic spaces, the people of the Basti Nizamuddin area were initially wary of any deviation from a time-honored way of life. Because of their disenchantment with elected representatives to provide even basic amenities, such as schools, dispensaries, parks, libraries, night shelters and livelihood options, the local population was initially skeptical, to say the least. But their skepticism faded when the people realized that AKTC was not in the business of throwing away money; it simply wanted to combine conservation, urban improvements and socioeconomic-development initiatives to achieve the United Nation’s MDGs.\textsuperscript{84}

The hope behind this urban-revitalization project is that the series of small, grassroots changes will eventually turn into a meaningful, sustainable model over the course of time. Moreover, it will become a model for similar projects in dilapidated historic areas, where


the resident communities exhibit signs of desperation and cynicism, when faced with an opportunity to turn things around for a better future.

In Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti, limited living space per family, poor ventilation from densification, inadequate sewerage and water connections, compounded by the large number of pilgrims, have increased dependence on public utilities and building facilities. The multidisciplinary approach followed here tends to generate gains across a range of stakeholders. Individual project briefs go beyond mere technical restoration to address the questions of the social and environmental context, adaptive reuse, institutional sustainability and training. For example, take the case of capacity building for women in the basti, economic linkages with the tourist population visiting the Humayun Tombs and Nizamuddin Dargah support the sale of crafts-based products that are produced by the women and children of basti.

Forging and balancing partnerships between various stakeholders and agencies is vital to realizing the broader scope and scale of projects entrenched in local realities. Working with communities presents its share of setbacks and challenges, internal as well as external. The urban sprawl of Delhi and its concomitant real-estate demands threaten to oppress and dislocate the most vulnerable groups. In such landscapes of fragmentation and alienation, arts and cultural interventions can bridge conflicting perspectives and offer new models for urban living. One of the primary reasons for the speedy execution of

this first public-private partnership project in the field of cultural revival is its location in the heart of Delhi; whereas most of the projects in India usually get tied up in red tape.\footnote{Unnithan V, Sandeep. "Conservation Czar." \textit{India Today}, (October 8, 2013).}

### 3.6 Interventions

**Conservation and Revival of Heritage**

The heritage conservation aspect of the urban-renewal project started in 2008, when the western wall of the 14\textsuperscript{th}-century baoli\footnote{Baoli literally means a stepwell.} collapsed. This is the only existing baoli in Delhi, which still retains natural sources of fresh water. The safety of the 18 families that were occupying the southern terrace, and the pilgrims who used the corridor overlooking the baoli to visit the dargah, was endangered. After ASI issued eviction notices to these families to safeguard the monument, a team from the Aga Khan Development Network played a major role, first in persuading the families to relocate and then securing plots from Municipal Corporation of Delhi, and building residential units for them at a distant location in the city of Delhi itself. This process took almost two years.

In restoring the baoli, 700 years of accumulated silt (over 20 feet above the wooden foundations) was removed. The collapsed portion was restored with traditional materials by master craftsmen working under close supervision of structural engineers and architects with significant community support. Extensive 3D-laser-scanning documentation was used to assess the structural damage and reconstruct the broken sandstone elements on the arched façade of the baoli corridor. The involvement of the community can be seen from the fact that a private homeowner next to the baoli agreed
to move back the façade of his house by 3 feet, with financial and technical support in reconstruction from the Trust. Similarly, 100 meters of new sewerage line at a depth of 8 feet was laid to replace the damaged pipes, which were dumping huge amounts of sewerage into the sacred waters of the baoli. A primary concern regarding the baoli is that the pilgrims and the people living on the edge of the baoli continue to throw their garbage into the waters, and only education and awareness-raising can tackle this issue.

[3.4 and 3.5] Baoli before restoration (2008); Baoli after restoration (2013)

Similarly, major conservation work has been carried out at the Chausath Khamba, a 17th-century marble-clad structure. Until a few years ago, both the building and its forecourt were in dilapidated condition; AKTC and ASI stepped in to commence the conservation with a landscaping project in 2010. Its expected completion is 2016. From each of the 25 domes, marble blocks are being carefully dismantled by master craftsmen. All of the corroded metal dowels are being replaced with new stainless-steel dowels, as the marble

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89 Ahluwalia, (January 29, 2014).
units of the domes are reassembled. Deep cracks on the terrace and soffits of the domes will also be repaired.

After landscaping the forecourt, the space today is used for hosting cultural performances within the basti, as it is the only area of open land in the dense labyrinth of narrow streets. The annual *Urs*[^91] for Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya and Hazrat Amir Khusrau[^92] are celebrated here. The basti comes alive during this festival and becomes host to thousands of people from all around India who walk in and out to experience the aura of Sufi music concerts, *mushairas*,[^93] *qawwali*[^94] performances, etc. Working with the understanding that equity and social justice can only be achieved when the culture of all those who share an inhabited space is considered integral to the overall fabric of society, this project strives to open possibilities for social transformation and aesthetic reinvention in the basti. For instance, it addresses gender asymmetries by introducing the neighborhood to performances of *qawwali* by women from other national and international contexts, and training basti women in artforms, such as paper-cutting, which have resulted in them designing products inspired by the stone-cut lattices in the Humayun Tombs complex.

[^91]: Urs refers to a festival celebrated on a death anniversary.
[^92]: Hazrat Amir Khusrau was a disciple of Nizamuddin Auliya and is attributed as the inventor of the “Urdu” language.
[^93]: Mushairas refers to an Urdu poetry recitation.
[^94]: Qawwali is a form of Sufi devotional music.
Sanitation: Community-Managed Toilets

Prior to construction of toilets, a 2008 socioeconomic survey revealed that 19% of the resident families did not have ‘in the home’ toilets. 11% of the public in Nizamuddin Basti were using the existing, dilapidated and unhygienic public toilets, and 14% of the public was sharing toilets.\textsuperscript{95} Only one of the two municipal-community toilets was in use and

\textsuperscript{95} Jodedio (2011), 189.
even there, broken toilet infrastructure, lack of privacy for women, and unhygienic conditions had made its use undignified. In 2009-10, the first community toilet was re-designed and opened to the public. The second Community Toilet Complex in the basti was reopened on October 10, 2013, after an extensive community consultation and upgrade. Located close to the dargah, this toilet complex has the daily capacity to cater to more than 800 users, with special provisions for children and people with disabilities.


The process involved community consultation, and 57% people of the residents who were surveyed expressed the need for better sanitation, women safety, provisions for annual pilgrims, children and the disabled, as these were lacking in the existing infrastructure, and open defecation in the parks along the western edge of the basti was quite common. The public toilets included necessary activities, like clothes washing, bathing and provision of a multipurpose hall for use as a community-congregation space with resource center. Interestingly, the wall of the children’s section was decorated with a local art form,
using colored, broken tiles, by a physically handicapped artist from the basti itself. On peak days, the number goes up to 3,000, when pilgrims descend upon nearby Nizamuddin Dargah. Millions of annual pilgrims, who visit the Dargah, use the complex, as do visitors and residents of the basti alike. It costs Rs.2 to use the toilets, Rs.5 for washing clothes, and Rs.10 to use the entire complex. This facility is owned by the South Delhi Municipal Corporation of Delhi (SDMC) and is run by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture with the help of an 11-member community group. SDMC does not put in money to run the complex, and thus 60% of funds are generated from the complex and the rest of the expenditure is borne by the Trust.


98 At the current exchange rate, 62 Indian rupees is equivalent to USD$1.
Even though this new facility was constructed for the public, the community showed signs of apprehension, as they did not want to pay at first. They had gotten used to using dilapidated government facilities for free, and it took some time before they could condition themselves to the rules governing the use of the new toilet complexes. People are fined for smoking and throwing cigarettes in or around the campus and are addressed regularly using a public-address system to keep the toilets clean. Things are running smoothly now, but problems crop up occasionally.

Parks and Open Spaces

It is impossible for urban rejuvenation to succeed in a historic settlement without open public spaces used by the residents. Earlier, existing open spaces in the basti were encroached upon and were being misused for open defecation, dumping of garbage, physical encroachment, and were filled with drug peddlers and addicts. Subsequently, these parks were redeveloped and landscaped to fulfill the needs expressed by the resident community. Thus, three small public parks were planned along the western edge of the basti for ensuring safe, positive spaces for community use. One of the spaces was developed as a “Zenana\textsuperscript{99} Park.” This is a screened green space built exclusively for women and small children, keeping in mind the religious and social sensibilities of the community. In addition, over the past couple of years, food and crafts of the basti have been displayed in “Apni Basti Mela,” the annual street festival held in one of the three parks, which earlier was used for the dumping of construction material by locals, as well

\textsuperscript{99} “The literal meaning of \textit{zenana} is “of the women” or “pertaining to women”. It contextually refers to the part of a house belonging to a Hindu or Muslim family in South Asia, which is reserved for the women of the household.” “Zenana,” \textit{Wikepedia}, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zenana. Accessed October 28, 2014.
as government agencies. This space has now been reclaimed by the community and is being used for multiple purposes.


Even now, there have been cases of misuse and vandalism. The women users of the parks have written applications to the local police station for increased policing around the park. Still there are some encroachments by criminal elements in the park adjacent to the school. Legal proceedings are ongoing regarding this issue.

**Street Improvements**

Since 2011, a major effort to undertake street improvements has been implemented in partnership with the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC). Major improvements have been carried out on the Musafirkhana Roundabout, which is the most important intersection at the western entrance to Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti leading to the shrine of Nizamuddin Auliya. This intersection is the mainstay of social activity, as it is surrounded
by parks, school, community toilets and a number of eateries. The streets were in shambolic conditions due to improper drainage caused by water-logging and overflow of soiled water from nearby manholes. Thus, drainage levels were rectified, manholes were repaired and the streets repaved to correct slopes without causing any inconvenience to vehicular and pedestrian traffic within the basti. Work also commenced on the other principal nodes during 2014.

[3.15 and 3.16] Beautification of Musafirkhana roundabout, Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti; Street repaving, Musafirkhana roundabout, Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti

Health Center

The health center was the first initiative implemented in the basti after the initial surveys carried out in 2008. The infrastructure and services at the existing polyclinic were

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upgraded, including gynecological consultations, which have been availed by thousands of women until now. Upgraded services at the MCD polyclinic have resulted in an increased patient load of more than 50,000 annually. Malaria, tuberculosis and HIV are tested here too. Emphasis is also paid on universal immunization, and growth monitoring per WHO standards at household levels for children. Similarly, community-health programs on antenatal-care checkups and safe motherhood through institutional deliveries is being promoted. The resident population is very supportive of the improvement in health services, as it is a known fact that the estimated share of household out-of-pocket expenses in total health spending is one of the highest in the world. In the case of poor working classes, healthcare debt is the primary reason for a vicious cycle of poverty. It is to be noted that only 15% of the 1.25 billion people in India have any kind of health or insurance coverage. In addition, a gymnasium catering to a capacity of 15 women has been created in one of the vacant rooms adjacent to the polyclinic.

Primary Education

The education interventions cover preschool, school attendance, adolescents and adults. At the renovated municipal primary school, the programs aim to provide quality education to the children enrolled. Major renovations of the school building have been coupled with faculty development, the placement of community teachers and improved school management, which has led to increased enrolment and attendance. Computer courses

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are regularly scheduled and street-computer kiosks have been set up to ensure improved access to computers. An arts program featuring regular music and visual arts classes, and a community theater group that conducts performances and initiates discussions on pertinent issues has fulfilled national curriculum objectives.

At the onset less than 150 students were enrolled and the dropout rate was relatively high. Enrollment has now increased to almost 98% for children between the ages of 6-11 years through improved functioning and infrastructure. The project has worked with over 1,200 primary-school children since 2008. At the moment, over 500 students are enrolled in the primary school with a minimal dropout rate. It especially helps the girls achieve education in a conservative society.

**Capacity Building: Women Empowerment and Gender Equality**

A 2008 socioeconomic survey revealed that only 1% of the youth had access to any kind of vocational training and only 11% of the women had an income of their own. The interventions commenced with skill-training development in order to increase employment opportunities for women through income-generating activities, such as traditional crafts developed into contemporary products. Through this program, the project was able to benefit almost 200 women with the objective being to help women supplement family incomes by working from home, as women’s mobility was an issue with the community.  

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The project then initiated a training program for youth that included young men and women, and this was affected through computer-based training programs. 800 young men and women have been trained so far, of which 458 have been employed, largely in the formal sector. The municipal polyclinic in the basti has got a new pathology lab, while gynecologists, pediatricians, ENTs and eye specialists are available there at regular hours. About 50 women have been trained as health workers and their job is to identify, monitor and extend support to those in need. Sanitation has been a major focus of the program. A further 100 women have engaged with the project itself as full-time or part-time staff. Simultaneously nine women’s self-help groups were formed that are engaged in savings and credit. Even the groups managing the park and community toilet are comprised primarily of women.

[3.17 and 3.18] Paper-cutting technique training, Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti; Finished products from paper-cutting technique training

Many more interventions in the fields of effective waste management, research, and community outreach are being simultaneously carried out by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture in Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti.

3.7 Critique and Impact on People

It is of primary concern that Nizamuddin Basti might feel the pressures of gentrification that could lead to relocation and replacement of the poor working-class residents with an economically superior population, once the project is finished in 2017 and significant upgrading is achieved in the built environment and quality of life. A similar case exists in Haus Khaz village, an urban village located in South Delhi, which in a period of two decades has been transformed from a sleepy village with cowsheds into an urban fantasy, a place where the chic bohemian can live out a Soho-esque style with ease.\textsuperscript{104} The urban village was first commercialized by fashion designers in the 1980s due to a lack of jurisdiction of by-laws\textsuperscript{105} and cheap rents. Today, over-commercialization and exploitation has led to the vanishing of the original cultural fabric as the area is perceived primarily as a “happening place.” This has also resulted in displacement of a large number of the original community that lived there.

The approach taken by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture becomes important, because it attempts to acknowledge the presence of inherited tangible and intangible culture in


\textsuperscript{105} Being a Lal Dora area, Hauz Khas Village does not come under the purview of MCD by-laws and over time, this has made property sales and modifications something of a free-for-all. New structural developments are in blatant disregard of even basic safety norms laid down by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD).
framing the development and conservation proposals and policies for the urban revitalization of Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti.\textsuperscript{106} One of the major apprehensions that people had during the starting days of the project in Nizamuddin Basti was they were somewhat skeptical of the supposed profitable ambitions of AKTC. They were basing their assumption on the successfully concluded Humayun Tombs-garden restoration project and the amount of revenue it was generating both for the AKTC and ASI. Due to being subjected to neglect and apathy by the concerned government agencies for the duration of their life, it was difficult for them to believe that the urban-revitalization project’s only goal was a cultural and humanitarian upgrading of the resident community. But with the passage of time, once the community started benefitting in socioeconomic and cultural terms, they have a much improved and positive outlook towards the project.\textsuperscript{107}

In Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti’s case, financial resources, technical capabilities coupled with administrative and political have permitted Aga Khan Trust for Culture to immediately address the issues adversely affecting the social aspects, as well as the built heritage. The quality of life has improved as a direct result of the socioeconomic interventions. Thus, this initiative fulfills both the utilitarian evaluation goals and neglected aspects of socioeconomic development.


3.8 Analysis

There are some clear conclusions that can be drawn from this case study and the approach that Aga Khan Trust for Culture has taken with respect to conservation of historic buildings and urban conservation carried out over time. Some of these conclusions are as follows:

- The process of urban conservation should involve reactivating people’s abilities to take care of themselves and their surroundings. These can be initiated by linking their lives to the creation of jobs, apprentice opportunities, and making resources available to motivated residents.

- This process does not just require only impetus, but also a reliable operating system – in this case, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture’s conducive and supportive institutional climate is important. The overall conservation-based strategies, coupled with incentives, facilitate (both financial and non-financial) appropriate development. Incentives, such as an upgraded physical infrastructure, help mitigate the inefficiency and apathy of the local administration, thus gaining the trust of the people. In Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti, the non-financial incentives, such as the use of the community toilet, are being provided at a relatively reasonable cost to the families.

- Another important ingredient is the application of traditional-construction methods in the upkeep of historic buildings. This aids in continuity of skill by training both craftsmen and apprentices in traditional construction and conservation.
• Major expansion is not occurring within the historic settlement of Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti. There is a tendency to spare the existing buildings and community spaces as much as is feasible.
• Decentralization and people’s participation can lead people to become active drivers of good management and development of urban services, rather than merely passive recipients. People’s engagement ensures access to basic services, especially for the weak and marginalized sections of society.
• The intangible aspect of the human and cultural dimension made the creation of historic cities possible. This dimension needs to be re-appropriated, to regain a sense of community for stakeholders, and the particular links to the tradition and culture that are embodied in these special places. Indeed, historic cities are the repositories of these values, memories, roots and traditions.
• Skepticism in the minds of the residents is inherent when a foreign not-for-profit organization is executing an urban-revitalization initiative, particularly when the responsible government authorities have failed to create any public support and awareness. The Aga Khan Trust for Culture’s plans for revitalization might involve rehabilitation, thus creating fear of eviction from the only housing the residents can afford with their limited means. It will be interesting to see whether or not gentrification occurs post 2017 when the project is completed, leading to the replacement of the poor working-class people with a more affluent class of people in the historic core.
Taking an alternate perspective, I would refer to the capabilities approach proposed by eminent Indian economist and Nobel laureate, Amartya Sen, as an evaluative mechanism for the changes brought about by this project. It is an economic theory proposed by Professor Sen in the field of welfare economics in 1980. In his theory, he proposes that approximating change in the wellbeing and development of humans through output-based measures, like GDP and IMR,\textsuperscript{108} is fundamentally flawed as these factors only take into account the economic capacity or an average-income level of a person. Instead, measurement of human capabilities will lead to a well-rounded perspective of wellbeing and quality of life. He defines capabilities as a set of abilities to achieve states and activities constituting a person’s wellbeing. These activities or functioning’s, as he defines them, can range from being healthy to having self-respect. Though, this method of evaluation is rather difficult to apply empirically, it does help in evaluating the immediate and future change being brought about by this project.\textsuperscript{109} The evaluation of the urban-revitalization initiative will be discussed in detail in the last chapter of this thesis.

The interesting aspect of this case study is that it is not restricted to protecting the historic buildings only, but actually focuses much more on the socioeconomic development of the people living in the settlement. It is also a reminder that to rejuvenate historic settlements, such as Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti, we have to put people back in touch with cultural identities and historic places, as they provide inspiration for the future too.\textsuperscript{110} At a national


\textsuperscript{110} Siravo, (2001), 134.
scale, these takeaways mean that this effort could very well be a model for sustainable urban development of our historic city centers and also achieves the important objective of engaging local communities in conservation and providing them with opportunities for vocational training. With such an approach, conservation of built heritage can become meaningful for India.

3.9 Discussion with Community and Feedback

Though, there is a presence of several NGOs working in Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti, there are no significant active resident or community groups that represent the majority of the 20,000 residents of the settlement. The concern here is that the people seem to have lost the sense of community stakeholder. This is symptomatic of typical slum-like conditions, as observed in different metropolitan cities of India. The project commenced with physical mapping of the area, socioeconomic surveys and documentation of historic structures, which needed to be managed sensitively by senior programming staff to explain the objectives of the program to the community at large. Even before the execution of socioeconomic interventions, the physical and demographical surveys were met with resistance from the community and could only be completed in 2009 after establishing confidence by building programming measures in health, education, sanitation and vocational training.

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112 Ibid.
3.10 Difference in Project Approach and ASI’s Approach

The project follows the Archaeological Survey of India’s practices of restoring and conserving protected monuments, but differs in its approach in the usage of the monuments. The Aga Khan Trust for Culture’s initiative combines conservation of monuments and rehabilitation of spaces to bring back their inherent cultural significance.\textsuperscript{113} This approach stems the exclusion of people from their historic precincts, which has been the traditional approach of heritage management prevalent in India. In order for conservation work at the baoli to commence, 18 families occupying the terrace of the baoli had to be relocated. Alternate plots were provided by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture paid for the relocation costs, which included the financial costs and technical supervision for constructing new houses for the relocated families.\textsuperscript{114} This was a sensitive approach towards critical issues, like relocation in heritage precincts, adopted by the project team in order to compensate the families in a sustainable manner.

3.11 Capabilities Approach

Concentration of multiple capabilities suggests the necessity of perceiving development as a combination of distant processes, rather than as an expansion of compatible magnitudes as real income. Due to the ongoing conservation-based initiative, major improvements have been noticed not just in elementary capabilities, such as freedom from malnourishment and perennial ill health, to complex abilities like achieving self-
respect and social participation. Capabilities, such as the ability to read and write, and access to better healthcare, lead to an enriched life and generate pride in the local people.
Chapter 4 Nako Research and Preservation Project, Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh, India

4.1 Introduction

The village of Nako is located 3,600 meters above the Spiti River in Upper Kinnaur. It was an important center of Buddhism during the Middle Ages, even though its location in the western Himalayas makes it virtually impossible to reach during winters.\textsuperscript{115} This region in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh has some significant ancient earthen buildings. Spiti and the Kinnaur region in the northern Indian state of Himachal Pradesh have some remarkable ancient earthen Buddhist temples.\textsuperscript{116} In the 8\textsuperscript{th} century, master Guru Rinpoche (958-1055) first brought Buddhism to this area as he traveled from Northern Pakistan.\textsuperscript{117} These temples, built between 10\textsuperscript{th} and 15\textsuperscript{th} centuries, preserve some of the earliest artistic heritage of Tibetan Buddhism in the form of mural paintings, polychrome clay sculptures, and decorative wooden-ceiling members.\textsuperscript{118} In fact, these were amongst the most important centers to adopt the Buddhist Mahayana traditions coming out of India and subsequently traveling further into the Tibetan kingdom. Mahayana is one of the three doctrines of Buddhism. The term \textit{Mahayana} was first used to designate the highest principle, or being, or knowledge, of which the universe with all its sentient and non-

sentient beings is a manifestation, and through which only they can attain final salvation (Moksha or salvation).\textsuperscript{119} The village consists of a cluster of approximately 122 stone houses, adjacent to a lake that serves as the principal source of water. Out of seven temples situated in the village, four date to the 12\textsuperscript{th} century. The oldest temple, Lotsawa Lhakhang, is also the largest temple in the Sacred Compound, which lies on the southern edge of the village. The other major temple is Karchung Lhakhang Gongma. Both of these structures suffered damage in a 1975 earthquake, and later, due to the after-effects of inappropriate alterations hastily carried out by the community.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{sacred-compound-plan}
\caption{Sacred Compound Plan, Nako village, Kinnaur; Nako village, Kinnaur\textsuperscript{120}}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{119} Full text of "Outlines of Mahayâna Buddhism", http://www.archive.org/stream/outlinesofmahay00suzurich/outlinesofmahay00suzurich_djvu.txt_br. Accessed November 17, 2014.
Built of wood and rammed earth, the Nako temples are a rich source of art-historical information on early Buddhism in the Himalayan region. The paintings within the temples display a large number of technical and iconographic innovations, including the earliest known rendering of a fully developed mandala\textsuperscript{121} with gates, a fire circle, and attendant non-Buddhist deities.\textsuperscript{122} The use of high relief adorned with gold and silver is impressive.\textsuperscript{123} These temples have undergone a transformation continuous changes in the climate and the limited material resources at hand. Unfortunately, these earthen buildings lie in one of the most vulnerable seismic zones, Zone IV\textsuperscript{124} (Bureau of Indian Standards 1993), and have experienced some damage in the past.\textsuperscript{125} Both structures were endangered due to the fragility of earthen architecture and water infiltration.

A large number of protected heritage buildings and a significantly larger number of unprotected buildings are located in rural areas, languishing in disrepair due to lack of funds. The majority of our rural areas suffer from the lack of social and physical infrastructure and employment, as well as rising poverty. Nako shares all these characteristics, its historic buildings situated in distant rural India deteriorating for want of expertise, funds and intent. This is the principal relation of this case study to the broader issues of Indian heritage.


4.2 Stakeholders and Demographic Overview

Per the 2011 population census, 128 families with a total population of 572 people, of which 274 are males while 298 are females, reside in the village. Children of ages 0-6 make up approximately 11% of the total population. The average sex ratio is 1088, which is substantially higher than both the state average of Himachal Pradesh and the national average. The village has a much lower literacy rate of 74.12% as compared to 82.80% for the state of Himachal Pradesh. It is even smaller in the case of the female population. Buddhism is the religion practiced by the majority of the people. Per the constitution of India and the Panchayati Raj Act, the Nako village is administrated by the Sarpanch, who is elected as a representative. The majority of the population belongs to the Schedule Tribe (ST) at 93.01%. People under the Schedule Caste (SC) constitute 2.62% of India’s population. Out of Nako’s total population, 314 were engaged in work activities with 98.73% of those working for more than six months in a year, and the rest involved in marginal activities providing a livelihood. Farming is the primary occupation for most people in Nako.

The village community, along with Buddhist Association of Nako and the University of Vienna, are the primary participants in this conservation project. The institutional purview consists of the conservation of the Buddhist temples and 8th-century artworks under the

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127 Sex ratio is defined as the number of females per thousand males. censusindia.gov.in/Census_And_You/gender_composition.aspx. Accessed January 27, 2014.
128 Head of village.
supervision of international conservation professionals. The local people were to be mobilized in this process and imparted technical expertise in the restoration process. Community purview in the initial phase of the project was focussed on getting the technical and monetary assistance to stabilize the damaged structures and frescoes. However, later the community was focussed on benefitting from the conservation initiatives in the long term by raising the quality of life of the residents.

4.3 Threats

Conservation of this living heritage raises two important conflicting issues. On the one hand, the preservation of ancient architecture and features in their original form is of utmost importance as a document of history. On the other hand, this living heritage poses a serious threat to the safety of the inhabitants during an earthquake. Retrofitting could alter and interfere with the historic fabric and impact the resource’s authenticity.130

The earthen buildings in the region,131 although designed very carefully to resist seismic vibrations, have certain inherent construction defects. Ceilings, with structural wooden beams and rafters, rest directly on the load-bearing earthen walls without any wall plates. Point loads exerted by the structural members resting on the walls in the absence of wall plates have created enormous stresses on the walls. These have manifested as significant structural cracks below the ceiling level, where brackets support the wooden beams and rafters on the walls. These cracks have now become inlet points for the

Infiltration of water damaged the murals inside the temple; it also eroded the earthen walls under the wooden brackets, which support the structural beams. The horizontal and vertical wall ties in most of the historic structures are either missing or discontinuous; therefore, the ties may fail to perform adequately during an earthquake. Excessive moisture swells the binder (clay), and sudden evaporation due to high-velocity wind leaves voids between the platelets of the clay. It results in little cohesion and makes the wall susceptible to erosion.

[4.3] Deflection of the roof structure, Nako village

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[4.4] Architectural layout, Sacred Temple Complex, Nako village\textsuperscript{135}

[4.5] Design of wall ties, Sacred Temple Complex, Nako village\textsuperscript{136}

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid. Accessed August 29, 2014.
4.4 Objectives

The primary aim of this project was structural conservation of the temple complex at Nako, the stabilization of paintings, and the creation of a holistic program for general conservation of the area’s cultural heritage. The Nako Research and Preservation Project viewed Nako as a cultural landscape, where apart from the immediate restoration interventions, there was a need for a continuous effort in conservation and formulation of appropriate guidelines. This was envisioned as a two-tier project, where detailed documentation, materials analyses, evaluation of proper techniques and urgent interventions were to be coupled with participatory consultation of the village authorities.

4.5 Narrative

Nako was visited first in the initial decades of the 20th century by acclaimed scholars, August Hermann Francke and Giuseppe Tucci. They specialized in Tibetan history and Buddhism. They also published the earliest report about Nako in 1914.137 The temples suffered structural damage due to an earthquake in 1975. Furthermore, acts of vandalism and a number of verified and unverified human interventions to the historic fabric over the years have resulted in irreversible damage.138 The traditional earthen architecture of the Himalayan area was designed for an arid and cold climate.139 The increase of rainfall due

to climate change is affecting all traditional buildings in the area adversely, and especially the historic temples of Nako.

[4.6] Inner south wall of Lotsawa Lhakhang, Sacred Temple Complex

[4.7] North view of the sacred compound, Sacred Temple Complex

In 1989, a painting-conservation delegation from the University of Vienna visited Nako. Subsequently, the detrimental effects of water damage caused by a fierce winter season in 1998 led to the near collapse of Karchung Lhakhang Gongma. The villagers called for help and formed an NGO, the Buddhist Association of Nako. The key person behind this initiative is Hokum Chand Negi, who is a native and a local bureaucrat. The villagers engaged in a dialog with Professor Deborah Klimburg-Salter from the University of Vienna. An emergency roof-repair expedition was executed by the University of Vienna Research Unit, INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage), and the Buddhist Association of Nako. It was funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) and organized

[4.8] Capacity building and training, Nako village

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by the eminent Delhi-based architect, Romi Khosla, and conservation architect, Anuradha Chaturvedi. Architect Romi Khosla had previously visited the northwestern Himalayan region in 1979 and documented the Buddhist monasteries in the region.

In 2002, an interdisciplinary team of conservation architects, wall-painting conservators from the Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, and two art historians from the University of Vienna travelled to Nako to undertake emergency-protective measures of the monuments, and an assessment of the site and its wall paintings. The aim of the mission was to gather information to prepare for the conservation of the buildings, wall paintings, clay sculptures and ceiling decorations.143 Professor Klimburg-Salter’s team investigated specific art-historical questions relevant to the conservation of wall and ceiling paintings.144

The Nako Research Preservation Project (NRPP) was formed with monetary support from organizations like the World Monuments Fund (WMF), Austrian Science Fund (FWF), and Shelley and Donald Rubin Foundation. In 2002, WMF, an NGO based in New York City, supported the University of Vienna in the completion of a comprehensive survey of Nako temples and the implementation of emergency stabilization measures. In 2002, Nako was placed on the List of 100 Most Endangered Sites by WMF (now known as the World Monuments Watch). Preliminary site work commenced in 2002 and continued until 2005.

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It included the completion of detailed photo documentation, measured-drawings assessment of decay mechanisms and condition of internal wall surfaces.

In 2003 and 2004, WMF, through the Robert W. Wilson Challenge to Conserve Our Heritage, started the conservation initiatives. Also carried out during the initial phase was documentation of painted ceilings, and consolidation of earthen walls and stone buttresses. Simultaneously, external wall plaster was reapplied, and roof waterproofing was also carried out. In 2003-2004, preparatory work for structural consolidation of Lhakhang Gongma, and the removal of its concrete floor and subsequent replacement with an earthen floor was carried out. Documentation of stylistic features and technical analysis of the Lhakhang Gongma’s ceiling panels for a comprehensive understanding of the chronology, interpretation and stabilization was achieved during this period. A number of in-field mock-ups were monitored over a period, and appropriate techniques developed to conserve the structures and restore the damaged sections. In Lhakhang Gongma in 2005, structural consolidation and conservation of the earthen walls, historic roof, and buttresses, restoration of ceiling panels, and reconstruction of the goddess of wisdom sculpture, Prajnaparamita, was completed.

In 2005, the Auroville Earth Institute was incorporated for research in alternative solutions using natural materials for waterproofing of the temple’s roof and aid in the erection of an addition to the temple complex. The addition, where villagers could work during the conservation activities in the Buddhist temples, was constructed of compressed

stabilized-earth blocks. The villagers were given training for block making. This alternate construction technology was introduced to combat changes in climatic conditions and to deter previously carried out inappropriate alterations by the villagers. Trainees learned all details, from soil preparation to quality control.146

The training exercise made sure that local craftspeople got involved in the restoration process of the temples. It resulted in the upgrading of local masons’ and craftsmen skills. During this process, locally available materials were used without the addition of any foreign construction materials. In 2006, conservation of Gongma Lhakhang’s interior decoration, including consolidation of wall paintings and clay sculptures, was finished. Simultaneously, ‘Namaste Nako’, a photo exhibition on the immediate results of the preservation movement for the Nako temple complex by the team from the University of Vienna was presented in February 2006.

4.6 Interventions

Interventions have been carried out in five phases starting with the first phase starting from 2002. In the first phase, preliminary documentation of Buddhist monasteries, emergency protective measures were carried out. During the second and third phase in 2003 and 2004, preliminary site work on buildings was executed. Similarly, wall-painting conservation studies were carried out with art-historical experts for the stylistic studies of Buddhist temples. In subsequent phases (2004-2005), Gongma’s painted ceiling and

structural elements of the historic roof were removed. Simultaneously, consolidation of earthen walls and stone buttresses, along with external wall plaster and roof waterproofing, were carried out. During this phase, training was imparted to the villagers in the production of stabilized-earth blocks. Simultaneously, reconstruction and restoration of the Prajnaparamita sculpture in the Lotsawa Lhakhang was completed. In 2006, the wall-painting conservation campaign and structural restorations were completed. No significant interventions were carried out in the socioeconomic realm during the duration of this conservation project.

4.7 Critique and Impact of Project on People

The approach taken by the NRPP becomes important, because its project objectives attempt to acknowledge the presence of inherited tangible and intangible culture in framing the conservation process. One of the major apprehensions that people had during the later days of the project was they were somewhat skeptical of the project’s supposed indifference towards the lack of socioeconomic initiatives. The locals were basing their assumption on the successfully concluded restoration project and the amount of revenue being invested in the conservation of buildings and paintings. Due to being subjected to neglect partly by the concerned government agencies and remote geographical location for the duration of their life, people’s aspirations for raising the quality of their life were not met.

Success of this project has to be quantified, and for that to occur, it needs to be defined in its specific context. Safeguarding these temples is not just preserving the built fabric, but also representing the long history of the region, a pivot of monastic community life, where even today, a Tibetan form of Buddhism still exists. This has led to the upgrading of skills for the local craftsmen and masons. This preservation project also has a broader social aspect too. The reinvigoration of Buddhism in India and India’s increasing stature as Buddhism’s original homeland are perhaps not surprising when seen as part of the long-term history of Buddhism in the subcontinent. The majority of the population of Nako belongs to the Schedule Caste, which over time has been more inclined towards Buddhism. Nako as a major visible Buddhist-pilgrimage site will attract Dalit Buddhists, domestic-Indian tourists, as well as East Asian and international tourists.

As temples are intertwined through the structure of the village and form an integral part of the architecture of Nako, the opinion has been formed in favor of protecting the entire village under a heritage-protection plan, thereby shielding it from further decline. It seems that the success of putting Nako’s temples on the WMF Watch list in 2002 was merely the first step. If the village as a whole could be included on the Watch list as well, with the help of UNESCO or other NGOs, conservation of the entire village could occur.

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The practical design and development of seismic retrofits for such ancient earthen buildings in the region should keep in mind the potential hazards to life safety, the present condition of the structure, and its materials and behavior.\textsuperscript{150} The project aimed to establish synergy between the technical experts, funding agencies, village community and local NGOs, whereby through involvement of the resident population, problems impacting the living heritage were addressed and valuable cultural heritage preserved. Different social groups create and influence social-value judgments in different ways. Heritage protection like any other ideology is a way of thinking that develops and functions through written or oral rules, authoritative or civil activities.\textsuperscript{151}

### 4.8 Analysis

This case study represents a case of dialectical contradiction\textsuperscript{152} of community and institutional purviews, project outcomes and the impact made on the lives of common people. One of the unintended consequences of the prolonged conservation project spanning over a decade was that people became disenchanted with the huge amounts of money spent on temples, which were not at immediate risk. Instead, they wanted

schools built for their children and a new temple with unblemished frescoes to honor the Dalai Lama on his visit to the village in 2007.

In Nako, due to geographical and economic remoteness, it would be difficult to generate sufficient resources to meet the challenges of social aspects and cultural heritage on their own. Major conservation interventions were carried out on the temple complex with the aid of foreign financial and technical help. In this process, the community has upgraded their traditional building skills, thus resulting in capacity building, but negligible progress has been seen in socioeconomic aspects. The village requires civic infrastructure for the betterment of life of its residents. However, it is to be clearly noted that upgrading of socioeconomic infrastructure was not the prime objective of the Nako Research and Preservation Project (NRPP), even though adequate infrastructure is required in order to become a potential destination on the Buddhist tourist circuit in India. The project follows a Eurocentric approach towards conservation, where the main beneficiary of the intervention is the built fabric, and no sustainable, overarching benefit is made to the daily life of the resident community.

4.9 Discussion with Community and Feedback

In order to establish appropriate methods for the preservation process, information needed to be gathered from multiple sources. As in the case of Nako, these included technical, social, economic, historical and anthropological sources. However, information, in general, is not easily available or accessible. Through the continuous consultation between NRPP and the Nako Buddhist Association, the Nako Village Council remains
committed to the preservation effort. Combining art-historical and cultural-anthropological methods, it is hoped to identify and analyze the ongoing mechanisms of change in Nako village. One of the principal reasons for involving the community is that the local housing tradition and religious monuments are merged into a historic ensemble. Thus, it is necessary to study, document and preserve the village as a ritualistic whole. The involvement of the local community in the conservation process is, therefore, a major aim of the project, in order to understand both the ritualistic and social functions of the architecture at the village level.  

A few villagers wanted to build guesthouses in the traditional-construction technologies under the supervision of the project team. However, a number of villagers wanted to build modern concrete hotels to accommodate future visitors in Nako. In fact, by the end of the project, a number of concrete buildings had been erected right at the entrance to the village. In 2006, the state government of Himachal sanctioned a sum of Rs. 12.48 lakh for the construction of a prayer hall, 39.40 lakh for construction of a guest house, and Rs. 2.50 lakh for construction of a tribal museum, in addition to sufficient funds for erecting a boundary wall around the monastery complex, and adequate toilets for visiting tourists.

Owing to the participatory effort of Nako’s Buddhist monastic community, consecration rituals and Buddhist teachings were held by His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, in the restored

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154 Rs.1 lakh is the equivalent of INR 100,000 or USD $1650.

temples of Nako in August 2007.\(^{156}\) This visit was scheduled years in advance and became the de-facto project deadline. The people of Nako felt that they could not possibly welcome their great leader in the existing dilapidated temples. Thus, a major decision was taken by the community. A new temple, worthy of hosting the Dalai Lama, would be built. And while the foreign agencies continued restoring the nearly thousand-year-old temples, the villagers directed all their attention and free time to what they wanted to show their Dalai Lama - a place of contemplation in his honor, with new frescos in fresh paint that were not peeling, and with smoothly opening entrance doors and ornaments that the villagers today value and understand.

This raises two pertinent questions. Do the people owning a specific heritage have a right over their history? Secondly, is conservation a luxury only the West can afford and is interested in? The immediate needs of Nako’s community might not be limited to just conserving something that can be rebuilt in the future in a much sturdier manner. Material things are not strived for in Buddhism. Conserving or preserving structures - albeit almost ten centuries old, even though artistically special, culturally rich and appreciated, is part of that material world. Passing on the tradition is something different. And the best media to pass on tradition, rites, considerations about life and death, thoughts, feelings, values and history, are probably the very people from Nako who every evening add a day to that vast past that is transmitted to the next generation, thus adding another story to a history

that started long before the 11th century. This shows the incongruity in principal intent of the preservation project carried out by NRPP, and the people’s aspirations.

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4.10 Difference in Project Approach and ASI’s Approach

This preservation project, undertaken by the Nako Research and Preservation Project (NRPP), is significantly different in the approach towards community participation, when compared to similar projects carried out by the Archaeological Survey of India. In fact, the Archaeological Survey of India officially discourages active worship at the site, though it does not inhibit the devotees from expressing their faith.\textsuperscript{158} Furthermore, as these monuments are not protected under heritage legislation, incorporating residents and the monastic community was a more logical and sympathetic approach, rather than relying on technical experts only to preserve the cultural heritage. The population itself represents a unique living culture, which needs to be preserved irrespective of economic or social status.\textsuperscript{159}

4.11 Capabilities Approach

When applying a capabilities approach to the introduction of cultural transformation in the socioeconomic assessment, a couple of questions can be raised:

- How can we measure the impact of heritage preservation on the socioeconomic and ecological sustainability of the village?
- How do we encompass the complexity of heritage preservation (creativity, innovation, process), while developing indicators for success?


In this case study, the built heritage involves the tangible heritage, which represents the “functioning.” The rituals, ceremonies and religious lifestyle of the monastic community constitute the interdependence of the tangible and the intangible heritage. These ceremonial acts are identified as functioning’s specific to the temples, which represent the religious and political thought of the Middle Ages.
Chapter 5: Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

India in the 21st century faces a strange dichotomy. It is a young nation, in the modern sense of the world, only 67 years old. By 2020, the average age for Indians will be 29 and millions will be added to the workforce every year. India is hoping to reap a "demographic dividend" as this population enters the workforce and bolsters the burgeoning economy. If adequate opportunities are not provided for them, frustration and social problems will be compounded.\(^\text{160}\) On the other hand, India has been around for thousands of years, comprised of several settlements, kingdoms, cultures, and civilizations that trace their roots back to this region. The rich and diverse heritage that comes with such a historical background is bound to pose questions for a country that is at the crossroads of progressing forward, while carrying a vast load of assemblage from its past.\(^\text{161}\)

Any kind of discourse regarding a future strategy adopted to find solutions to the factors affecting built-cultural heritage in an adverse manner needs to address issues of continuity and mitigate strategies for the future. Heritage management takes on great significance in this case, since often there is the problem of ‘too many’ sites. If mismanaged, the country stands to lose a great deal of historical wealth. On the other hand, progress is the foremost of priorities. This places heritage management in a


precarious situation, where it draws significant concern, and requires a serious revisiting of the issues and how they are being dealt with in the dystopian Indian conditions.¹⁶²

In the cases of both Shekhawati and Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti, poor civic infrastructure, inconsistent new development, dilapidation of historic buildings, and government apathy accompanied by lack of funds and intent, apart from affecting the life of people on a daily basis, also act as a hurdle in the packaging and upgrading of these two sites as international-tourist destinations. The difference is that Nako village demonstrates a better condition of authenticity and negligible urban transformation. Its geographical and economic remoteness has insulated it from the ill effects of urbanization and, in a sense, aided the integrity of its monuments for posterity.

As early as 2006, a comprehensive development plan, including a detailed inventory of nearly 1,000 historic structures, precincts and streetscapes, was prepared for the state government of Rajasthan. Even today, not much progress has been made due to lack of insufficient administrative and political will to implement these proposals.¹⁶³ An extensive, comprehensive policy for heritage management and cultural tourism is critical. Large building stocks of historical value provide ample opportunities for adaptive reuse and innovative conservation to community and tourism assets, such as bed-and-breakfast inns (BnB), hotels, information and facilitation centers, performance centers and community spaces.

For the creation of community assets, one of the institutional models that should be adopted is the multisectoral linkages and coupling of preservation goals with existing central-governmental schemes at the national-policy level, like the National Rural Employment Generation Guarantee Act (NREGA) and Barefoot Innovators initiated by the National Innovative Foundation, Department of Science and Technology, Government of India. With over $33 billion spent between 2007-2013, NREGA\textsuperscript{164} is the world’s largest poverty-alleviation scheme providing 100 days of employment, which includes activities with a 60:40 ratio of an unskilled manual-labor component to the material component. Conservation of historic buildings could be coupled with NREGA, as conservation typically has a much higher labor component.

Barefoot Innovators establishes incentive mechanisms for traditional-knowledge holders, and ultimately, provides the economically weak and knowledge-rich innovators with developmental opportunities for economic welfare.\textsuperscript{165} Craft revival through conducting training workshops would not only inculcate pride in the community, but will help in preserving the historic fabric and providing continuity in cultural legacy, in addition to augmenting economic growth resulting in greater economic opportunities and creation of a skilled workforce for future projects in Shekhawati. Workshops for training haveli owners in hospitality and local youth in becoming heritage guides will ensure better services in the area.


Capacity building at a local municipal and community level can be initiated by exposition of public-private partnerships through pilot projects, such as the one demonstrated by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture in Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti. Stakeholder involvement is critical to any sustainable urban-revival scheme. An honest effort should be made to reach out to the local community and the large Marwari business diaspora, which has been an untapped resource until now. They can actively finance public-private partnerships and influence political will to build into the entire process a sense of ownership and shared heritage of Shekhawati. On the other hand, increasing legal protection to buildings in Shekhawati might prove to be of little help, as without proper management of resources and a monitoring framework, implementation of legal sanction is difficult.

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture’s program in Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti has already introduced a number of initiatives in the socioeconomic and physical development of the historic settlement. Capacity building through demonstration of public-private partnership pilot projects included training workshops for craft revival and heritage guides, and conservation of dilapidated structures. In addition, reuse of community spaces, and the upgrading of healthcare, educational and sanitation facilities provides direct benefits to the local population. A combination of interventions involving monuments, public open spaces, social institutions and upgrading of facilities has been introduced and

successfully executed. In parallel, a number of income-generating activities in the adjacent historic fabric has to be promoted.

The income-generating activities of the "Noor" self-help group can be coupled with the new initiative of India’s recently elected, free-market economy to support the government’s “Make in India” campaign.¹⁶⁷ This initiative aims to make India into a global manufacturing and export hub. It is commonly understood that credit and business-advisory services, such as micro-finance institutions, play a pivotal role in creating wealth and stimulating economic development. One of the sectors with significant potential for employment generation, and which benefits from credit services, is cultural tourism.¹⁶⁸

India has yet to capitalize on its rich, diverse history and vast cultural resources for tourism development. Therefore, promoting investments that will combine tourism development with conservation and reuse of historic buildings makes sense. Despite the Aga Khan Trust for Culture’s best effort, there are multiple historical buildings that are lying in dilapidated condition. Granting legal protection to these structures will help in the temporary protection, since the chances of critical notification of legal status is much higher in Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti, which lies in the heart of the nation’s capital. Creating the administrative and political will is now comparatively easy due to the successful execution of the pilot project and the overwhelming support of the local community.

In the case of Nako, three primary suggestions are proposed. The village of Nako does not have adequate social infrastructure, and the Nako Research and Preservation Project has concentrated almost exclusively on the conservation of historic buildings and paintings. Coupling this with the creation of health and sanitation facilities using funds from NREGA could be a viable option. Similarly, to upgrade the residential structures in the village, the central-government schemes, like Rajiv Gandhi Awas Yojna, could be tweaked to make them benefit the local community in a direct manner. The introduction of legal protection to a few of the important conserved structures will prove useful in Nako’s case, due to its geographical and cultural isolation from the capital of the state of Himachal Pradesh. Once protected, safeguard of structures and socioeconomic upkeep of the area becomes the state’s responsibility as per the Directive Principles, contained under Article IV of the Indian constitution. Directive Principles are not justiciable, but are principle to governance. Their aim is to create ideal socioeconomic conditions in order to raise the quality of life for the citizens. Giving legal protection to unprotected monuments in remote parts of India, may act as a lifeline against an uncertain future.

Under the “Tourism and Hospitality” segment of the Make in India initiative, the state government is providing direct and indirect tax incentives for setting up tourist circuits and assets in Himachal Pradesh. These are the untapped avenues that need to be explored.

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169 Rajiv Gandhi Awas Yojna is a scheme implemented by the central government since 2011. Its primary objective is to provide financial assistance to house the urban poor by providing up to INR 50,000 or 25% of the total construction cost (whichever is lower) of the unit. http://www.moneylife.in/article/government-launches-rajiv-awas-yojana-to-house-urban-poor-centre-to-fund-rs50000-per-unit/18621.html. Accessed December 15, 2014.

These recommendations are perhaps only a starting point in working towards a transformation that is essential for the Indian heritage-management scene. For a country with enormous historical and heritage resources like India, a comprehensive strategy to manage this vast store has been long pending. Implementation of any new steps will take political will accompanied by planning, coordination, and foresight.

5.2 Capability Approach

Capability sets represent individual or collective freedom to achieve various functioning's. Thus, apart from providing a choice for alternatives, they also create many opportunities to achieve a valuable status. These capabilities range from the ability to read and write, and elementary freedoms, like freedom from hunger and malnourishment, to complex ones, such as the ability to achieve self-respect and social participation. The foundational importance of human capabilities provides a firm basis for evaluating living standards and the quality of life. It points to a general format in terms of which problems of efficiency and inequality can also be addressed.171 A combination of distinct capabilities suggests that essentially, it is a pluralist approach. Thus, it brings attention to the importance of defining development as an aggregate of individual processes, instead of a continuation of uniform significance, such as real income or utility.

Human development requires that necessary attention be paid to individual concerns and also to a mix of social and economic processes.172 All of the three case studies, have

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covered issues dealing with changes that involve considerations of human capabilities (e.g., education, health, morbidity), while others refer to impacts that operate from social or economic processes. These include promotion of crafts revival, increased employment opportunities for cultural tourism, continuity of architectural and cultural legacies through training in traditional paintings and building-construction technology, and creation of self-reliance and confidence through entrepreneurship.

The capabilities approach allows the freedom to account for unrealized or intangible achievements. Indeed, this is the primary significance of this approach that differs from the conventional accounting of “success.” However, the ability to exert this freedom has a direct correlation with the level of education, as development of this sector has a critical relation with the capabilities approach. More education means enhanced awareness and understanding of the surroundings, resulting in increased productivity. This also has an effect on the better distribution of incomes and resources into various functionings and lifestyles.173 Interconnections between sectors, such as health and education are also important, as good levels of health have a similar effect on productivity and an increased proficiency to convert resources into higher living standards. These social interconnections play a crucial role in assessing the success and failure of human development.

An imaginative valuation, including realized and unrealized capabilities, would enable us to better understand the socioeconomic changes being brought about by the three case studies critically analyzed in this thesis.
5.3 Analysis and the “Research Questions”

From the analysis of the three case studies, it can be stated that the link between people and heritage conservation is a fundamental one. Based on the observations from the three case studies, it can be argued that the state alone cannot meet both the social and economic needs of every citizen, and that people can benefit from community-based initiatives as an engine for social and economic development, with heritage conservation acting as the catalyst. Ideally, community-based organizations have an important role to play in providing social services. Conservation needs to be determined by those strategies that accommodate the imperatives of development and the welfare of the community while seeking economically to safeguard the significant values of the architectural heritage and site.¹⁷⁴

Distracting factors like change of government or lack of administrative will can affect the process in an adverse manner. Coupled with limited resources and expertise, the situation becomes precarious. This requires change, and concepts like people-responsive frameworks need to be devised and at least implemented on a few selected projects across India. We have to deviate from the old ways of heritage management, as they have not yielded satisfactory results. There are a number of inadvertent effects on conservation projects that were not originally listed in the project objectives. Issues like gentrification arising out of the improvement in quality of life in the near future need to be tackled and this needs to be factored in.

The central moral challenge facing India’s polity for the last seven decades since independence has been “what strategy can move the greatest amount of people in human history out of abject poverty?” Since the 1950s, India has experimented with state-run socialism to the quasi-liberalization of 1990s under the ambit of a secular and tolerant democracy. Now, a major number of economists and thinkers are forcefully arguing that only one strategy will help the poor: economic growth resulting in social growth, which is to be led by the markets, overseen by the people, and buoyed by innovative and liberal policies and mechanisms.\(^{175}\) Heritage conservation has to latch on with the growth story, as it takes more than just “good intentions” and sentimentality. If we want conservation to work, we need growth with all that it implies.

After analyzing the three case studies, it would not be correct to state that success is just an intermediate goal, whose importance is contingent on what it finally contributes to human life. Apparently, the three case studies exhibit varying degrees of interlinkages between the intent, outcomes and aspirations. Shekawati Virasat Abhiyaan shows clear disconnect, whereas in Aga Khan Trust for Culture’s urban-revitalization initiative, there is a partial convergence of people’s aspirations, project objectives and the final outcome. Nako initiative depicts contradictions in terms of project aims, people’s aspirations, and impact on the life of people owing to project outcomes.

Success is not just dependent on the scheme of a program to preserve built heritage, but other important factors, such as financial resources, traditional crafts, political and administrative will, and the accessibility of the location. The long-term adverse and unintended impacts should also be used to evaluate the efficacy of conservation initiatives. Ideally, a preservation-oriented initiative that fulfills both the challenges faced by socioeconomic aspects and built heritage, and also augments the capabilities of people by enriching human life should be qualified as a successful program. Incorporating the capabilities approach deviates from the traditional utilitarian methods of evaluating quality of life, as a human freedom achieved due to strengthened capabilities.

5.4 Knowledge Derived from the Research

To start with, we have to realize that in all the case studies, there are three principal key players. First, the people who are eventually affected by the project, then the facilitation agency (either an NGO or a government agency), and last, the state, which makes the key infrastructure investments. There is a clear interlinking between them. Success in a conservation project cannot be achieved with each one of them acting alone, as there would be no synchronization. In Indian conditions, to expect everything synchronized perfectly would be a mistake. There are umpteen factors involved and it has been observed that due to the fickle nature of the government realm, where administration and policies change with new political dispensation, one cannot hope to plan everything in advance. A robust framework, with fixed infrastructure investments benefitting the people and built fabric, can be an alternate approach. Subsequently, development will take place leading to a raised quality of life that further reinforces the civic and social infrastructure.
At places where the expected results are not experienced, interventions can again be made as a part of this people-responsive framework. This helps in taking a holistic view and respond to future stresses.\textsuperscript{176} There is an urgent need to combine a heightened respect for traditions of the past with an understanding of what exists and what may come.\textsuperscript{177}

\section*{5.5 Additional Research}

Traditionally, in the Indian context, conservation of built heritage has been approached from an antiquarian and archaeological point of view. However, more and more, the effect of conservation projects on the political economy and culture of the individual contexts needs renewed scholarly attention. Out of the three case studies investigated in this thesis, limited scholarly attention has only been imparted on the urban-revitalization initiative being carried out in Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture. In the other two case studies and many more outside the purview of this thesis, little systematic investigation has occurred in academic circles dealing with heritage conservation in India. Similarly, the capabilities approach is a progressive and useful conceptual tool for addressing issues of heritage versus development. Developed in the 1980s, it has the potential to evolve as a prominent mechanism to prove the efficacy of heritage conservation as a tool for integrated development in India. Further research needs to be made on multiple conservation-based projects that have been carried out in

\textsuperscript{177} Jodedio, (2011), 21.
various parts of the country. Sincere efforts should be devoted to testing the use of the capabilities approach with different case studies.
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