An Initiative of The Indian Trust for Rural Heritage and Development (ITRHD)

Volume - 6, Issue-1, July 2018

EXPLORE

Rural India

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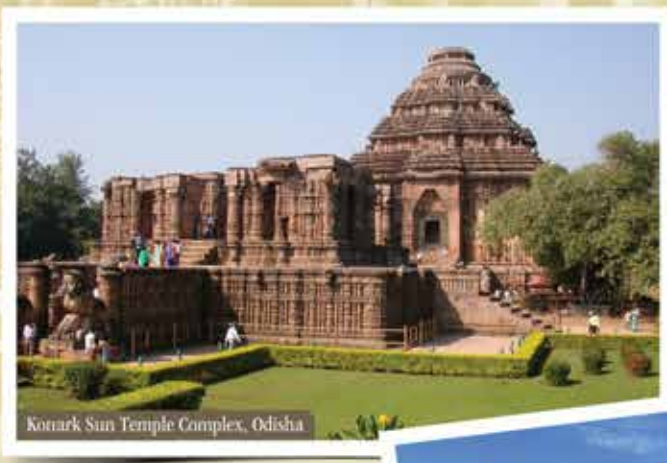
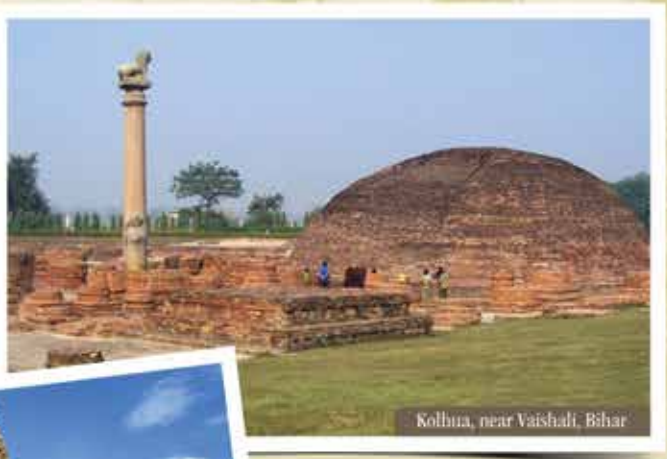
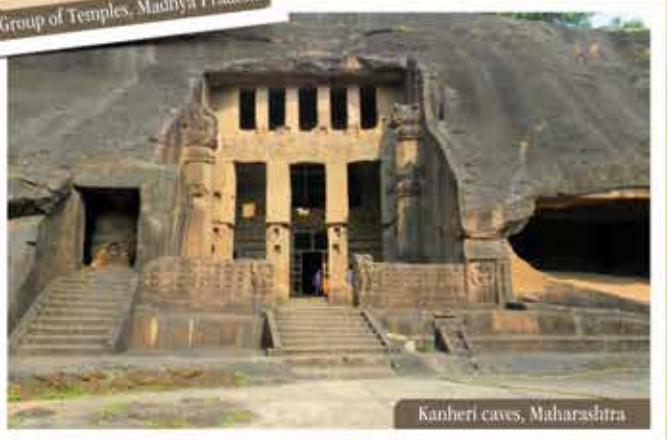

Konark Sun Temple Complex, Odisha


Kolhua, near Vaishali, Bihar


Khajuraho Group of Temples, Madhya Pradesh


Bhoganandishwara Temple, Karnataka


Kanheri caves, Maharashtra

- IndianOil created a non-profit trust titled The IndianOil Foundation (IOF) in the year 2000.
- IndianOil, through NCF and ASI, funds conservation works while IOF develops world-class facilities for tourists at select heritage sites as above.
- Two new projects, at Chittorgarh Fort in Rajasthan and Dholavira in Gujarat, have also been adopted for developing tourist infrastructure facilities.
- The foundation will also boost awareness, knowledge and involvement in our national heritage and culture.

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"A nation's culture resides in the hearts
and in the soul of its people"

Mahatma Gandhi

Indian Trust for Rural Heritage
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Cover Photograph : A small school girl in a village of Barmer, Rajasthan
'Hello' in different languages can be seen written behind her on the school wall
Cover Photo Credit : Vikram Kalra

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Contents

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HAPPINESS

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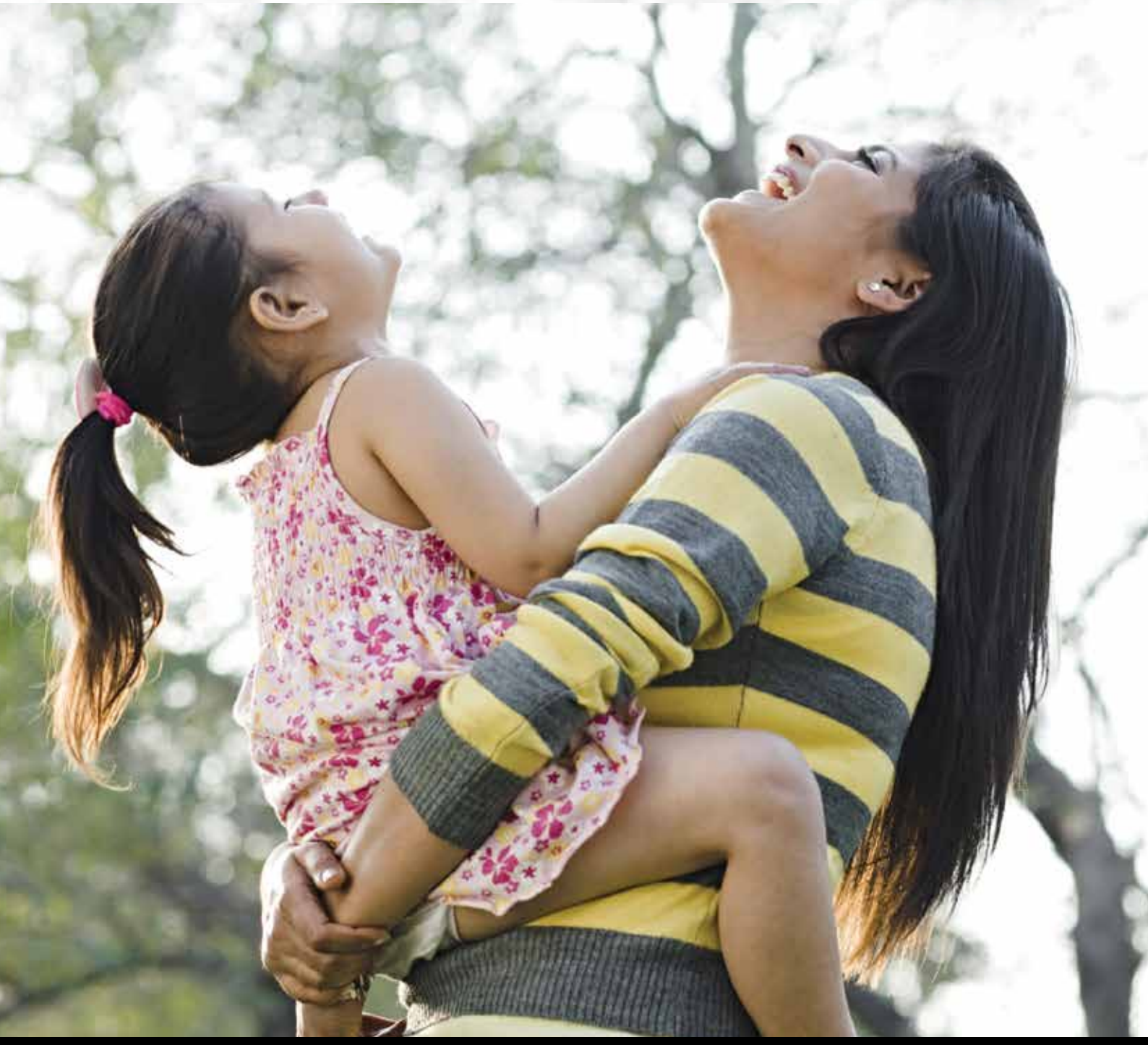

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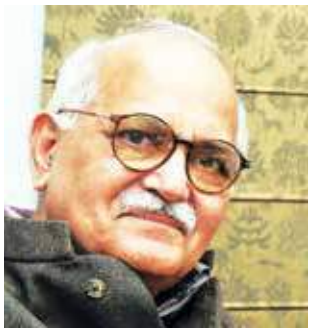


Chairman's Note

We are now in our seventh year and sailing along smoothly. As you know, our endeavor from the beginning was to work in villages that had strong, though often endangered, heritage traditions - tangible or intangible - and to help create sustainable viability for the heritage while at the same time focusing on its potential as a resource for overall development. We began by identifying suitable villages in six states, and launched projects in partnership with local communities. In addition to preserving the heritage assets, we have concentrated on infrastructure development, primary education, skill development, employment generation, and development of rural tourism.

Early Projects

From L to R, Shri Sudhir Kumar Tripathi, Chief Secretary, Govt of Jharkhand, Shri Shashikant Misra, Chairman, ITRHD, Shri Shree Deo Singh, HART Ranchi and Dr. Manish Ranjan, Secretary, Department of Tourism, Art Culture, Sports and Youth Affairs at the Advisory committee meeting held on 20th June 2018 at Chief Secretary's office at Ranchi

The response has been encouraging. We started with no Government support, instead relying on private donations and the generosity of our members. Subsequently we were able to inspire confidence in the Jharkhand and Telangana Governments. MOUs were signed with them for conservation of sixty-two 17th-18th century terracotta temples in the village of Maluti in Jharkhand, and for tourism infrastructure development in the Telangana weavers' village of Pochampally. In addition we were entrusted with the conservation of a 700 year-old Dargah in Haryana, with the support of the Haryana Wakf Board, the Haryana Government and the Archaeological Survey of India. Work on all these early projects is either complete or nearing successful completion.

The Creative Cluster of Azamgarh

Another early initiative involved three extraordinary villages in Azamgarh, U.P., each with strong heritage assets. **Hariharpur**, with a long classical music tradition, **Nizamabad** with a unique tradition of black pottery, and **Mubarakpur** with thousands of fine silk weavers together form an unusual cluster of historical creativity. In all three villages the talents and the skills remained, though all were severely endangered, and each village suffered from poverty and lack of civic infrastructure.

In Azamgarh we have focused on strengthening the traditions, through design diversification, specialized training, and marketing support. We now organize

Inauguration of Azamgarh Festival Delhi, 2017
by the then Hon'ble Vice President of India Mohammad Hamid Ansari

Azamgarh Festivals annually in both Delhi and Lucknow, at which the artists and musicians from all three villages not only attract new patronage and new support, but also are creating new appreciation for the cultural riches of Azamgarh.

In the musicians' village of Hariharpur, new performance opportunities and training programs for the younger musicians are strengthening the musical heritage, and the possibility of the Hariharpur Gharana coming into its own seems within reach. Moreover, a primary school has been functioning for the last three years, with equal emphasis given to both girls and boys from the village. The day to day expenses of the school are being met primarily by annual contributions from many of our members. Local women graduates from the village community itself have been trained to take care of kindergarten classes, but there is still need for more qualified staff for the upper classes and particularly for English language training. The school originally started in a rented building but is now functioning from a four room structure made possible through donations.

The Airport Authority of India was kind enough to provide support under their CSR programme both for expansion of the school building and for a new music academy. They wanted State government agencies to serve as a conduit for the funds, and to date they have not been able to handle this satisfactorily. We are working to find a solution. Several skill development programs in Hariharpur have involved nursing and teachers training, tailoring, cosmetology, computer training, and other vocational training. A Youth Club was established with the help of college student interns from Delhi, and is fully functioning.

In the Nizamabad pottery village, design intervention is helping to diversify product lines, and better packaging and marketing is increasing sales and income. A recent initiative funded by one of our foreign Advisory Board members installed a solar power unit in the village as a pilot project. So far this is working well.

Hon'ble Smt. Rita Bahuguna Joshi, Minister for Tourism and Culture, Govt. of UP inaugurating Azamgarh Festival Lucknow, 2018

The Mubarakpur weavers have benefitted substantially from their participation in our Azamgarh Festivals, with robust sales and exposure to new buyers. A long-term initiative here is focused on improving materials while developing designs, patterns and colours that satisfy sophisticated market demands. Gradually we thus envision Mubarakpur reclaiming the prominence it once enjoyed as a centre for extremely fine silk weaving.

Rakhigarhi Indus Valley Civilization

The twin villages of Rakhi Shahpur and Rakhi Khas in Hisar District of Haryana enclose the site of Rakhigarhi, one of the oldest and largest Indus Valley sites yet known. Excavation by the ASI was begun in the 1990s, but subsequently stopped. Due largely to our efforts, work was resumed under a professional team, and the State Government agreed to construct a site museum and some other facilities. Excavation has currently come to a halt due to negotiation with residents on an inhabited part of the site.

Meanwhile, we have proceeded with work on several other aspects of community development. One of the most promising relates to solid waste management. With funding from IL&FS (Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services Limited) we have been able to develop a program in collaboration with Manav Rachna University in Faridabad.

Azamgarh Weaver's Festival 2017, Delhi: Mubarakpur

Azamgarh Festival 2017, Delhi: Nizamabad Pottery

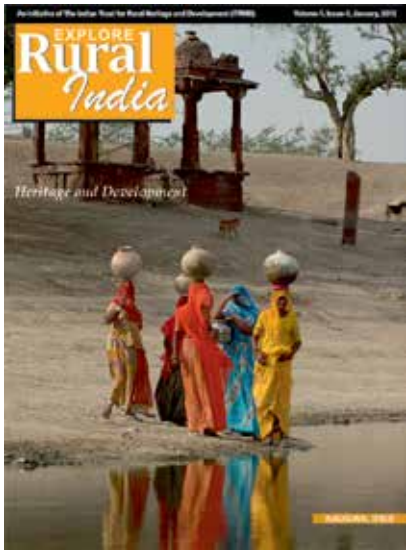
Government Partnerships

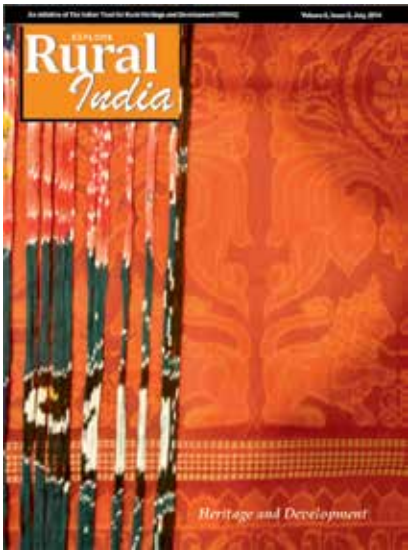
The grant of Rs. 5 crores that we received from the Ministry of Culture last year has allowed us to provide crucial support to several projects, although we are restricted to use of income on the corpus. For specific projects, we have found a number of State Governments to be supportive. Both Jharkhand and Telangana were early collaborators, and we have also had support from the U.P. Government for the Azamgarh Festivals. Currently we are in discussions with the Kerala Government regarding a very interesting project there.

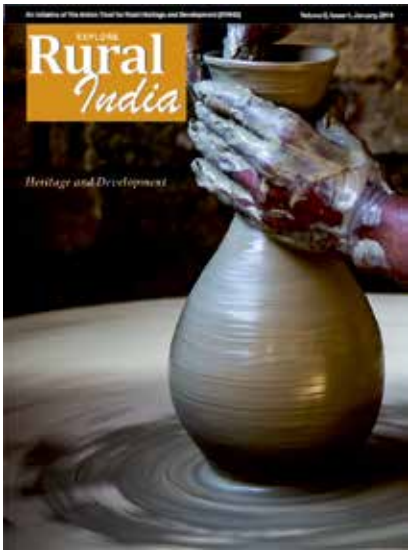
A great deal of my time and that of several of our other Trustees is devoted to securing and nurturing these partnerships with the States. It is a laborious and often frustrating exercise, and those of us who have come out of government backgrounds must utilize all our experience and persuasive skills. It can take time, and in several cases we have been working for extended periods to bring State government support to fruition. Eventually, the successful efforts justify the effort.

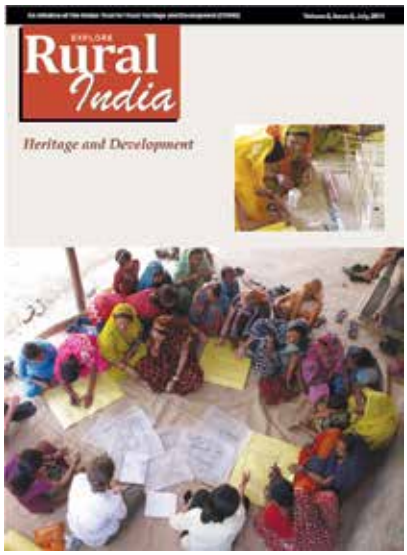
Publications

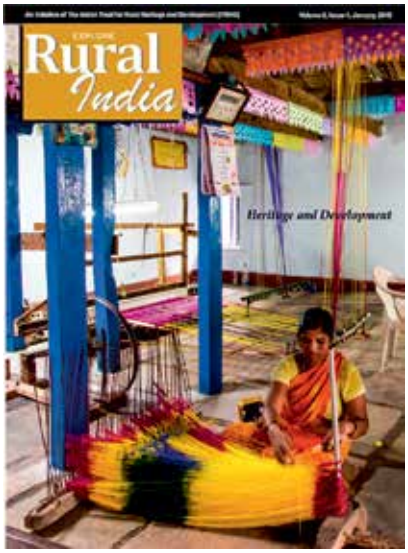
Since 2013 we have published eight issues of our **Explore Rural India** magazine with substantive articles on a wide variety of topics from contributors both in India and abroad. These have been made possible by revenue from advertisements and support from friends and personal contacts.

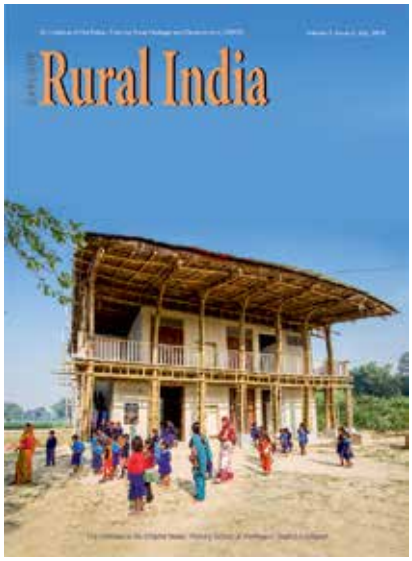


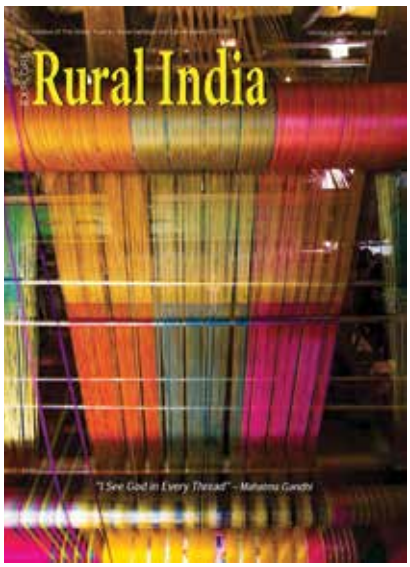


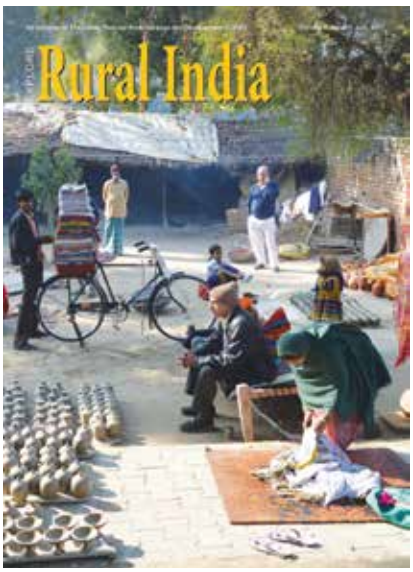












We have also published three specialized books, one on **Traditional Cuisines of India**, one on **Oral Traditions, Myths and Legends of India**, and the most recent on **Rural Sports and Games of India**. The last was funded by the Ministry of Sports of the Government of India, and will be distributed by them as well as by us.

International Partnerships

As a founder and Vice-Chairman of the International National Trusts Organisation (INTO) when I was Chairman of INTACH, I have been closely involved with all their activities. ITRHD was granted full membership in INTO soon after we were established, and I have served on the Executive Committee ever since. This relationship has been valuable to us in tangible ways (securing international contributors for our publications and advice and funding for some projects) as well as giving us a strong presence in the international heritage community. I, along with Maureen Liebl, Trustee, have been participating at all major INTO events, and Sangya Chaudhary, our Director of Rural Development, has also represented us at INTO events in Bali and the UK.

ITRHD Team

As an NGO, we depend totally on the commitment and dedication of our team. Our Trustees, our Finance and Executive Committees and our Advisors provide guidance and oversight, and several individuals among them have also provided critical financial and other support. In this regard I must especially acknowledge our Vice-Chairman Yogendra Narain, MJ Akbar, Harsh Lodha, KL Thapar, DV Kapur, PR Khanna, SSH Rehman, AGK Menon,

Laila Tyabji, Anita Singh, Ashwan Kapur, Naresh Arora, Amrita Singh and Maureen Liebl. Maharaja Gaj Singh (Bapji) of Jodhpur has been a constant source of encouragement. These colleagues and friends take a huge load off my shoulders and have made our growth and effectiveness possible.

Archana Capoor, our Member Secretary, is a tower of strength and her professionalism and financial expertise are absolutely critical. Sangya Chaudhary is Director of Rural Development as well as Editor of our publications, and her academic background and communication skills are extremely valuable. Several colleagues have contributed to the success of projects in various ways, and I must thank our Jharkhand HART Shreedeo Singh (whose contacts and expertise have ensured the success of the Maluti project), Shiban Ganju, S Krishnamoorthy, Harmeet Bajaj, Asha Rani Mathur, and Preeti Harit. Our former Member Secretary Pamela Bhandari continues to give us her good advice. Vikram Kalra designs and publishes all our journals and magazines, and tirelessly contributes his efforts to these activities.

Last but certainly not least, our modest office staff of Ambika Surendran, Arun Gupta, Gulshan Gojal, Neeraj Ganotra, Arvind Yadav and Anil Kumar work with great devotion.

ITRHD Team with Smt. Sheila Dikshit, former Chief Minister of Delhi at Azamgarh Festival, 2017, Delhi

We are grateful to the State Governments of Jharkhand, Telangana, Haryana and Punjab for reposing their trust in us, to the Ministry of Culture for lending support to our corpus, and to the Archaeological Survey of India and the Ministry of Sports for financial help. We are also thankful to Alliance Français for giving us their auditorium and exhibition spaces and support us in all our endeavours.

I look forward to continuing support from all of you, our patrons and friends, in carrying the movement forward. To remind: our website is being constantly upgraded and is at www.itrhd.com.

S. K. Misra
Chairman
The Indian Trust for Rural Heritage and Development (ITRHD)

Editorial

It gives me great pleasure in presenting the 9th issue of Explore Rural India. The effort of the entire Trust and the editorial team expended in the process of collection, sifting and editing of articles is immense and it is an enriching process for all of us involved to read in detail about the experiences of all the contributors. The voluntary action by such citizens to attain certain objectives in the best interest of the society and its heritage and culture is commendable.

We are all busy in our personal development, chosen vocations and personal obligations and in playing our part in the interdependence of the constituents of the society. The travel, the desk, the field, the stage, the education and our homes, all these obligations keep us busy and at times do not even leave us with any time for our own selves. However, we also have an obligation to our heritage, the heritage that is extremely patient with us and does not demand our attention but the lack of our attention towards it makes it wither away into oblivion. Merely because it is not unacceptable yet to ignore our heritage or our social responsibility, one should not ignore them, since left to themselves, our heritage and our social fabric will wither away to a stage where even a legal compulsion would not be enough to preserve it. Each one of us must therefore actively take out time from our busy schedules to either conceive of social programs or involve ourselves in such social programs that seek to conserve our heritage, both tangible and intangible and also result in betterment of the rural and downtrodden sections of the society.

If I were to mention one thing that is central to the theme of the articles that are regularly published in the magazine, it would be the strength of the indomitable human spirit. In any program or project that is successful in making an impact on the society in however small a manner, there is the presence of a selfless, motivated individual central to it wanting to make a difference to the life of others. This is the essence of the human spirit and also the essence of the various Trusts, Societies and other NGOs working to make a difference. There are so many avenues where these organisations are working and there are so many more where an effort would be more than welcome. Areas like women and child development, agriculture, water management etc. are all areas crying out for special attention on a small scale in areas and on a large scale in the country to make our society a better place. This is essential in the country's interest and can go a long way in eradicating the existence of a large number of its populace below the poverty line and to take them above it to a better standard of living.

The Indian Trust for Rural Heritage Development has been attempting to do exactly that through various projects despite the limitations it has faced that are common to any organisation. The publications of the Trust have also been driven by the intent to create a platform where best practices and effective implementation of ideas could be propagated to the section of society that can make the maximum impact in this sector. We have the utmost confidence that these publications will go a long way in inspiring more such success stories.

We are extremely thankful to all the contributors to this issue who have taken out some time to share with us their projects and experiences and have written for this publication. We would also like to sincerely thank everyone, who have financially contributed by purchasing advertisement slots, which help us run this publication. Without each one of you, Explore Rural India would be incomplete. I hope we have managed to bring to you another informative issue and one that you all enjoy reading. Best wishes!

Sangya Chaudhary
Editor & Director
Indian Trust for Rural Heritage and Development (ITRHD)

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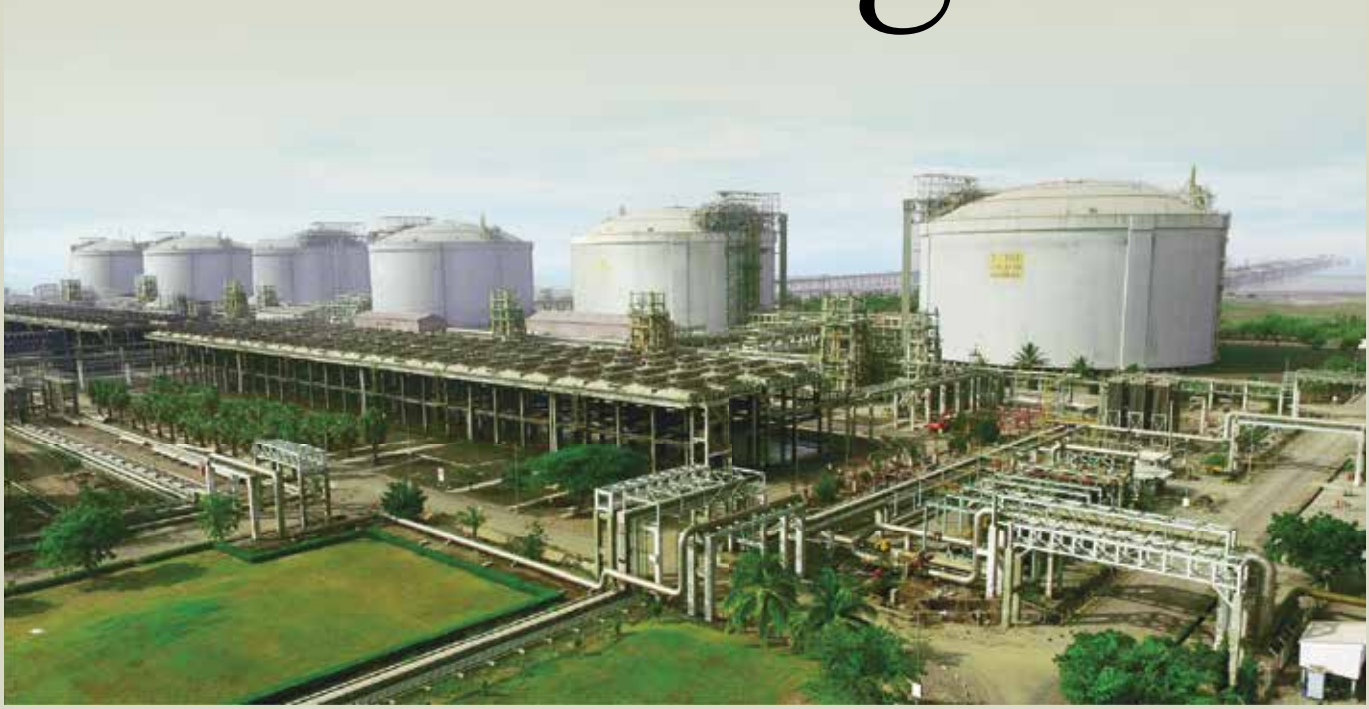
The answer to climate change, is change.



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Essential Strategies for Heritage Organisations Responding to Climate Change

Simon R Molesworth AO, QC

Preface

Climate influences all that we do and all that we have done in the course of human existence. Our lives in any particular place have been dependent upon our understanding, or rather expectation based on prediction, of the climate of that place. We have organized our lives, in fact our whole existence, in ways that respond, indeed respect, the climate. We have learnt to understand meteorological conditions as being, largely, beyond our control. Human history shows an acceptance that climate was beyond our influence – often our beliefs and philosophies would explain climatic change in terms of religion and/or the supernatural. However, as our scientific understanding of the natural world improved, we came to understand that humankind was not so disconnected from climate. Our management and mismanagement of our world could cause change. In more recent decades we have come to understand that the modern world has exploited natural resources to excess and the resultant anthropogenic climate change is the legacy with which we've cursed our present and future generations.

Over the centuries our responses to climate have molded our societies, influenced our cultural development and have, in part, influenced us so much so that our societal identities reflect the climates within which we have evolved. So our way of life, be it the way by which we produce and grow food, modify the natural environment and express ourselves culturally, all reflect the climate of our place. Our cultural creations and expressions: our traditions, our buildings, our art, song and dance all reflect the all-pervading influence of climate. Even the languages we used have evolved over the centuries, embedding into them terms and descriptions which reflect the climatic conditions we know and have expected to remain.

The anthropomorphic evolution that I have described has occurred throughout time at a pace that reflected a manageable timeframe, often brought about by conscious human decisions, the desire to survive or find a sustainable way of living being the strongest influences. So our communities have migrated to new territories, some have followed seasonal cycles, some have moved where sustenance was more assured. We've responded to extreme conditions, such as drought and flood, as required. We've learnt when such extremes are recurrent or predicable, strategically modifying our existence to accommodate the changes so as to lessen impacts when such conditions are repeated. Over time wars have been fought and the territories of others conquered, leading to influxes of new or replacement communities. All these territorial changes have required us to adapt, to evolve our ways of living, resulting in the evolution of cultural responses to the places where we settle.

Now overlay that social evolutionary process with anthropogenic climate change, where change is inexorably occurring at a such a scale and at such a rate that the vast majority, if not all, of the world's societies will concurrently face change: change that is not freely chosen but rather uncomfortably faced as inevitable, reflecting the global human community's mismanagement of the planet. Perhaps this global anthropogenic climate change began in an excusable, yet unfortunate, manner: out of sheer ignorance when human kind didn't understand the signs of global change. Perhaps we were tardy, or "conveniently blind" pandering to short-term expediency, but whatever the origins, the science is now understood. Now that we understand these changes, there is no room for excuses: to simply witness such changes without making the effort to counterbalance them would be inexcusable. We are now duty-charged to respond appropriately – and we must do so for that most primal of instincts, to survive. But more than that, the intellectual "property" in our collective cultural development is deserving of effort: effort that might see our respective cultures, the physical and intangible manifestations of our culture, survive so that future generations at least have a chance to appreciate, understand and celebrate that which went before.

Climate change will increasingly present a plethora of complicated, and sometimes polycentric, challenges for heritage organisations, including the world's National Trusts – organizations such as ITRHD - entrusted with conserving built and intangible cultural heritage. These challenges should not be ignored or awaited passively until the difficulty and cost of effectively responding proves crippling. Rather, in adopting a precautionary

approach to heritage conservation, an integrated and comprehensive 'toolkit' of climate change strategies should be developed and implemented.

This climate change 'toolkit' must include both strategies capable of achieving the clever and sympathetic adaptation of heritage properties to a changing climate and strategies that enable National Trusts and heritage organisations to effectively reduce their carbon footprint. Moreover, National Trusts and heritage organisations should recognise and fully carry out their duties with respect to climate change – namely: leading by example by becoming exemplars; advocating for responsible and necessary sustainability action; and protecting against, and responding to, the loss of intangible cultural heritage.

This paper advocates for the adoption of thirteen such strategies, which are considered to be essential for National Trusts and like heritage organisations to properly respond to anthropogenic climate change.

Introduction

Climate change will increasingly present a plethora of complicated, and sometimes polycentric, challenges for National Trusts and like heritage organisations entrusted with conserving built and intangible cultural heritage. Unfortunately, "a comprehensive understanding of the impacts of climate change on cultural heritage and resources across various continents and disciplines is noticeably absent from the [relevant] literature".[1] Nevertheless, it is critical that these challenges are not ignored or awaited passively until the difficulty and cost of effectively responding proves crippling. To adopt a "wait and see" approach would be inexcusable. Rather, in adopting a precautionary approach to heritage conservation, an integrated and comprehensive 'toolkit' of climate change strategies should be developed and implemented.

World Heritage harbour city of Valletta, the capital of Malta, vulnerable to rising sea level

1 See, eg, S Fatoric and E Seekamp, "Are cultural heritage and resources threatened by climate change? A systematic literature review" (2017) 142(1-2) *Climatic Change* 227.

This climate change 'toolkit' must include both strategies capable of achieving the clever and sympathetic adaptation of heritage properties to a changing climate and strategies that enable National Trusts and heritage organisations to effectively reduce their carbon footprint. Moreover, National Trusts and like heritage organisations should recognise and fully carry out their duties with respect to climate change – namely: leading by example by becoming exemplars; advocating for responsible and necessary sustainability action; and protecting against, and responding to, the loss of intangible cultural heritage.

This paper advocates for the adoption of thirteen such strategies, which are considered to be essential for National Trusts and like heritage organisations to properly respond to climate change. We the current generation owe it to future generations to adopt this course.

Adaptation Strategies

Adaptive Strategy 1 – Addressing deterioration in buildings and structures

World Heritage megalithic temple site of Hagar Qim in Malta, shielded from climatic conditions by canopy erected over entire site

A changing climate will undoubtedly impact upon the physical condition of heritage buildings and structures. For example, if climate change leads to increasingly moist or dry conditions at the locale in which a heritage building is situated, these changed conditions will likely have significant impacts, potentially seriously detrimental impacts, on the physical condition of that building. Indeed, in 2010, Smith et al concluded that "[e]nvironmental controls on stone decay processes appear to be changing rapidly as a consequence of changing climate".[2]

2 B J Smith et al, "A commentary on climate change, stone decay dynamics and the 'greening' of natural stone buildings: new perspectives on 'deep wetting'" (2011) 63 *Environmental Earth Sciences* 1691-1700, 1701.

World Heritage megalithic temple site of Hagar Qim in Malta, protected from climatic extremes

Thus, it will become increasingly imperative that National Trusts and heritage organisations develop comprehensive strategies to analyse the possible and probable physical changes resulting from climate change. Moreover, it will be essential that recurrent condition reports, prepared by professionals, are carried out to identify and monitor the deterioration of heritage buildings and structures. Yet, the capacity to effectively monitor the condition of heritage should be expanded by encouraging "community involvement in recording and monitoring the historic environment through projects such as CITiZAN",[3] which has "established [a] network of volunteers to record, monitor and promote the significant, fragile and threatened archaeological sites around England's coast".[4]

Training volunteers to support professional heritage conservation practitioners. Here CITiZAN volunteers are recording shipwreck remains on a vulnerable English coastline at Seven Sisters, East Sussex

Adaptive Strategy 2 – Addressing deterioration in heritage collections and materials

Climate change will have consequences for the management of collections of heritage significance by National Trusts and like heritage organisations. Amongst other impacts, materials within heritage collections may be vulnerable to greater solar exposure, more extreme hot or cold temperatures and wetter or dryer weather conditions.[5]

Moreover, "[g]lobal temperature increases [may] lead to the spread of insects and other potentially damaging organisms into previously inhospitable areas, putting organic materials at risk".[6] Hence, recurrent and systematic analysis of such impacts and endangering processes will be essential to ensure the proper precautionary management of heritage collections.[7] For example, conservators ought to prepare thorough materials management plans that identify and consider the probable and possible impacts of climate change and delineate the necessary strategies to effectively monitor and respond to such impacts.

As the physical manifestations of climate change will vary from place to place, so it will be that the impacts will vary. Hence it will never be possible for one management plan within an organization to cover all circumstances and conditions. A heritage organization will need to carefully attune their management plans on a case by case basis, modifying the requirements and strategies according to the particular circumstances of the climatic conditions of the particular district, the characteristics of each place and the heritage collections within that place

Insect infestation can be a consequence of changing climatic conditions. This "Encyclopedie" written by Denis Diderot in 1780 book has been riddled by bookworm requiring conservation treatment

Adaptive Strategy 3 – Initiating and maintaining skills training programmes.

National Trusts and like heritage organisations will be unable to effectively and efficiently respond to the challenges posed by climate change unless the skilled people upon whom they rely are adequately equipped with the necessary skills to determine and then implement practical climate change strategies. Therefore, training programmes should be devised to

3 H Fluck, *Climate Change Adaptation Report* (Historic England, Report No 28/2016, 2016) 44.

4 CITiZAN, 'About Us' <www.citizan.org.uk/about-us/> accessed 10 July 2017.

5 See, eg, M Roberts, J Lloyd and J Hopkinson, *Forecast Changeable* (National Trust UK, 2015) 8.

6 J Adams, "Global Climate Change: Every Cultural Site at Risk?" in M Petzet and J Ziesemer (eds), *Heritage at Risk: ICOMOS World Report 2006/2007 on Monuments and Sites in Danger* (ICOMOS, 2008) 195.

7 See, eg, P Brimblecombe and P Lankester, "Long-term changes in climate and insect damage in historic houses" (2012) *Studies in Conservation* 1.

appropriately re-train (or train), inter alia, architects, builders, material conservators, restoration tradespeople and horticulturalists. These programmes ought to equip these professionals with the requisite competency and knowledge to address climate change related challenges.[8]

As most National Trusts and like heritage organisations rely to a large extent on the support and skills of a volunteer supplementary workforce, providing essential support to the professional staff teams, the same skills training programmes should be made available to volunteers.

To this end, National Trusts and heritage organisations ought to offer, or sponsor, essential training programmes and actively collaborate with relevant tertiary institutions and professional organisations. Furthermore, the diverse range of properties held by National Trusts and heritage organisations make such properties ideally suited to host well-designed and appropriate training programmes. Learning "on the ground", with practical demonstrations and examples, will surpass mere theory any day.

Adaptive Strategy 4 – Adopting sustainable garden and estate management practices.

National Trust of Australia (Victoria)'s National Heritage listed garden estate of Rippon Lea, with management plan in accord with sustainability principles

Climate change will pose considerable and complex physical challenges for the maintenance of estates and gardens of heritage significance. One important challenge will be that created by significant changes to rainfall patterns. Indeed, it has been observed that "[w]ater shortage is likely to be the most serious single impact of climate change on gardens".[9] In some parts of the world, the opposite extreme will be an outcome of climate change, with excess water challenging many places around the globe: with melting mountain glacial fields, snow fields and polar caps, increased sea levels all being predicted occurrences.

If the objective of a particular heritage estate, managed by a National Trust or like heritage organization, is to maintain the property as an example of a past lifestyle – a cultural timepiece - by retaining its style, design, composition and characteristics – it will be critical to properly understand how that desired static state can be preserved despite potentially significant changes to rainfall patterns. Depending on the circumstances, it may be necessary to establish the infrastructure to collect, store and harvest water or to protect a property from excessive water by shielding particular features and re-directing water flow.[10]

Wicken Fen, a National Trust property near Cambridge, England, where vulnerable and disappearing fen environment is carefully managed

Another opportunity for National Trusts is to offer their properties as places where bio-diversity offsets might be established. Given that heritage organisations collectively own tens of thousands of properties across the globe, tree planting and more intense revegetation opportunities should be available in many places. In circumstances where developments might have been allowed in places which have resulted in the removal of vegetation, such as trees which act as "green lungs", many regulatory systems require those responsible for such developments to off-set the calculated environmental harm (and so consequential long-term impact on climate change) by replanting or revegetating in other places. In exchange for payment, thereby raising much needed revenue for related heritage conservation projects, National Trusts can most probably make available many places where carbon off-setting can occur. A win-win for all participants, the Trusts can have the plantations or wood lots on their properties augmented with the cost being met by others, such as developers in the circumstances just described, whilst concurrently creating further green lungs to absorb carbon dioxide.

8 See, eg, The (UK) Historic and Botanic Garden Trainee Programmes <http://hbgtp.org.uk/about-the-programmes/> accessed 10 July 2017; National Trust (UK) Volunteer Management Traineeship Programme <www.nationaltrust.org.uk/projects/volunteer-management-traineeship> accessed 10 July 2017.

9 R Bisgrove and P Hadley, *Gardening in the Global Greenhouse: The Impacts of Climate Change on Gardens in the UK* (Technical Report, UK Climate Impacts Programme, 2002) 83.

10 See ibid, 83-84.

Adaptive Strategy 5 – Monitoring & documenting change in heritage garden & estates

Eucalyptus gillii trees in a private conservation reserve established by the author and his wife Lindy. Research underway to understand why these 200+ year old trees are no longer regenerating. Climate change impact suspected

In many circumstances, responding to climate change may require National Trusts and heritage organisations to adopt a pragmatic strategy of managing and adapting particular heritage estates and gardens to the changing climate. Rather than resist the inevitable change, in a futile fashion expending significance resources in the effort, it may be decided to adopt an approach to transition the place, monitoring the process of change. If such a strategy is adopted, it will be incumbent upon the responsible entity, say a National Trust owner, to properly understand the desired transition from, for instance, the past and existing plant communities to the likely future plant communities which will more likely survive in the changed conditions.

In order for such an evolution to be successful, and to be accepted by the public, this evolution **must** be properly explained. The carefully determined communication strategy is essential. Moreover, the evolution of such places should be recorded and interpreted for both educational purposes and to protect the historical legacy of what was and will no longer be.[11] Being able to understand the new "present" in the context of the lost past, can be instructive as a means to understand the process of change as well as being respectful of that which was before. Good heritage practice facilitates such a process of understanding, enabling a greater understanding of comparative values.

Adaptive Strategy 6 – Monitoring & managing changing pest & disease conditions

Heritage estates and gardens will undergo considerable biophysical changes as a result of climate change. These changes must be identified and understood to allow appropriate strategies to be developed to respond to the associated challenges.

Two important challenges that conservators of historic estates and gardens will have to grapple with are the spread of problematic pest species and the increasing level of risk poses by plant diseases such as moulds, funguses and viruses. Consequently, strategies (sometimes controversial) must be developed to both prevent and address these challenges.

For example, the Royal Botanic Gardens of Melbourne and Sydney have had to devise and implement a strategy to address the damage caused by roosting flying fox colonies to the biodiversity of those gardens.[12] The flying foxes were an animal that in past decades only lived in the northern reaches of Australia, in hot humid tropical conditions. In the last twenty or so years these animals progressively moved further south into environments that never before had experienced the impact of such creatures. With the increasing warmth further south in Australia from the northern climes, the flying foxes' natural habitat, the impacts were unacceptable from a heritage garden perspective. Natural resilience in the plant species had not evolved, so the heritage gardens became vulnerable to extremes of predation. Further, being heritage gardens, conflicts between human enjoyment of these places and the now vast numbers of these non-endemic animals in a new home required the adoption of emergency strategies.

Mitigation Strategies

Mitigation Strategy 1 – Reducing the carbon footprint with sustainable energy initiatives

National Trusts and like heritage organisations have a moral obligation to take action to reduce their carbon footprints and, in so doing, mitigating climate change. In particular, strategies to reduce energy usage – by, for example, relying on renewable energy sources instead of fossil fuel energy sources – will be necessary.

Having committed to reducing its carbon emissions from energy use by 45 per cent by 2020, the National Trust (UK) is an exemplar organisation in this respect.[13] Heritage organisations may be able to secure corporate and government support to facilitate this transition to a sustainable energy future.[14]

11 See, eg, M Morrison and L Clausen, *Cruden Farm Garden Diaries* (Penguin, 2017).

12 See, eg, "Flying fox relocation" (Off Track, ABC Radio National, 1 July 2012) <www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/offtrack/flying-fox-relocation/4100340> accessed 10 July 2017.

13 See, National Trust (UK), "Our energy targets"<www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/our-energy-targets> accessed 10 July 2017.

14 See, eg, National Trust (Vic). "Federal Funding announced for Rippon Lea Carbon Reduction Project" (13 July 2012) <www.nationaltrust.org.au/news/federal-funding-announced-for-rippon-lea-carbon-reduction-project/> accessed 10 July 2017.

Mitigation Strategy 2 – Reducing carbon footprint with green transport & equipment

Only electric vehicles inside 14th Century Chinese World Heritage city of Ping Yao

Even the police vehicles are electric in World Heritage Ping Yao

Similarly, National Trusts and heritage organisations should endeavor to embrace cutting edge technologies capable of reducing their carbon footprints. For example, green transport and green equipment should increasingly supplant existing stock: visitors should be encouraged to walk, cycle[15] or use electric vehicles on heritage properties[16] and equipment and machinery should increasingly be powered by renewable energy.

With respect to organisational management, rapid advances in information technology should obviate the need for human movement to the extent currently required. Additionally, the formation of partnerships between heritage organisations and tertiary research institutions, to identify new sustainable property management approaches, will be fruitful. Innovation, in response to the challenges of climate change, is likely to be the outcome of scientific research that is occurring globally. The National Trusts and like heritage organisations, being largely in the public eye due to their custodianship of thousands of heritage properties worldwide, have the opportunity to be true exemplars, allowing their properties to demonstrate sites and exemplars of responsible and sustainable property management.

Mitigation Strategy 3 – Sustainable water management

National Trusts and heritage organisations should implement strategies to avoid excessive water use and associated energy use. Water is too valuable a resource to be allowed to be wasted. The objective of such strategies should be to simultaneously discourage the excessive use of water, whilst developing the capacity to harvest, store and reuse water through grey water and water purification approaches.[17] A program which has achieved impressive results in this respect is the National Trust (Wales) 'fit for the future' program.[18]

The lake in Rippon Lea, the National Heritage listed property in Melbourne of the National Trust of Australia. Sustainably harvested water from surrounding urban streets reused on the heritage gardens

The National Trust of Australia (Victoria)'s National Heritage List property Rippon Lea is a very early example of sustainable property management. The system was designed in the 19th Century to capture and reuse water from the surrounding neighbourhood, using a large ornamental lake as a storage basin. Still functional, the captured water is pumped throughout the heritage gardens. Recurrently, the lake sludge is dredged and then reused as fertilizer on the gardens. This system of water recycling was originally pumped by water pump windmill, using the renewable power of the wind. In short, the property demonstrates a multi-faceted approach of sustainable property management in a climate change context.

Mitigation Strategy 4 – Waste not, want not.

Finally, National Trusts and heritage organisations should formulate strategies to reduce, reuse and

15 See, eg, National Trust (UK), "Cycling" <www.nationaltrust.org.uk/cycling> accessed 10 July 2017; J Pascoe, "Cycling is at the hub of National Trust's new initiative" *Guardian* (online) 15 March 2011 <www.theguardian.com/environment/bike-blog/2011/mar/15/cycling-hub-national-trust-new-initiative> accessed 10 July 2017.

16 See, eg, Y Zhang and Q Zhou, "Research on Developing Strategy of the Ancient City Pingyao Based on Low-Carbon Tourism" (2012) 573-574 *Advanced Materials Research* 762.

17 See, eg, M Roberts, J Lloyd and J Hopkinson, *Forecast Changeable* (National Trust UK, 2015) 8.

18 See, eg, P Mandeville and D Rajasingham, "Sustainability in the Museum sector" (Museums and Heritage Advisor < http://advisor.museumsandheritage.com/features/sustainability-in-the-museum-sector/> accessed 10 July 2017.

recycle waste. To provide only a few examples, heritage properties can commence (or intensify) composting programmes, produce sustainable heating bricks from farm waste and utilise sustainably harvested timber. Such strategies will reduce operating costs and allow for the realisation of sustainability objectives. More ambitiously than recycling, reusing and reducing waste, the National Trust for Historic Preservation (USA) has established a Preservation Green Lab to carry out research on how waste can be reduced by encouraging the reuse of existing (but not necessarily heritage) buildings, rather than such buildings being prematurely demolished and replaced.[19]

Duties

The duty to advocate

All National Trusts and heritage organisations, as custodians of significant cultural heritage, have a duty to aspire to be a proactive advocate for responsible climate change action. These organisations, from their volunteers through to their leaders, should talk about sustainability, write about sustainability and adopt effective communication strategies to promote sustainability objectives and strategies.[20]

Inherent in this duty is the obligation to encourage the public to reduce their carbon footprint. For instance, the National Trust (UK) has created a webpage, in partnership with the renewable energy provider Good energy, which provides the public with information on "[t]en ways to be greener".[21]

"Ten Ways to be Greener" – National Trust for England, Wales & Northern Ireland – leading by example with website initiative in partnership with renewable energy provider Goodenergy

19 See Preservation Leadership Forum, "Preservation Green Lab" <http://forum.savingplaces.org/act/pgl?_ga=2.155521339.1672742180.1499661254-307833118.1499661254> accessed 10 July 2017.

20 See, eg, National Trust (UK), "Green energy building design guides" <www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/green-energy-building-design-guides> accessed 10 July 2017.

21 See, eg, National Trust (UK), "Ten ways to be greener" <www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/ten-ways-to-be-greener> accessed 10 July 2017.

Another proactive strategy, especially for membership-based organisations and influential organisations with a respected reputation, such as is often the case with many National Trusts, is to create an awards scheme. Heritage organisations, such as National Trusts, can incentivise people to focus on sustainability by incorporating sustainability focused awards in their annual reporting programme. If they have existing heritage awards covering traditional areas of activity they ought to be expanded to embrace achievements or successes within the range of proactive adaptive and mitigation strategies recommended earlier in this paper. This would ensure that the successful work of exemplary people and organisations are recognized and highlighted in public forums and in the media.

The duty to shape the law

Birthplace of Democracy, Runnymede, appropriately a National Trust property in England. Advocacy for responsible environmental policies worldwide is our duty

National Trusts and heritage organisations should also become proactive advocates for responsible climate change action at a macro level. The lobbying of legislators and governments to introduce or strengthen laws, regulations and policies concerning climate change should be seen as central to their guiding objectives. For example, the Australian Council of National Trusts collaborated with the Australian Wind Energy Association to carry out the Wind Energy and Landscape Values Project. This project assisted Australian Governments in establishing appropriate

regulatory regimes to facilitate renewable energy whilst protecting against the unacceptable impacts of such development, such as on precious landscapes.[22] Identifying and thereafter advocating for the protection of cultural and natural landscapes has been a traditional role for many National Trusts, whereas supporting wind farm installations has been difficult. So the identification of a collaborative approach whereby renewable energy installations were concurrently supported – in acceptable locations – whilst landscapes to be protected were identified, was seen as groundbreaking for the National Trust movement given the past controversies.

Urgenda Climate Change litigation court room in the Netherlands – setting the precedent for global advocacy

Perhaps more importantly, National Trusts and heritage organisations should similarly participate in, and contribute to, the international deliberations which could lead to, in a trickle-down fashion, the eventual enactment of consequential national laws. Achieving reforms globally through effective and persuasive influence is in the interests of the global heritage movement. The importance of INTO itself performing this role, on behalf of the heritage fraternity, is indisputable.

The duty to protect intangible cultural heritage

Finally, in the context of my opening observations in the preface to this paper, it is critical to emphasise that National Trusts and heritage organisations have a paramount duty to protect and conserve intangible cultural heritage associated with places. As such, it must be recognised that a critical and all too often over-looked consequence of climate change is the loss of cultural knowledge, cultural connectivity and the "sense of place" derived from the intergenerational affinity of a people to their locality. Climate change is likely to cause people to move: put simply, how and where people have traditionally lived will be in jeopardy in many parts of the world. Cultural traditions of art, craft, music, folklore and language are all fragile and susceptible as people are relocated and dispossessed by climate change.

22 See Australian Council of National Trusts, *Wind Farms and Landscape Values* (Pirion Printers, March 2005).

Intergenerational equity – our duty to future generations: children in Chinese World Heritage city of Ping Yao

To properly carry out this duty, National Trusts and heritage organisations must marshal their resources – including, for example, their educational programmes - to safeguard and interpret cultural heritage legacies.[23] So, if a people are relocated from the coast to the mountains or from an island to a mainland, it is the heritage fraternity of National Trusts and heritage organisations that will be uniquely placed to foster, celebrate and understand their cultures. This fraternity will ensure that dynamic and 'living' repositories are established which, overtime, may become an essential cultural resource for successive generations.

Conclusion

This paper has briefly outlined thirteen essential strategies that National Trusts and heritage organisations ought to adopt in order to effectively respond to the challenges posed by climate change. This is by no means a comprehensive list of all the necessary or useful climate change strategies that could be adopted to protect and conserve cultural and natural heritage. It should also be stressed that there is no one-size-fits-all method or approach to devising and implementing the above mentioned strategies. In fact, it is critical that each National Trust and heritage organisation carefully devises and implements its own unique particular model of each of the above strategies to effectively respond to climate change. Yet, it should also be stressed that National Trusts and heritage organisations must collaborate with, and learn from, one another to ensure that the heritage fraternity successfully upholds its paramount obligation to conserve the heritage of the world. As this paper has shown, this is especially so given the increasing complexities and challenges posed by a changing climate to the proper conservation of heritage.

The article is based on a presentation to the 17th International Conference of National Trusts in September 2017 in Ubud, Bali, Indonesia.

23 See, eg, V Herrmann, "America's Eroding Edges" (National Trust for Historic Preservation (USA)) <https://savingplaces.org/americas-eroding-edges?_ga=2.217980566.1672742180.1499661254-307833118.1499661254> accessed 10 July 2017.


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Vernacular Architecture of Sonepur, Odisha

Sangeeta Bais

Abstract

India has a unique diversity in rural vernacular architecture which has been evolved throughout the ages with repeated and continued experimentation of the local communities with the climatic conditions, geology, geography, social customs and traditional occupation. Although we have a rich vernacular architecture, which is continuing since ages, very few studies and researches are available to showcase the materials and construction techniques used. This paper attempts to explore the materials and construction techniques of tribal settlements of Sonepur, that is extraordinarily unique and at the same time multifarious and till now architecturally unexplored.

Sonepur, is a district of Odisha state, located on the confluence of two rivers. It is also known as Second Varanasi of India for its cluster of temples having architectural importance and tantric (sicsic) mystiques. Rural Sonepur, is primarily habited by tribes who are engaged in traditional crafts of silk, handloom, patta chitra and terracotta. Social strata, arts and crafts, geography and geology of the area have generated a unique kind of vernacular settlement where locally available materials have been used in the construction of the houses.

1. Forward

The present research is an outcome of a site survey done in 1998 and 2005. Academic research was carried out in 1998 as a part of Masters Program in Architectural Conservation, which was further enhanced by a later site visit in 2005. In the first instance, the architecture of the place looks very common but after an evaluation of the shaping factors, we were impressed by the uniqueness of the structures are inevitable.

It is an outstanding example to understand the interplay of the culture, climatic condition, occupation, social customs and geography to evolve a phenomenal vernacular architecture. The vernacular architecture of Sonepur looks very simple and plain but at the same time it is architecturally very impressive. Generally we ignore the precious vernacular architecture because of their simplicity and we do not find any aesthetics into this. This paper also aims to highlight these hidden architectural treasures, which are still not explored in a right way and therefore not appreciated.

The data presented here is an analysis of the several local factors that are responsible for the creation of a unique vernacular architecture of the place. The town has been studied in terms of its various cultural components, eco system, the physical form, social structure, economy base, which defines the cultural heritage of Sonepur.

2. About Sonepur

Sonepur, also known as the temple town of western Odisha, is a small town situated at the confluence of river Mahanandi and river Tel in the western highlands of Odisha. Presently the district headquarters of the district of the same name has a population of just over 1, 45,000 inhabitants (according to 1991 census) and covers an area of about 6 square miles. The town is in a remote region, which is only connected through road network linking the major towns of Bolangir and Cuttack and has no railway linkages because of which, once a flourishing town, it has become a stagnant and under developed town and has lost its importance considerably.

3. Historical Background

Historically, it has been the capital town of Bhanjas and then the Somvanshish, who ruled the region till the 11th century AD. Later it had acted as merely a military outpost as the capital was shifted to Cuttok and it did not have much importance till 16th century when it became the separate state under Chauhans.

The geographical location and features make it a flourishing state as compared to the others states of the region. The Chauhans were very great patron for temple construction and therefore a large number of temples were constructed in the town. The temples were dedicated to Savaite/ Vaisnavite and the Sakti cults, which gave the place a distinct religious significance to the region. The Chohan ruled continued till the merger of the state to Odisha in 1948 AD. During the Marathas and the British regime, Sonepur acted as feudatory state under the Chohan. After independence this became a sub division headquarter of Balangir district till 1993 AD when it was given the status of a new district.

4. Key Factors Responsible for Defining the Vernacular Architecture of Sonepur

Temples of Sonepur

Landforms with water ponds

4.1 Geography of the Place

Sonepur is located at the confluence of two rivers, which is religiously very significant in Indian context. Several temples were constructed throughout the ages is the area due to significant location which attracts regional pilgrims for various religious occasions. These religious gathering generally

organized in the open areas around the temples. Landforms with catchment area with a slope towards the rivers provide opportunity to create small water ponds (tanks) to store water, which is being utilized by the villagers for the agricultural needs.

4.2 Natural Resource

Sonepur has abundance of natural resources, rivers, water bodies, forest and the land which binds with the culture of the community providing an ecological inter relationship dependency thus creating a distinct eco system of the place. Locally available materials play an important role in shaping up the vernacular architecture of the place. Forest is the major source of the building material required for roofing, walls and floors.

- Forest provides the wooden members and bamboos for the roofing of the houses. Rest of the woods has been used for the door, windows and other accessories.
- Other forest products such as leafs and bamboos also provides economic base to the local community.
- Agricultural resources such as thatch used in the roofing and rice husk to mix with the mud for the mortar to improve the workability.
- Rivers and local ponds supply good quality of earth for the pottery as well as for the construction.

4.3 Arts and Crafts

Sonepur is famous for exquisite arts and crafts, which are typical to the regions. The arts and crafts that are significant in Sonepur are:

- Sonepur weaving cluster are specialized in tie & dye and *bomkai* design in Sari. The other products of this cluster are plain cotton sari, plain silk sari with *bandha* design and ladies dress material.

Weavers of Sonepur

- Sonepur is one of the places in Odisha, which still produce ganjifa cards which is one of the traditional games. The traditional *ganjifa* cards are handmade and hand painted, each single card being a work of art. Groups of Chitrakars, painters and craftsmen produced cards in diverse styles. The process of making ganjifa cards is laborious and it involves all members of a family.

Ganifa Cards

- Terracotta is traditionally done by the tribes of Odisha. They use special type of clay to give shape to their imaginations through their skillful hand. Popular items of terracotta include roof tiles and utensils such as plates, *khullars* or the earthen tea cups, jars and many other kitchen items. Artists prepare many items most of which they outline and highlight with colors. However, in most cases the finishes are in natural terracotta color. Animal figurines of bulls, elephants and horses are also elegantly molded in very natural strong forms.
- Each of these crafts are done by different community and each community live together in a cluster. The design of individual cluster as well as the houses is derived by the spatial needs of the individual crafts.

4.4 Religious Background

Sonepur has a significant role as a cultural core of Western Odisha. This is the only town, which is known for its Savaite/ Vaisnavite, Sakti and Tantrik traditions. Being a place dominated by the tribal, associated with tantrik ritual and traditions, the festivals like Balijatra and Niyamadajatra, plays an important role in binding the communities (both tribes and non tribes). These festivals attract a lot of pilgrims and tourist from all over the region.

Settlements have big open areas around the temples as well as within the settlements for the religious rituals. These open areas not only used for the religious activities but also for the common community activities.

The architectural character of Sonepur has evolved due to constant interplay between eco system, cultural affinity and the regional influence. Each of them is linked by a common system of adaptation, and transformation.

5. A Description of the Vernacular Architecture of Sonepur

In first glance, the vernacular architecture looks very simple and very similar to the rural architecture of other places. Its distinct architectural features are visible on the external or internal facade. One can understand and enjoy it only after analyzing the existing settlement fabric with in regard to the local community, their traditions, social structure, occupations, landforms and climatic conditions. This paper reflects how these factors are considered to design the best suited house form for the local community.

5.1 Settlement Pattern

The vernacular housing of Sonepur is comprised of several clusters, which are scattered all over, linked by road networks. The location of individual cluster is based on their social structure and their occupation. Main core is generally dominated by the upper caste and lower castes are located in outer areas.

All the clusters have different characteristics such as fisherman community is the densest and has narrow internal road. These are generally located on the riverbank. The Shoemakers is a lower caste and lives in the outskirts. This cluster has mainly row houses with a center road connecting all the houses. On the other hand, the weaver's community, who is economically better has bigger houses and have common open areas.

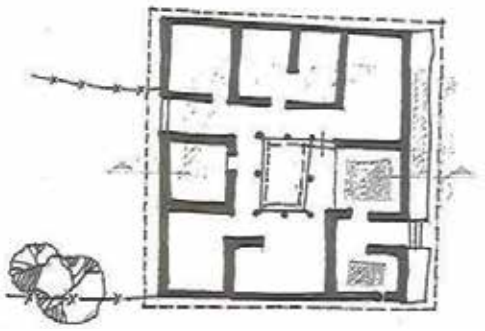
5.2 Open Areas

Open areas are important factors for shaping up any housing for several community related activities. Being a popular religious destination it attracts several pilgrims from all over the regions. It demands big open areas for these gatherings. All the temples have big open area all around which has been used of the religious gatherings. Besides this, there are open areas for community in the form of *chowks*. These areas have been used for several activities along with the community based religious activities.

5.3 Types of Houses

There are several types of houses in the settlements. Occupation of the community plays an important role in designing the house like the weaver's house demands a place for weaving, dyeing the thread, therefore these houses have courtyards, rooms for weaving table etc.

5.3.1 *Meher Pada* (Weaver's Housing)



Weaver's House with central courtyard, Weaver's workshop & long verandah used for thread making & dyeing

This cluster belongs to weaver's community. The cluster comprised of set of rooms and individual open area, which could be front yard, backyard or a courtyard. The activities of weaver demand a certain quality of space that is both interior and exterior and accordingly the houses were designed traditionally. These activities govern the placement of the spaces within and around the house, which gives shape to the built form as well as the settlement.

The different activities performed in a weaving process and the types of spaces they require are:

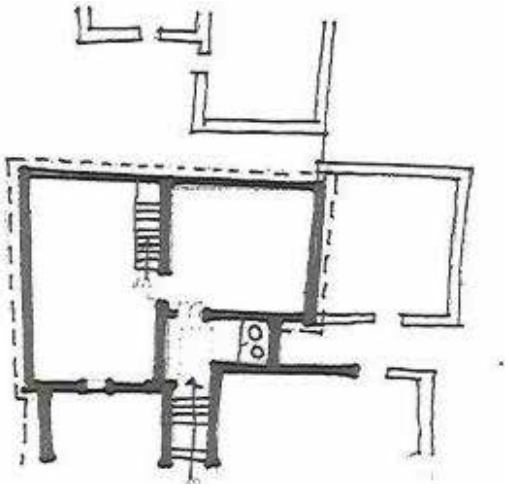
- Spinning and winding of thread which requires open area
- Knitting of thread according to design is done is closed space
- Dyeing of thread is done in an open area which is the open area with the individual house
- Weaving the products is an indoor activity where they keep a handloom machine

The individual house unit is comparatively bigger than other cluster as these communities were patronized by the previous rulers. This community is economically well off, so besides having spaces for their occupational needs, they also have cattle-sheds and storage areas for the agricultural needs

5.3.2 *Lohar's* Housing (Ironman's Housing)

This settlement belongs to *Lohars*, who stays away from the main settlement. Their houses are basically of single bay type without any private courtyard or open area. All the activities of the crafts carried out in the bay.
They share facilities like open areas within the settlements for the community gathering and domestic purpose.

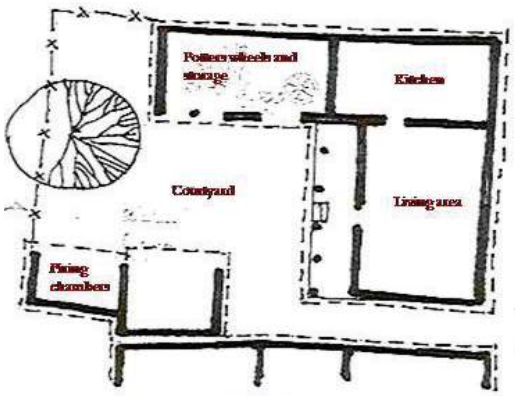
5.3.3 *Keuta Pada* (Fisherman's Housing)



Fisherman's House with single chamber or two rooms with narrow lanes

This cluster belongs to the fisherman community always lives along the river. Their day to day activities completely depend upon the river and thus they have open area along the river. It is a dense housing comprise of single room house unit. There is not much open area within the housing cluster. The open areas along the river are the major activity area, which is used for fishnets, boats, drying the fish, storing the fish etc. Houses are very small and comprised of a single chamber of approximate size 8' x 10' which is mainly use for the household activities. Few houses had verandah (partial open chamber).

5.3.4 *Kumhar Pada* (Potter's House)



Potter's House with backyard, firing chamber away from the living area

The activities of the potter define the design and spatial layout of the house unit. The basic spaces they require are a workshop, storage space, furnace area and living are

- Preparing clay for the pottery such soaking and storing before use which is done in open area
- Making pottery products using potters wheels requires indoor space
- Slow drying of the pottery requires indoor storage space before firing
- Firing is done in an open room away from the living room
- Fired potteries then kept in the open courtyard for cooling and then either stored or sold out
- Living area and the working area are distinctly demarcated and are separate.

5.3.5 *Mali House* (Gardener House)

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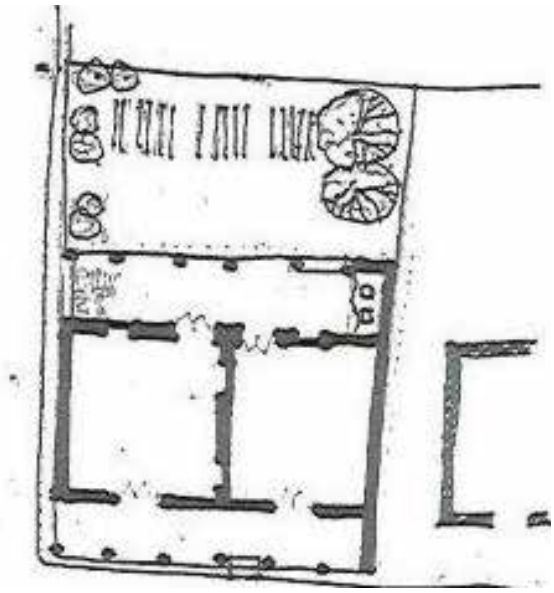
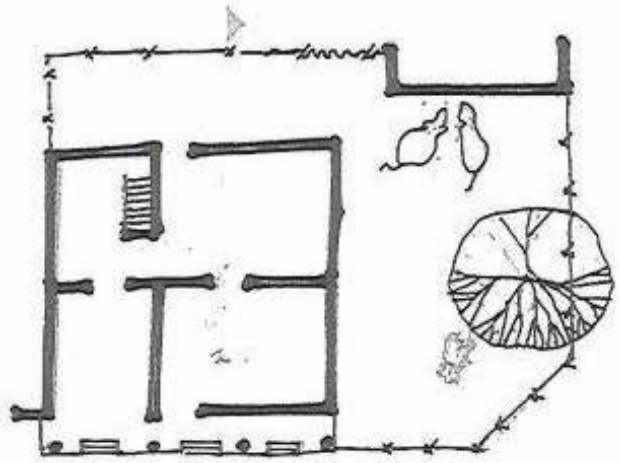


Mali House with backyard to grow flower

A Gardener is involved in gardening activities. They grow flowers in the backyards, which they sell in the temples for religious ritual. A gardener's house is comprised of areas as per suited to his needs with open verandahs on both the sides where they prepare flower garlands to sell in the temples. Besides this, they have two rooms for the household activities.

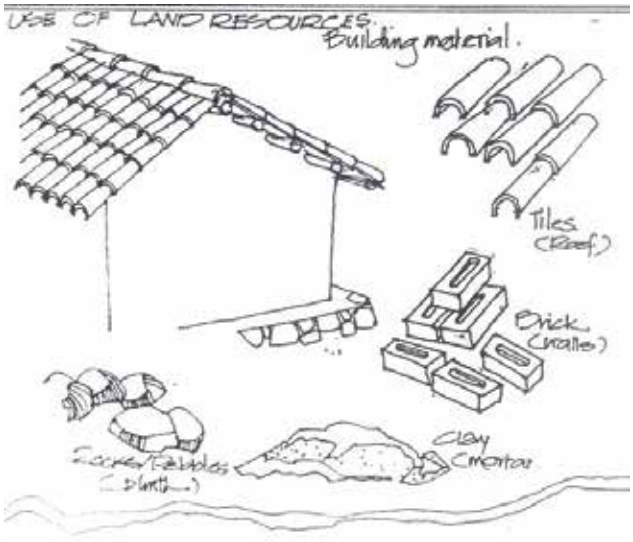
5.3.6 *Artisan's House*



Artisan's House with big opening in the front to provide light to the artisan while working

Artisans are involved in preparing the *ganjifa* cards for which a small room is required with good light. These are generally small house units with or without courtyard.

6 Material and Construction Techniques



Use of local meterial for construction

Most of the required building materials are easily locally available and used for most of the construction. Most of the materials do not cost much as they are available from the agricultural fields, water bodies and the forest.

Most of the structures are single storied except the new constructions, which are coming up along the main roads. Wooden doors and windows are provided in the openings.

6.1 Foundation and Plinth- It is constructed using locally available stone. Generally Rubble stone masonry is constructed with mud mortar.

6.2 Walls- Walls are generally 250 mm thick and constructed with locally baked bricks with mud mortar. The locally baked bricks are available in the local markets. Bricks are soaked in water before use for the construction. Small niches have been provided in the walls for storing various household items.

Houses with narrow lane

6.3 Mud Mortar- Mud mortar is used for walls, floors and plastering the surfaces. It is prepared using local Mud procured from the neighboring ponds in a traditional way. Clay is procured from the land near the water bodies and then soaked for two-three days to improve the workability. It is then mixed

with rice husk for the construction. Sometimes cow dung is also mixed with the mud mortar to add water-proofing properties in the mortar.

6.4 Plaster- Mud plaster is prepared by mixing mud, rice husk and cow dung. Sometime they are finally finished with slurry prepared using clay and cow dung, which adds the water proofing properties to the surface as well as make the surface very smooth. This process is repeated as and when required for the maintenance of the structures.

6.5 Roofing- Most of houses are covered with sloping roof comprised of a ridge beam, wooden rafters, and frameworks of bamboo and finally covered with locally available clay tiles. Sometimes, the truss is covered with thatch which is an agricultural product and easily

Tradition thatch roofing

available. Thatch roof is generally used for the cattle shed, storage of firewood, rice husks and other products.

6.6 Flooring- Flooring is comprised of same mud mortar mixed with traditional additives and laid in lumps over the ground. Before applying this floor, ground is consolidated firmly. These floors require regular maintenance, which is done by the women of the house by allying a coat of cow dung. It makes the surface very smooth after sometime.

Most of the construction is done by the local community members. This is how the complete Eco system is sustaining which well defined and self sustainable. Now transformations are clearly visible in these settlements due to rapid urbanization, which needs to be addressed properly to maintain the sustainability of the eco-system of the place.

Present Issues

The vernacular housing of the village is still continuing but now modern materials such as cement, reinforcement roofs has gradually started replacing the traditional construction system. Commercialization has started on the main spine of the transportation routes. Besides, these earthen buildings need regular maintenance due to use of organic materials in the construction. These housing have been evolved throughout the ages and now it further needs to be improved to make it sustainable. These vernacular housings need to be upgraded to make them suitable for the modern day living respecting the benefits of the traditional construction systems.

Glossary

Keuta	*Fisherman*
Kumhar	*Potter*
Ganjifa	*A type of playing card*
Chowk	*An intersection of two roads*
Mali	*Florist*
Bomkai	*A type of handloom sari*

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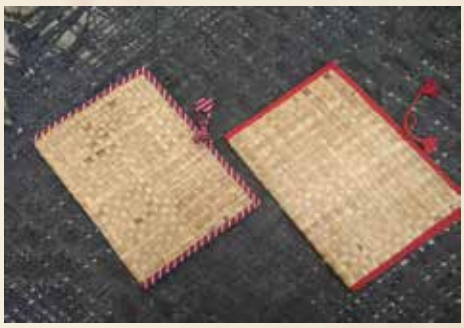
with active assistance from Punjab Heritage and Tourism Promotion Board, women of Village Churian, Harike near Amritsar, have started making and selling these beautiful products made from water hyacinth which is a weed.



File Folder

Mobile Cover

Clutch Purse

Sling Bag

Coin Purse

Flip Flops

Basket

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Why Farmers Should Think Twice Before they Burn their Stubble and Straw

Johan D'hulster

Climate Change

There is a growing consensus that climate change threatens the survival of our planet Earth. Not only the global warming, but also erratic, unpredictable weather patterns play their role. There is an urgent need in mastering and if possible turning back the global warming, and therefore the emissions of CO2 (carbon dioxide) and other harmful gasses need to go down.

The problem is complex, but let us for a while focus on the surplus of CO2 in the air. CO2 is a gas that appears naturally in the air, but in the past 150 years an extremely strong increase has been noted as a result of human activity. In the industry, traffic and the households we have been burning excessively fossil fuels, which release a lot of CO2. But in its own way, also the modern agriculture adds notably to the problem. That's strange, because a good agricultural practice is able to take more CO2 from the air and store it in the agricultural system, than it releases. In theory, agriculture could even solve the problem of the planetary warming up. But alas, our modern agricultural practice is far alienated from this.

CO2 is a carbon compound; and carbon is a major element from the periodic table, which very easily binds to e.g. oxygen and hydrogen. Carbon is found everywhere: in our body, in the clothes we wear, in our home furniture, in our plastic carrying bags and in our green environment.

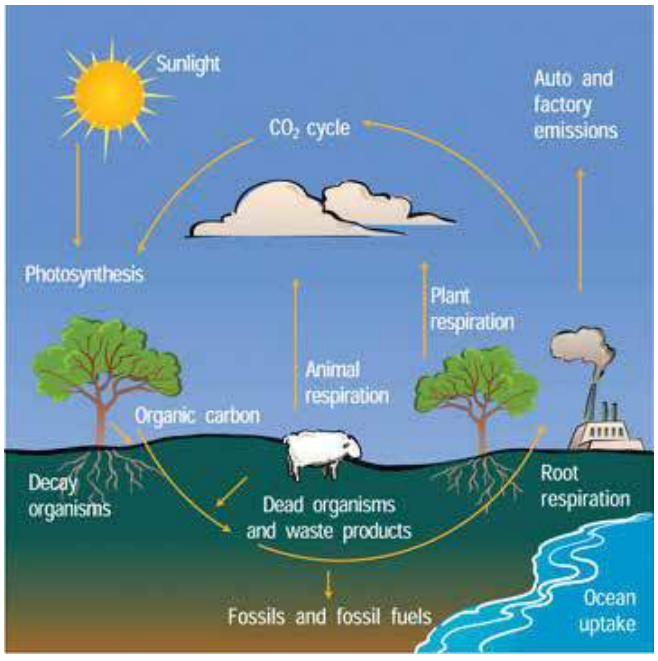
Photosynthesis

In the process of building the green leaves of a plant, the CO2 along with the water in the atmosphere are converted into sugars and starch by the solar light. This is called photosynthesis and it is the primary process for the creation of all organic matter on Earth. The CO2 from the air is split into carbon and oxygen: the carbon serves the leaf tissue and the structure of the plant, whereas the oxygen is released in the breathing of the plant.

The sunlight lies at the origin of the growing process of a plant: we first see the development of cellulose, followed by lignin and when a plant comes to seed production, we may remark seeds rich in oil substance. This can be interpreted as an ever increasing level of energy, and this expresses itself in the increasing complexity and length of the carbon chains. Taken over a long period of time, we find that the origin of our common energy sources, like coal, petroleum, is the result of a massive piling up of plant material and millions of years of geologic compaction. All this starts with photosynthesis.

The Carbon Cycle

A plant grows and the carbon which is stored in the plant's cellulose and lignin also moves, as everything in nature is subject to building up and breaking down. A part of the carbon gets lost in the plant's breathing (mainly during the night), and a part leaches out (exudates) through the root system. There a new symbiosis arises, as the leached carbon is a necessary building stone for the formation of a soil life, mainly bacteria and fungi, who in return deliver nutrients to the plant and also this soil life breaths, so again we lose some carbon back into the air.



Carbon Cycle

This is a very simple approach - the reality is far more complex - but it serves the purpose of the article. It is important to know that in a natural environment, like a forest, or a sustainable farm, more carbon is stored in the system than there is lost, so there is a net profit.

Soil Fertility

Humanity has strayed far from remembering it, but it isn't exaggerated to state that soil fertility is the bearer of every culture. The history of mankind shows many cultures that disappeared because of the complete loss of soil fertility, often resulting in desertification. To this day even our mighty science has only little comprehension of what happens in the soil microbiology.

Soil fertility is related to the 'soil food web', which is mainly bacteria, fungi and an infinite range of micro-organisms. All these exist thanks to carbon, without carbon - which by means of the photosynthesis is formed, and which enters the soil through the organic components of the plant, no soil life can originate or be maintained and without soil fertility there can be no healthy farming.

Agricultural Cycle

For ages the Indian agricultural tradition and wisdom has been based on cyclic processes. The key concepts in this rich tradition were biodiversity, biomass, compost and fermentation, soil fertility, cereals and legumes, and the sacred cow. Biodiversity showed itself on the level of soil life, in the crop varieties, in the cattle breeds, but also in the rich social and cultural life of the rural villages.

Biomass was abundantly present in trees and jungle in India. The deforestation of the country under the British colonisation has robbed India of its most valuable buffer and carbon source. Composting and fermentation techniques are a means to connect carbon with nitrogen in a precious balance and were common practice in India's tradition. Soil fertility is the outcome of a sensible agricultural practice in, which the soil is nourished with sufficient organic material of good quality. It is the interplay of the humus (which is mainly carbon), the soil texture and the microbiological life. India's good agricultural practice produced a diversity of cereals and legumes (pulses) and again the legumes manage to combine carbon with nitrogen thanks to a specific group of bacteria active in the root zone of the plant.

When all the above elements cycle around, with the cow in the centre (because of the unique bacterial biodiversity in her digestive system), then vitality emerges. And vitality is a necessary condition for the creation of a sound and sustainable food system. In addition some ratio's and balances need to be respected, e.g. the number of cows in relation to the size of a farm, has both an under- and an upper limit.

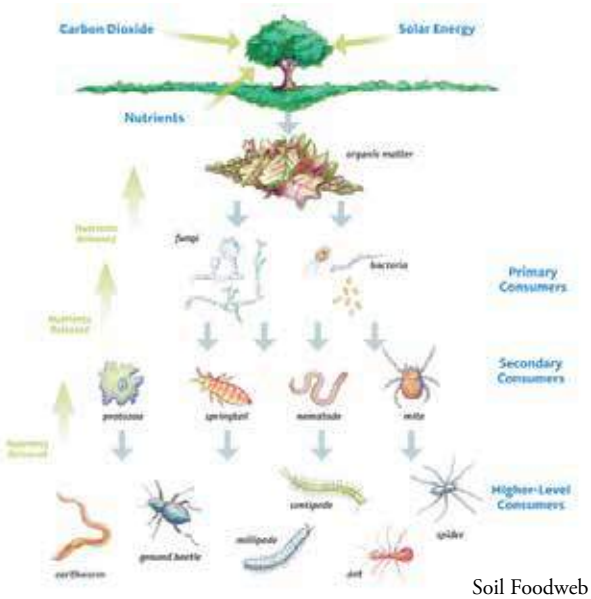
Back to Carbon

In whatever way you look to agriculture, you always will end up with carbon. Until around 1930, the scientific agricultural research had a pretty good understanding of soil fertility, in which great importance was attributed to the humus content in the soil. Humus is actually an unscientific notion, because it cannot be exactly defined. We do not yet understand its living components, but in all means: also humus is mainly carbon. So carbon was considered as the main indicator of a healthy agricultural practice. Yet, the setting changed, for many reasons, and nitrogen was put forward as the leading element in agriculture. The end of World War II has contributed to this, as a solution had to be found for the gigantic nitric industry for the production of bombs and explosives. Consequently, the chemical fertilizer industry rose. The prevailing thinking of the agricultural universities looked into the direct feeding of the plant with water soluble salts, mainly nitrogen, instead of feeding the soil with organic matter. Farmers were promised an explosive growth of the crops and soil fertility and carbon disappeared from the picture.

Meanwhile we know better, we know the consequences of a one-sided chemical agricultural system that initially shows higher yield, but after some decades ends with an exhausted and poisoned soil. Not to mention the environmental and social impact of this system.

In most of its soils, India has nowadays extremely low humus and carbon levels. Once a fertile land of milk and honey and abundance of biodiversity, India has turned into a very vulnerable and almost nude country. In the subtropical climate zone to which India belongs, soil fertility degrades faster than it can build up, unless there is a sufficient degree of afforestation and a sound agricultural system! Until 15O years ago India was opulent with both, it had an abundance of jungle, and most likely the wisest agricultural system in the world. Deforestation started around the mid 19th century, and this caused India to loose its main carbon source, because no plant is as efficient as a tree to store carbon and solar energy, and to make these available for agriculture and no good agriculture can exist without trees.

The green revolution has put India on the wrong track of chemical agriculture, at the expense of her own deep tradition of wisdom. Soil cover, mixed cropping, compost and fermentation techniques - a lot has been sacrificed in exchange for the explosive nitrogen operated production. The lack of care and attention for the soil and the loss of the farmer's wisdom has further deteriorated the carbon content in the soil to an extent that it's now mostly under the critical threshold for even a healthy agricultural system.



Soil Foodweb

Burning the Stubble and Straw

Last November the extreme air pollution in New Delhi was attributed to the widespread burning of stubble and straw by farmers in Punjab and Haryana. Unfortunately, this 'slash and burn' method (this is: a swift removal of the remains of the harvest by burning) has become a common practice, not only in India, but also in many other parts of the world. It is an easy way to clean the fields and get rid of the 'waste' in order to make the field ready for the next crop. But we have to understand that this so-called waste is the most valuable carbon source, a product of photosynthesis, a source of energy in the form of lignin, - these are the complex carbon chains. To burn this lignin is to blow the carbon in the air as CO2, but a good agricultural system will always try to preserve the carbon sources and give it back to the soil. It would require a complete manual for good agricultural practice to describe the different techniques for this, but we can e.g. think to process the straw in a closed stable system or to compost it. There is also the technique of conservation agriculture, combining no tillage with permanent soil cover. All this was common practice in the tradition of the Indian agriculture.

Connecting Carbon and Nitrogen

Carbon and nitrogen are each other's opponents in character, but the art of farming is to connect both. The supply of carbon is to be found in the biomass, the totality of organic material such as wood, leafs, straw, green manure etc. Carbon is the backbone and structure of the earth and tends to be rigid in the long term (e.g. coal).

Nitrogen is mainly to be found in the air, it is omnipresent and yet almost elusive and tends to evaporate, it is the motor of growth and production. But in order of importance carbon comes first. Unfortunately, we forgot this in the modern chemical agricultural practices. In fact, if there is sufficient carbon supply (by means of soil cover, presence of trees), then the nitrogen supply will automatically follow. Certain soil bacteria, which bind the nitrogen from the air and make it available for the plant, will take care of this. No forest has ever been treated with fertilizer, and yet everything is growing properly.

Nitrogen does have its clear value when it comes to food production. But the use of nitrogen as a fertilizer should not be to feed the plant one-sidedly, but it should rather be a part of a dynamic strategy for the soil fertility and be balanced with the carbon sources in the agricultural system. And here reappears the importance of the cow and the wealth of its manure, the compost (mature compost has a C/N ratio of 10/1), and the leguminous green manure.

The Importance of Soil Fungi

Where we can say that most of the Indian agricultural land has deteriorated over the past 100 years with a level of carbon in the soil that is dramatically low, there is also a second serious problem, namely the lack of soil fungi. The quality of the soil life as a component of soil fertility is mainly determined by 2 important pillars: bacteria and fungi. Both are the start of an incredibly rich and diversified soil food web, consisting of many forms of micro-organisms. The cow plays an important role in the care of the bacterial soil life and bacterial life is usually easy to apply and to manage in a soil. Bacteria focus on the breakdown of cellulose-like organic material. On the other hand, soil fungi require sufficient carbon and long complex carbon chains, this is carbon material with a sufficient lignin component, such as straw or wood - vice versa, lignin can only be decomposed by fungi. Lack of carbon in the soil means lack of fungi, and without fungi a part of the necessary soil food web cannot exist.

Soil fungi form a network of rhizomes and have multitude of functions in the soil, such as: information transfer, compare it with our internet system, but also many functions that have to do with the health and resilience of our soil and ecosystem.

Farmers Networks

Why do farmers burn their stubble and straw? Has the farmer lost his dignity and self-confidence here? And can we blame the farmer for this, when we see how much he is harassed by industrial pressure, by the low prices for his product, by the delusion of the chemical

fertilizers and by the pretended 'omniscience' of the agricultural universities?

There is an urgent need to restore the self-trust of the farmer and the woman farmer as a prerequisite for the recovery of a healthy agricultural system. That is why India on the first place needs a form of knowledge transfer at the level of the farmer, in which the simple coherence of the life forces of agriculture can be understood. The author of this article has a long experience, both in India and Europe with farmers networks in which farmers teach each other and share their practical knowledge and experience and lift up their sense of honour. Science can also play a role, provided that it renounces its dominant position and its submission to industrial interests and that it learns to open up to the needs of mother earth.

Agriculture could be an important factor as part of the solution to the climate problem, while it now contributes to it and is at the same time its victim. Let farmers fulfil once again their essential role as caretakers and carbon managers!

Mooralala Marwada, Prahlad Singh Tipaniya (center), and Devnarayan Sarolia performing at 2018 Malwa Kabir Yatra

Ghar ghar ānand hoe - In Every House There Will be Joy: Impact of *Nirgun* Folk *Bhajans* in Malwa, Madhya Pradesh

Dr. Amba Sarah Caldwell

The tiny village of Luniyakhedi in rural Madhya Pradesh is the unlikely birthplace of a startling renaissance in folk cultural music tradition over the last twenty five years that has had broad implications for the upliftment of lower caste communities, providing new avenues of achievement, economic stability, and social fulfillment for a wide variety of people in the region. This broad transformation in the social, spiritual, emotional, and socio-economic wellbeing of a depressed rural community has followed largely on the personal efforts and achievements of one extraordinary individual, Prahlad Singh Tipaniya, who was born into a family of bonded labors in the Dalit Balai community in this village in 1954. Drawing from a deep well of local cultural wisdom and musical tradition, Tipaniyaji has transformed the lives of his family, village, community and touched the hearts of urban educated people throughout India and the world. His success and example inspired many other singers of his own and subsequent generations to take up *bhajan* singing and to make real changes in their lives. The story of the rise of Kabir *bhajan* singing in Malwa is an inspiring example of the power of folk traditions to stimulate rural development and create tangible positive social change.

Tipaniyaji's remarkable personal story has been chronicled in some depth by a number of researchers in books, dissertations, and films over the last ten years (Hess, Virani, Virmani). These artists and writers, who met Tipaniyaji starting in the year 2000 after he was a well-established performer, were deeply inspired by his ability to convey through the *bhajans* of the north Indian sant's, especially those of Sant Kabir, a spiritual message of the oneness of humanity, as well as to actively mobilize that message for social change. Through the medium of music and spiritual discourse, drawing from indigenous local folk tradition, tangible and permanent positive changes have come to the people of the Malwa region, strengthening local pride while also connecting communities to broader networks of support throughout India and abroad.

The recently completed five - day 2018 Malwa Kabir Yatra provides a glimpse into this process of transformation. The linchpin event of the Malwa Kabir Yatra is the Luniyakhedi Kabir festival, an all night event in which artists and *bhajan* groups from around the region perform along with artists from outside of the Malwa region who have been brought in to share the stage. Originally conceived as a showcase for local

Tipaniyaji and group performing during 2018 Malwa Kabir Yatra

Village performance on 2018 Malwa Kabir Yatra

village singing groups of the *nirgun bhajan* tradition, the festival has now expanded to include performances by well-known folk and semi-classical artists from outside the Malwa region. The all-night event is held on the grounds of the Kabir Smarak, a charitable spiritual and educational institution started by Prahlad Singh Tipaniya in 1997 after receiving a generous land grant from the Madhya Pradesh State government. The Luniyakhedi Kabir Festival draws up to 10,000 people from the local villages in the region, as well as about 100 urban and a few foreign visitors. The all-night festival was the concluding event in a five - day traveling caravan, designed to bring free performances of spiritual *nirgun* vocal music to all the major cities and towns in the nearby area. Performances ranged from urban concert halls holding a couple of hundred people to huge outdoor events drawing many thousands of villagers. A vibrant and joyous public procession of several hundred revelers through the nearby town of Maksi on the day before the final event celebrates the local *nirgun bhajan* singing tradition's rise in prestige and visibility through the tireless efforts of its founder, Prahlad Singh Tipaniya.

A look at Tipaniyaji's early life story underscores the extraordinary achievement that the procession celebrates. A schoolteacher and headmaster in village schools for forty years, Tipaniyaji first heard the sound of the rustic tambura (a Rajasthani wooden folk instrument with five strings, different from the classical gourd *tānpura*) at the age of 24, played by a local *nirgun* folk singer. The sound of the instrument deeply affected him, and Tipaniyaji joined local groups that sang all night and discussed the meaning of the spiritual poetry in the songs. Within a few years Tipaniyaji had mastered much of the repertoire and deeply imbibed the spiritual messages, and became one of the most popular singers, despite a complete lack of formal musical training. Singing with friends and family, Tipaniya eventually recorded cassettes, CDs and DVDs, which were wildly popular and sold widely. His unique style of singing, interspersing lively folk music with didactic passages of spiritual teaching on the meaning of the cryptic poetic lines of Kabir and other poet saints, quickly became the standard which local singing groups imitated. By the late 1990s, Tipaniyaji was well known outside his local Malwa region and began appearing on television, radio, and at government sponsored cultural programs, representing the little known Malwi cultural tradition of western Madhya Pradesh. In 1997 the state government granted Tipaniyaji a large plot of land in the village of Luniyakhedi, on which he built an ashram, school for local underprivileged children, and musical center dedicated to the study of Satguru Kabir's teachings.

From 2000 to 2015, several Indian and foreign scholars and artists came to meet Tipaniyaji and began studying his music and documenting his life and activities. A series of documentary films, CDs, and books produced by the Bangalore based Kabir Project (directed by filmmaker Shabnam Virmani), as well as three US tours organized by Stanford University professor and Kabir scholar Linda Hess, established Tipaniyaji as a world figure over this period. Fans in Mumbai, Bangalore and Delhi enthusiastically organized a series of annual festivals and workshops revolving around his work. In 2011 Tipaniyaji was granted the prestigious Padma Shree award from the Indian government, in recognition of his lifelong dedication and contribution to Indian culture.

The extraordinary financial and artistic success of a local Dalit school teacher with no musical training had wide ranging impacts on his family, village, and community, and inspired hundreds of his peers and admiring youngsters to branch out as professional or semi-professional singing groups. The style and composition of the musical ensembles changed and developed in response to Tipaniyaji 's innovations. By the late 1990s scores of singing groups had formed and were performing regularly at public events small and

large, as well as appearing on national television and at political and religious events. Today several hundred people make at least a partial living by singing *nirgun bhajans* in small groups (*mandalis*).

This development did a great deal more than provide increased financial opportunity for the local community through the singing of *bhajans*. The impact of this change can be understood by a striking vignette, narrated by ethnomusicologist Vivek Virani, who stayed in the village of Luniyakhedi in 2014-2015. Vivek was given a tour of the village by two local schoolteachers. They explained that the entire village is divided into only two "communities," Brahmins and the Dalit Balai: "The Brahmins consider us *nīche jāt* (low-born) and even *achyūta* (untouchable). For decades Tipaniyaji Ji tried to teach them. 20 years ago, he finally gave up and moved out here, and the rest of the *Balai* all followed. Now only Brahmins live in old Lunyakhedi, and only *Balai* live in Kabir Nagar." As a young man Tipaniyaji and all the members of his community were prohibited from entering the local Ram temple. As one teacher explains, "when we were children…we could not even use the Brahmin streets. We had to take off our shoes and carry them on our heads if we wanted to pass by Brahmin houses." "Was it really that bad?" I ask, aghast. "So what happened in 20 years to make such a big change?" Rakesh's simple answer amazes me. "Tipaniyaji ji started singing. And now… we don't do that anymore." (Virani 30-32).

Similarly, the tambura that is used by all local *mandalis* in Malwa today was once considered to be a mark of low caste status and despised. In the words of Tipaniyaji's wife Shantiji: "If people saw you walking with a tambura, they would cross the street to avoid you. They would sprinkle water and mutter prayers to avoid being spiritually contaminated. You would not be allowed to stay in guest-houses" (Virmani 2008a). As Virani explains, "Now that stigma is gone, and tamburas are a regular sight and sound in villages and by the roadside. [Villagers credit] this resurgence of the tambura to Tipanya's widespread success and revitalization of *Malwi nirgunī bhajans:* "All the tamburas were lying in the dust…then Tipanyaji wiped the dust away." (Virani 90-91).

Through his unfailing dedication, vision, talent and courage Tipaniyaji nearly single-handedly transformed severe caste prejudice, economic exploitation, and negative cultural attitudes toward *nirgun* singing in

Entrance to Kabir Smarak in Luniykahedi Village, Madhya Pradesh

his village and beyond. Even after achieving financial success and fame, Tipaniyaji remained in his natal village and used his resources to establish an ashram and school dedicated to uplifting his local community by propagating the values expressed in the Kabir *bhajans*. For the past eight years a free primary school called the Kabir Academy offers accredited education including music, physical and moral education, to children who might otherwise have no schooling at all. His charitable Kabir Smarak organizes cultural programs throughout the region, and was recently awarded a grant by the Sangeet Natak Akademi in New Delhi to train talented young singers on site at the ashram. Over the past twenty years Tipaniyaji has mentored numerous young singers and groups, helping them with everything from learning *bhajans* to details of professional performance presentation.

This leadership, mentoring, and community service have transformed Luniyakhedi into a center of spiritual, moral, and educational inspiration for people throughout the entire Malwa region, and has inspired countless members of the younger generation to aspire to lives beyond the confines of their village and lives as manual laborers. Caste division and prejudice still exist in the village, but the *Balai* now feel more pride, hope and self esteem. Tangible Improvements have been made in quality of houses, farming, medical care, vehicles, education, and employment opportunities. The powerful spiritual message of self determination propounded in the *nirgun bhajans* has allowed singers to identify with more than just their born social status through awareness of their innate freedom and divinity merely by virtue of being human. *Bhajan* singing has encouraged improvements in lifestyle and family harmony, by the abandonment of antisocial habits such as smoking, drinking and crime. Participating in local and national music festivals and events has allowed for travel and connections to city residents and opportunities outside the village. Kabir festivals have sprung up in Mumbai, Bangalore and locally in the Malwa region; and Malwi singing groups are invited to perform at regional and India wide events, as well as on Doordarshan television and other media events, raising the visibility of Malwa culture.

Walking through the streets of Maksi, the nearest town to the village of Luniyakhedi, on the final day of the 2018 Malwa Kabir Yatra, in the company of hundreds of joyous villagers, city dwellers, singing and dancing alongside local musicians as well as those from far flung regions of India, was a great celebration of the positive power of the local folk *bhajans* to transform and unify society, and to uplift humanity. It was also a celebration of the personal achievement of Luniyakhedi's most famous son, Prahlad Tipaniya, who once was rejected from even walking the streets of his own town. That night, as nearly ten thousand people, seated on the fallow fields that grow wheat and corn to feed them throughout the year, thrilled and swayed to the sounds of one musical group after the other until dawn, the message of Kabir triumphed and hope became reality.

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Photo Credits: Smita Goyal & Sarah Caldwell

Each year, more barns fall across the prairie landscape, including this one west of Ceylon, SK. Once the center of activity on the family farm, the barn is now symbolic of the decay of the historic rural environment as agricultural methods have changed over the past several decades

Canada's Historic Barns: Buildings at Risk, Buildings with Value

Kristin Catherwood and Meghann Jack

Much of the story of our country is embedded within the posts and beams of old barns. They demonstrate the industriousness of the rural landscape and the importance of farm families to the development of Canada. Prior to World War II, census records show that two-thirds of Canadians lived on farms. No farm was complete without a barn, which served an essential role in animal husbandry as well as crop storage and processing. For many Canadians, there's a good chance that at some point in time, one of their ancestors milked cows or threshed grain in a barn.

But historic barns are disappearing at an accelerating rate. Once a common sight across our country, today most old barns are deemed obsolete for modern agriculture – too small to adapt to industrialized practices. Adaptive re-use of barns is also challenging: barns are often located far from populated areas, and are large and expensive to maintain. Many in rural Canada will likely encounter barns in perilous situations – neglected, abandoned, falling down. With few specific resources in place for agricultural heritage conservation, the outlook for these iconic structures is not promising.

Yet despite the odds against barns, there are owners undertaking projects to revitalize and restore the barns that matter to them and their communities.

Assets for Today's Farm

Just outside Radville, in south central Saskatchewan, Kim Levee and Tracy Bain have a vision for the future of their barn, one that incorporates the past. Their barn, built around 1911, was originally a lumber shed for a business in what is now the ghost town of Brooking. In the 1920s, it was moved 16 kilometers to what is now the Levee farm, where it began a new life as a dairy barn.

By the 1970s, the dairy operation had ceased, and the farm moved to growing grain exclusively. The barn's only use for the next few decades was as a repository

The Cumminger barn in Aspen, Guysborough County, NS, is one of the oldest in the locality. Nearly 90 feet long, it was built in two phases, the first, circa 1835 and the second, in the early 1860s. Although the owner has worked to maintain the building to the best of his ability, it will eventually fall down without major structural work

A common sight in southern Saskatchewan's rural landscape are barns like this one, near Ceylon, SK, which have no prospect of restoration work. An impressive structure with Gothic features, this barn is part of an abandoned homestead and its long-term fate is uncertain

for old junk and miscellanea. The couple were inspired by a visit to Nova Scotia in 2007 where they witnessed the potential for agri-tourism. Tracy recalls that, "every second place seemed to have something to offer to passing motorists, and part of the attraction was the old, restored buildings."

The couple had a dream of starting a U-pick Christmas tree farm, but they needed a venue for visitors. Rather than building new, they decided to tackle the project of adapting their old barn. To date, they have spent $80,000 on the barn to transform it into a Christmas tree store and anticipate another $10,000 before it is complete. Although a substantial investment, they argue it is still far less than the cost of erecting a new building to meet their requirements – and the old barn offers an historic and attractive component to their agri-tourism operation that a modern structure would not. Kim and Tracy are unsure whether their Christmas tree business will repay the work they put into the barn, but they nevertheless see the economic value in the heritage of the building. As Tracy explains, "When we sell a tree, we're not really selling a Christmas tree. We're selling an experience, and I think the barn is a big part of that."

These striking twin barns, situated along the St. Mary's river in Guysborough County, NS, are important landmarks within the region

Without doubt, part of the attraction of barns for many is their deep associations with history and memory. Full of grit and character, they represent hard work but also a mostly vanished way of life – one where Canadians were close to their food source. In Kim Levee's words, when explaining the choice to adapt rather than build new, a new barn just "hasn't got the nostalgia when you're done, and that's worth something."

In fact, barns can be sensitively adapted for farming uses beyond agri-tourism initiatives. A pilot study in the United States by America's National Trust for Historic Preservation and Successful Farming magazine in 1988 revealed that old barns could indeed accommodate mass production strategies, with participating farmers spending on repairs and retrofitting as little as a third of what building new would have cost them. With a bit of investment in proper maintenance and modification, traditional barns can continue to be useful for hay and equipment storage, horse stabling, modest dairy or beef herds, as well as small livestock rearing.

Sustainable agriculture practices also present a potential

partnership for the regeneration of historic barns. For small-scale, mixed, and community supported farming initiatives, a traditional barn is an ideal asset. The designs of traditional barns have the benefit of being developed over many generations of trial and error, all with a view to convenience and durability in mind. They offer advantageous floor plans, coupled with a quality of craftsmanship that complements the local and place-based values of the slow food movement.

Icons of Canada's Rural Landscape

The Carles family, also Radville area farmers, have recently completed a 20-year restoration project on their historic barn. When the building was no longer agriculturally feasible, save for storage, the continued costs of maintenance were hard for the family to justify. Nevertheless, Roland, his wife Darlene, as well as their children and grandchildren, were determined to save the building at the center of their farmyard as a symbol of the family's deep roots in rural Saskatchewan.

"Every farm had a barn," remarks Roland. "The problem with these barns is there's no use for them anymore," continues Darlene. While the Carles' had considered repurposing the barn as a machine shed, they were reluctant to destroy the interior layout of stalls and hayloft. "We figured if we're fixing it up, we might as well have it original looking," explains Roland.

The restoration of the barn – from a new concrete foundation to a new roof, and everywhere in between – could be called a labour of love. Over the past 20 years, the Carles family estimates they have spent around $25,000 on the barn – mostly on materials, because Roland, his son Carey, and now some of their grandchildren have done the majority of the work themselves. But when asked why he went through all the trouble and expense to do this, Roland's answer is simple: "Because barns are just disappearing."

The Carles barn, near Radville, SK, is representative of many of the barns once found on small family farms across Canada. Lovingly restored, the Carles family has done most of the labour themselves

The interior of Kim Levee and Tracy Bain's barn is being adapted into a retail space for their Christmas tree farm. A new crumb rubber floor has been installed for durability and comfort, but the original stalls will remain and be incorporated as part of the retail space

Barns hold meaning not just for individual farm families, but for the wider rural community too. Diverse in their form and appearance, barns are significant because they help define local distinctiveness and sense of place. Any traveler along the rural roads of Canada will understand their profound visual impact. For instance, when Hardy Eshbaugh, who lives in the small community of Waternish, in Guysborough County, NS, faced the ultimate question of what to do with his two dilapidated 19th century barns, he decided they were worth the expense of maintaining because they mattered not just to him, but to the community as a whole. Running parallel to the road, the large, striking barns emerge suddenly as you round a turn.

"Anybody who drives through this part of this county knows those double barns. They are a landmark," Hardy explains. "The farthest barn was collapsing. It would have been gone in a year or two." Had the barn disappeared, it would have irrevocably changed the look and feel of this small rural community. For rural places such as Waternish, which have already lost their shops and post offices and other landmarks, barns become the defining features on the landscape. Thanks to Hardy, the twin barns have been stabilized through extensive structural work as well as exterior restoration – an enduring legacy for the community.

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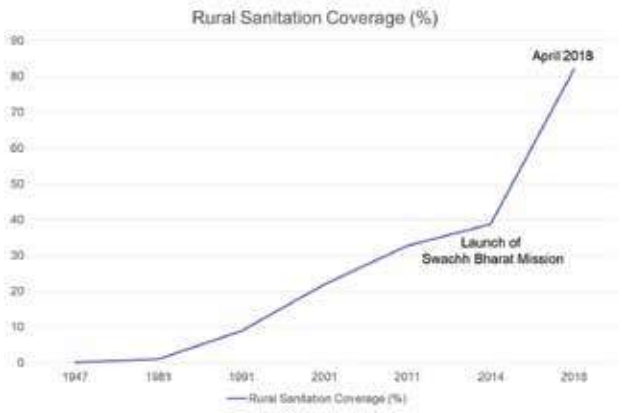
Toilets for Women, Women for Toilets

Mahima Vashisht

Rural India's tryst with toilets began with its first Sanitation programme, the CRSP (Community Rural Sanitation Programme), in 1981, when the country's rural sanitation coverage was a mere 1%. By 2014, it was 39%, i.e., an average of about 1% increase in sanitation coverage per year. 2014 saw the launch of the Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin (SBM(G)) which aimed to create an Open Defecation Free India, by providing access to toilets for all. As we step into the final lap of the Mission, rural India's sanitation coverage today stands at over 82% - which means that the distance covered since Independence to the launch of the Mission has now been covered since the launch of the Mission in a matter of a little over three years. (Source: sbm.gov.in).



Over six crore new households have been provided access to sanitation at such an accelerated pace. But construction of toilets alone is not sufficient for sustained behavior change. The definition of "Open Defecation Free" (ODF) itself is based on outcomes (behavior change), not inputs (toilets constructed) which needs an army of foot soldiers engaged in this task at the village level. In this process of instilling new habits at the grassroots, some unlikely heroes have emerged as the champions of this people's movement. Women, children, senior citizens, economically and socially backward communities are leading the way to a Swachh Bharat in the hinterlands of India. The role of women has, in particular, transformed tremendously since the launch of the Mission, and it is instructive to analyze how and why.

Toilets for Women

Toilets are arguably one of the most potent tools of women empowerment in history. A 2012 National Bureau of Economic Research paper states, "There

was no more important event that liberated women more than the invention of running water and indoor plumbing".

A 2017 Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation study found that there were significantly higher cases of women with lower Body Mass Index in non-ODF areas than in ODF (Open Defecation Free) areas, indicating disproportionate impact of lack of sanitation on women's health. At the same time, a 2017 IMF research found that an improvement in public sanitation reduces women's time spent in caregiving work by 10%, and leads to a 1.5% increase in female labor participation. Sanitation also leads to higher female literacy rates. There are innumerable more examples and studies that establish the role of toilets as the unlikely feminist champion in the women's empowerment movement.

But perhaps the biggest by-product of Swachh Bharat for women has been the shift it is effecting in the perception of women from victims to leaders.

Dignity First

One might recall a recent advertisement, featuring actor Vidya Balan, run under the Nirmal Bharat Abhiyaan. In the advertisement, she is seen advocating that a new bride be given a toilet, else her *ghoonghat* would do nothing to preserve her dignity. The message was: "Build a toilet for the woman to protect your family honour." The ad was, sadly, mute on the regressive *ghoonghat* practice itself.

This is deeply problematic and acutely reflective of the prevalent narrative at the time – advocating toilets, while inadvertently reinforcing toxic patriarchal notions, such as, "women's bodies are the property of her husband or family", "man is the protector of the woman", and "woman is the receptacle of family honour".

It was no surprise that this myopic messaging proved counterproductive in the long run. Men around the country were found refusing to use toilets because of the belief that using a toilet is for women and, open defecation, by extension, a sign of virility. On the other hand, women's groups were seen rallying against toilets, seen as a threat to their last freedom to leave the house at least once a day.

Under SBM(G), the 2016 Gender Guidelines emphasized the need for gender sensitive messaging for sanitation (Source: mdws.gov.in). Following this, the Mission launched a national level mass media campaign – *Darwaza Band* – that led the way by example. Several advertisements under this campaign feature eminent actor, Amitabh Bachchan, where he is seen coaxing, cajoling, and coercing men to not only build toilets but also use them.

The second part of the campaign, featuring actor, Anushka Sharma, calls upon women to play a leadership role in promoting toilet use in their homes and villages, and celebrates their collective and individual strength as changemakers. This message, in particular, is a breath of fresh air compared to the traditional narrative of women as powerless victims, at the mercy of their men and families.

At the community level, the SBM(G) Gender Guidelines also direct that "women should be represented in the leadership of SBM(G) committees and institutions… so that their communities and villages can benefit not just from women's participation but also their leadership".

The resultant of these highly progressive directives is that Swachh Bharat has seen women of rural India transform in their role from victims to leaders. Women are seen taking up traditionally unconventional roles, like masons and contractors engaged in toilet construction. Many are also becoming Swachhagrahis, who deliver the behavior change communication to the

community, and earn an incentive for every toilet they help construct. Villages headed by women sarpanches are empirically found to be more likely to achieve and sustain ODF status.

Naari Shakti, Swachh Shakti

Prime Minister, Mr Modi, rang in International Women's Day 2017 with 6000 women sarpanches under the banner, "Swachh Shakti". Their stories offer a glimpse into the role women are playing for sanitation in rural India. Asha is a mason, working in a male dominated profession and building toilets in a patriarchal community of Rajasthan. Akamma, from Karnataka, mortgaged her own jewelry to construct a toilet for herself and those around her. Uttara Thakur, Chhattisgarh sarpanch, led her village to becoming ODF, undeterred by her own physical handicap. Sushila Kurkutte, a tribal woman from Maharashtra, personally dug her own toilet pit so that her family would have access to safe sanitation.

We urban women and men celebrate International Women's Day every year. With 15 States/UTs, 370 districts and 3.5 lakh villages declared ODF in rural India, it is also important for us to acknowledge and celebrate these "Swachh Shakti" icons who are at the forefront of the sanitation revolution happening in the country. And it is India's sanitation revolution which, in turn, is emerging as arguably the biggest and most effective feminist movement silently underway in the country today.

The Spirit of *Langar*

Ashish Chopra

Ek onkar satnam kartapurakh...a phrase in the Gurmukhi that marks the initiation of a Sikh's prayer and it marks the liberating communion with the Almighty. It dwells on the subject of oneness between the creator and the creation. The reverent lesson is infused in every bit of the Punjabi culture and so, the service offered in the gurudwara is pregnant with solemnity.

My gifted adrenaline rush takes its onus from my Punjabi roots and amongst most of the clichéd virtues, I like to enunciate on my ever generous gut for food and my evangelical self the most. I am a Punjabi by birth and Punjab is a state, where being overtly generous and kind are not virtues but a habit ingrained in the DNA of its people. When it comes to food, only a large helping is an option. Punjab is the wonderland of food and the good news is you won't have to go bunny hunting to land yourself in the wonderland. The finest and the most exquisite pride of the Punjabi culture is exemplified through the *langar* in all its gurudwaras. A *langar* is a popular community feast in gurudwaras and it is open for everyone irrespective of his her faith. Even today, when a household is well known in the community for its 'open' kitchen, it is said, "G*har mein langar laga hai!"* meaning there is a community kitchen running in that house.

To have grown up in Punjab seeing people of diverse faith (irrespective of any caste, creed, religion) and especially to have been influenced by the realism of its preaching, it brought me divinely close to food and nurtured my enthusiasm for feeding people as much as it elevated my respect for humanity. Visiting *gurudwaras* all over the state, especially the *Harmandir Sahib* (Golden Temple) gurudwara in Amritsar, would not only provide an immense sense of tranquility but I'd be inundated with joy to think about the mouthwatering *langar* that we'd usually have afterwards. My greatest high, being a passionate foodie and who also loves to cook with as much passion, was an opportunity to cook in the mega kitchen of the Harminder Sahib Gurudwara. When I entered the massive kitchen, history and divinity engulfed me. The astronomical quantity of vegetables and *dal* amazed me. The mammoth size of the utensils thrilled me to the core. There was an energy running in the ambience of the kitchen, it was sheer electric current

that drove every action towards serenity. The resultant fruit of the hard work - seeing the people being fed in the name of the Lord. Such is the vigor of holiness that the *langar* enforces in us. The process of *langar* is like the river, it's ever flowing throughout the day and night, blessing tens of thousands of people. But before I go into my personal journey, let's go a little deeper into knowing about the origins of *langar.*

Langar is a Persian word meaning 'an almshouse', 'an asylum for the poor and the destitute' or 'a public kitchen kept by a great man for his followers and dependants, holy persons and the needy'. Some scholars trace the word *langar* to Sanskrit *analgrh* (cooking place). In Persian, the specific term *langar* has been in use in an identical sense. In addition to the word itself, the institution of *langar* is also traceable in the Persian tradition. *Langar*s were a common feature of the Sufi centres in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Even today, some *dargah*s or shrines like Khwaja Mu'in ud-Din Chishti's at Ajmer commemorating Sufi saints, run *langars*.

Akbar and *Langar*

It is said that Emperor Akbar visited Guru Amar Das Ji, he too sat in the *pangat* to take *langar* before he was allowed to see Guru Ji. Hence the mighty ruler of India also sat amongst the common people as an equal and had the same simple food. So impressed was he by the *langar* that he offered a great *jagir* (a great amount of land and wealth) as a contribution to its maintenance. As the Mahima Prakash records, the Emperor refused to step on the silks spread out for him by his servants when going to call on the Guru. He turned aside the lining with his own hands and walked to the Guru's presence barefoot. The Guru would not accept the Emperor's offer of the *jagir*, so Akbar offered it as a wedding present for the Guru's daughter. It is believed that the gifted land is today, the city of Amritsar.

When President Nasser of Egypt visited the Golden Temple he was so touched to see so many Kashmiri Muslims, Hindu's, Christians and Sikhs sitting together to eat in the *langar* that his party left all the money they carried with them as a contribution to its running

The *langar* is run by *sevadars* 'voluntary selfless' Sikhs and others who wish to help. It is a community kitchen and anybody can help in its running. This function of *sewa* brings a community feeling in the persons mind and destroys their ego and the feeling of "I" or "me" by the performing of this valuable service to humanity. The *langar* continued to perform its distinctive role in days of the direst persecution. Bands of Sikhs wandering in deserts and jungles would cook whatever they could get, and sit in a *pangat* to share it equally. Later, when the Sikhs came into power, the institution of *langar* was

further consolidated because of increased number of gurdwaras running the *langar,* and assignment of *jagirs* to gurdwaras for this purpose.

Rules Concerning the Tradition of *Langar*

The *langar* must be:

1. Simple and vegetarian
2. Prepared by devotees who recite *Gurbani* while preparing the l*angar*
3. Served after performing *Ardas*
4. Distributed in *pangat* without any prejudice or discrimination
5. Fresh, clean and hygienically prepared

Importance of *Langar* to Sikhism

Bhai Desa Singh in his Rehitnama says, "A Sikh who is well to do must look to the needs of a poor neighbour. Whenever he meets a traveller or a pilgrim from a foreign country, he must serve him devotedly.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh made grants of *jagirs* to gurdwaras for the maintenance of *langars*. Similar endowments were created by other Sikh rulers as well. Today, practically every gurdwara has a *langar* supported by the community in general. In smaller gurdwaras cooked food received from different households may comprise the *langar*. In any case, no pilgrim or visitor will miss food at meal time in a gurdwara. Sharing a common meal sitting in a *pangat* is for a Sikh an act of piety. So is his participation in cooking or serving food in the *langar* and in cleaning the used dishes. The Sikh ideal of charity is essentially social in conception. A Sikh is under a religious obligation to contribute one-tenth of his earning for the welfare of the community. He must also contribute the service of his hands whenever he can, that rendered in a *langar* being the most meritorious.

"Keep the *langar* ever open" are reported to have been the last words of Guru Gobind Singh spoken to Bhai Santokh Singh before he passed away at Nanded. One of the lines in his *Dasam Granth* reads: "*Deg tegh jag me dou chalai*—may *langar* (charity) and sword (instrument of securing justice) together prevail in the world." The first Sikh coin minted in the eighteenth century carried the Persian maxim: "*Deg tegh fateh*—may *langar* and sword be ever triumphant."

An essential part of the gurudwara is the *langar*, or free kitchen. Here the food is cooked by *sevadars* and is served without discrimination to all. After the *Sadh Sangat* has participated in any ceremony, they are served the Guru's *langar*. It was inspired by Guru Nanak's act of serving food to wandering holy men when given money by his father to strike a good bargain. The practice of serving food to all was started with Guru Nanak's Sikhs at Kartarpur.

The Guru's *langar* is always vegetarian, and traditionally is made up of simple, nourishing food. Strict rules of

hygiene and cleanliness are important when preparing the *langa*r (i.e., washed hands, never tasting it while cooking). Individuals with communicable diseases should not participate in the preparation of *langar*. It is also said that Once Guru Gobind Singh, disguised as an ordinary pilgrim, made a surprise check of the *langars* at Anandpur. He discovered that Bhai Nand Lal's *langar* was the best maintained. He complimented him and asked others to emulate his standards of dedication and service. One of Guru Gobind Singh's commandments was that a Sikh visiting another Sikh's door must be served food, without hesitation or delay. Another of his sayings ran: *"Gharib da munh guru ki golak hai"* — to feed a hungry mouth is to feed the Guru. This spirit of common sharing and of mutual co-operation and service was the underlying principle of the Sikh tradition of *langar*.

Guru Nanak and his successors attached a great deal of importance to *langar* and it became, in their hands, a potent means of social reform. The former gave it the central place in the *dharamsala* he established at Kartarpur at the end of his preaching tours. He worked on his farm to provide for himself and for his family and to contribute his share to the common *langar*.

He had such of his disciples who could afford to set up *dharamsalas* and *langars*. Among them were 'Sajjan Thag, then lost to godly ways, and a wealthy nobleman, Malik Bhago, both of whom had converted to his message. Bhumia, formerly a dacoit, was asked by Guru Nanak to turn his kitchen into a *langar* in the name of God. A condition was laid upon Raja Shivnabh of Sangladip (Sri Lanka) that he open a *langar* before he could see him (Guru Nanak). The Raja, it is said, happily complied.

Guru Angad, Nanak II, further extended the scope of the institution. He helped with cooking and serving in the *langar* at Khadoor Sahib. His wife, Mata Khivi, looked after the pilgrims and visitors with the utmost attention. Such was her dedication to work in the langar that it came to be known after her name as Mata Khivi ji ka *Langar*. The Var by Satta and Balvand also applauds Guru Amar Das's *langar* wherein "*ghee* and flour abounded." In spite of rich variety of food served in his *langar*, Guru Amar Das ate a simple meal earned by the labour of his own hands. "What was received from the disciples was consumed the same day and nothing was saved for the morrow." Contributing towards the Guru ka *Langar* became an established custom for the Sikhs. Partaking of food in Guru Ka *Langar* was made a condition for disciples and visitors before they could see the Guru. Guru Amar Das's injunction was: "*pahile pangat pachhe sangat*"—first comes eating together, and then meeting together." *Langar* thus gave practical expression to the notion of equality.

At Goindwal, during the time of Guru Amar Das Ji a rule was instituted that anyone who wanted to have a meeting with the Guru (receive his *darshan*) would have to eat food from the *langar*. Even when the Emperor of India, Akbar came to see Guru Amar Das, he sat in *pangat* (where *langar* is served) before meeting the Guru. From that time forward, at Goindwal, *langar* was served 24 hours a day.

Bhai Jetha, who came into spiritual succession as Guru Ram Das, served food in Guru Amar Das's *langar*, brought firewood from the forest and drew water from the well. By such deeds of devoted service, he gained enlightenment and became worthy of the confidence of Guru Amar Das. *Langar* served to train the disciples in *sewa* and to overcome class distinctions.

The institution of *langar* had become an integral part of the Sikh movement by now and, with the increase in its numbers, it gained further popularity and strength. With the development under Guru Ram Das and Guru Arjan of Amritsar as the central seat of the Sikh faith, the capacity of the local Guru ka *Langar* increased manifold. Sikhs came from far-off places to see their Guru and to lend a hand with the construction work. They were all served food in Guru ka *Langar*.

Bhai Manjh, was attracted to Sikhism from a Muslim sect, engaged himself in serving the Guru's *langar* by fetching fuel wood from the nearby jungle. Once, due to inclement weather, he fell into a well whilst carrying wood on his head. On hearing this, the Guru Arjan Dev rushed to the well with necessary equipment. When the ropes were lowered, Bhai Manjh requested the Guru to draw out the fuel wood first, as he considered dry wood more essential than himself. It was done, and when Bhai Manjh was drawn out, the Guru embraced him in his wet clothes blessing him, "Manjh is the Guru's beloved. Whosoever keeps his company shall be redeemed."

Guru Hargobind and Guru Tegh Bahadur travelled extensively in

north and northeast India. This led to the establishment of many new *sangats* and each *sangat* meant an additional *langar*. In the reign of Guru Gobind Singh, the institution of *langar* acquired further significance. At Anandpur, the new seat of Sikhism, a number of *langars* were in existence, each under the supervision of a devoted and pious Sikh. Food was available in these *langars* day and night.

The Protocols

When preparing food for the *langar*, the mouth and nose will be covered by a piece of cloth known as a "*parna*". Also during the preparation due regard is made to purity, hygiene and cleanliness, the *sevadars* (selfless workers) will normally utter Gurbani and refrain from speaking if possible. When the *langar* is ready, a small portion of each of the dishes is placed in a plate or bowls and placed in front of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib and a prayer called the *Ardas* is performed. The *Ardas* is a petition to God; a prayer to thank the Creators for all His gifts and blessings. A steel *kirpan* is passed through each item of food, after the "Guru-*prashad*" has been blessed. The blessing of the *langar* with *Ardas* can be done anywhere, in case the *langar* needs to be served before the completion of the Gurdwara ceremony. The *langar* is not eaten until the *Ardas* has been recited. After the *Ardas* is completed, each item of food is returned back to its original pot or container. It is said that the blessings of the "holy" food are thus passed to the entire *sanga*t through the *langar*.

When serving the *langar*, the servers must observe strict rules of cleanliness and hygiene. Servers should not touch the serving utensils to the plates of those they serve. When serving foods by hand, such as chapattis or fruit, the servers' hands should not touch the hand or plate of those they are serving. Those serving should wait until all others have been completely served before they sit down to eat themselves. It is advisable not to leave any leftovers.

Since some Sikhs believe that it is against the basics of Sikh to eat meat, fish or eggs, hence non-vegetarian foods of this sort is neither served nor brought onto the Gurdwara premises. Others believe that the reason vegetarian food is served in Gurdwaras is so that people of all backgrounds can consume the food without any anxiety about their particular dietary requirement and to promote complete equality among all the peoples of the world. Alcoholic and narcotic substances are stringently against the Sikh diet, hence these with any meat products are strictly not allowed on Gurdwara premises.

A Means of Social Reform

Community kitchens came into existence with the *sangat* or holy fellowships of disciples, which sprang up at many places in his time. Sikhs sat in *pangat* (literally a row) without distinctions of caste or status, to share a common meal prepared in the *langar*. Besides the kitchen where the food was cooked, *langar* stood for the victuals as well as for the hall where these were eaten. The disciples brought the offerings and contributed the labour of their hands to prepare and serve the food. The institution of *langar* had thus demolished the long established caste barriers and gender prejudices of the time. *Gurbani* be recited during the preparation.

High caste people would eat from the hands of low caste people and vice-versa. This practice, slowly overcame the century old established prejudices ingrained in the minds of common people of the land. Before the establishment of *langar*, a Brahmin would not eat in the presence of a low caste person and was thought a bad omen if a low caste person was to enter a room where the high caste Brahmin was eating. The institution of *langar* removed all these barriers in the culture of Northern India.

Conclusion

For me, such is the virtue in a *langar* that it was a blessing indeed not only to have cooked but also to have served it too. The food and the flavours of *langar* cannot be savoured anywhere else – I assure you that. It is a delectable holy space where the giver and the receiver stand as one.

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Sikhism and Spirituality

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Ugandan youth enjoy the activities of their school Cultural Heritage Clubs

Moral Values in a Changing World Does heritage matter?

John De Coninck

How is our world changing? Do we – the older generation - not all decry the "good old days", the times when the youth were so much better behaved than now (that includes us of course!) and how the world generally was a much saner place to live in?

But has the world actually changed for the worse, as our memories would lead us to believe? In many countries, poverty levels are down, gender inequalities lessening, infrastructure improving, scientific advances so fast that they elude comprehension.

Yet, in my country Uganda (no doubt elsewhere too), the positive changes we see have come at great social costs – many more people than before live in squalid slums, families have become dysfunctional, ever greater corruption scandals reflect the disappearance of moral values, youth seem to disregard their heritage, while the general public expresses discomfort at the influence of the internet and the other effects of globalisation.

These changes have affected the young generation most – In Uganda and in other countries, youth (the great majority of the population) seem to have been especially disoriented by the changes in family values, many caused by the social dislocations brought about by the AIDS crisis and rapid urbanisation. The family fireplace – the space to learn about oneself and one's community – has almost disappeared; the elders have passed away without transmitting their knowledge and values to the younger generation; boarding schools have become a poor substitute for cultural learning (especially where commercial pressures forces them to be hell-bent on academic performance at the expense of "moral education"); new and growing religious faiths demonise "culture" and wholeheartedly espouse alien values and practices; and all these are crowned by the Facebook era and other manifestations of the internet age. Meanwhile, in a country where 70% of the population is under 30 years and where jobs are extremely scarce, the youth face the daily life-and-death

challenges of shelter, food and jobs. As many will tell you, "culture does not bring food onto my plate".

The Yearning to Re-connect - Is it therefore not astonishing to find so many young people seeking to re-connect with their cultural heritage? The organisation I work for, the Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda, supports Heritage Education Clubs in 130 secondary schools across the country – where young people re-learn about their clans, their totems, their proverbs and other ways to appreciate and express their cultural heritage. One observation arising from this work in the last 6 years has been the enthusiasm of such youth, when given the opportunity, to discover their cultural roots and more schools keep asking us to join the scheme.

What are young people in this case looking for? Undoubtedly a fuller identity and a sense of self-worth. Are these not universal aspirations, just as we treasure a faded photograph of our forefathers, or protect other expressions of our heritage – historical buildings and sites, natural wonders, dances, music or other forms of intangible cultural heritage? It is this heritage that gives us a sense of distinctiveness as human beings and the indispensable moral compass that we transmit to the next generations.

We thus find ourselves in a world of contradictions where, on the one hand, the pursuit of "modernity" implies for many the irrelevance of cultural heritage – and the values that come with it – other than as a tourist attraction. This modern world extols the values of individualism, self-reliance and as few rules and regulations as possible in the pursuit of material gain. The values of solidarity and holistic well-being that come with our traditions and our heritage, if abandoned, are however increasingly seen as losses to humanity. Interestingly, the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage is one of the body's most "successful" instruments, having now been ratified in its short existence by 175 countries and territories around the world, while demands for inscription of "elements" of intangible cultural heritage (oral traditions and expressions, performing arts, social practices, traditional forms of knowledge, traditional forms of craftsmanship…) on the lists of the Convention (the equivalent of the well-known World Heritage Sites, administered under another UNESCO Convention) often exceeds the capacity to handle them.

Does it not echo our Uganda youth desire to connect with their heritage, the values, principles and identity it represent?

A Changing Understanding of Heritage - Other contradictions and dilemmas arise because the very notion of heritage is itself evolving; a process informed by the social, philosophical, demographic and technological changes described above. A century or so ago, our parents and grand-parents in African countries socialised youth into the important community values of "Ubuntu" and social responsibility. This is rarely seen today. In the Western world, our forefathers created museums and other forms of "institutionalised heritage" where one could learn to become "cultured": these were hallowed buildings, where artefacts were carefully presented to project a certain view of social history and artistic preferences. With time, the notion of the museum evolved – to the "living", interactive experienced-based sites and other forms of living heritage we have now become accustomed to.

Meanwhile heritage has become inextricably entwined with tourism and other forms of livelihood for those concerned, especially in the less developed countries. The seal of approval that a listing on a UNESCO list provides is even nowadays questioned as a poisoned chalice: as increased attention leads to overwhelming and at times destructive forms of tourism, where should the right "balance" be struck?

Similarly, the notion of heritage and its associated moral

values has shifted from a focus on building the nation-state (especially for those countries emerging from the colonial period), to a greater attention to cultural rights and diversity, the rights of ethnic minorities and an accent on regional community-anchored cultures and values.

Heritage therefore cannot exist and evolve without people – its creators and its consumers. While the distance between the two may at times seem to widen, soon the gap bridges itself. The need for identity and direction will always bring a more up-to-date notion of heritage to the fore. Heritage and its associated values therefore remain intensely relevant and a contemporary political manifestation of people's will and identity – the recent destruction of the Bamian Buddha's in Afghanistan and of the Palmyre world heritage site in Syria attests to this – their symbolism seen as so threatening that they had to be blown up, along with many markers of history and culture in these countries.

This intertwining – for good and, occasionally, for bad – not only gives us food for thought, but should also invigorate our work as cultural activists. The fight to demonstrate the constant relevance of heritage to our modern world and to its evolving values is not about to end, but every step along the way is well worth the effort. We can rest assured that future generations will benefit from our efforts…

Mangroves Sunset

Save the Mangroves and Save the World

Catherine Childs

Blue Carbon

Protecting your local wetland can help to save the planet. Coastal ecosystems such as mangrove forests, seagrass beds and salt marshes have long been recognized for their importance to nearby communities, but recent research has highlighted the valuable role these ecosystems play in slowing climate change due to their extraordinary ability to sequester and store carbon (known as 'blue carbon'). Mangroves are exceptionally productive ecosystems and are important for the host of benefits they provide that are critical to the well-being of millions of coastal people around the world - including supporting unique biodiversity, protecting communities from storms, shore stabilization, and water filtration. They also support important fisheries, including shrimp and crabs, which are crucial to the livelihoods and food security of coastal people. But scientists have recently discovered that coastal wetlands are also extremely efficient at sequestering and storing carbon where it remains in their deep, rich soils for millennia if left undisturbed. Although their global area is much smaller than that of terrestrial forests, the contribution of these coastal ecosystems to long-term carbon storage is much greater. However, mangroves and other wetlands are being lost at an alarming rate, faster than any other forest type on earth. Their critical ecosystem services will be gone forever if deforestation and degradation are not urgently addressed.

Coastal wetland managers have been struggling to preserve these important ecosystems, but funding conservation and restoration activities is particularly challenging when protection conflicts with other land use pressures. In many seaside areas, land prices are also very high, making purchase for land preservation difficult. With the recent recognition of their carbon storage abilities however, new funding is becoming available to preserve these ecosystems as a climate mitigation strategy. If the value of blue carbon in international carbon markets can be realized and transferred to communities at the local level, it could alleviate poverty, incentivize and finance community-led mangrove management, and help safeguard the

Cayman Islands

Cayman Map

services that mangroves support. Payments for blue carbon protection would value ecosystem preservation over habitat conversion, potentially altering economic incentives and halting deforestation and degradation in these areas. Protection of carbon-rich wetland ecosystems around the world for climate change mitigation purposes could be a significant tool in gaining access to the funds and political will to protect these threatened areas, and in turn preserve the other critical ecosystem services so important to communities worldwide.

There are several avenues available to countries interested in funding the protection of their coastal wetlands. Financial support for coastal restoration and conservation can be obtained through payments for ecosystem services, the use of insurance schemes, and debt-for-nature swaps (outlined in "Coastal "Blue" Carbon: a Revised Guide Supporting Coastal Wetland Programs and Projects Using Climate Finance and Other Financial Mechanisms")[1]. Blue carbon projects may also be eligible for climate credits under REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation), a program of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The governments of Costa Rica, Tanzania, Indonesia, and Ecuador have already included mangroves in their national REDD policies.

Mapping Ocean Wealth

It is also important that natural carbon sinks such as mangroves are included in national climate strategies. The "International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2013 Wetlands Supplement"[2] provides methods for the inclusion of coastal ecosystems into national greenhouse gas inventories. Additionally, Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Approaches (NAMAs) provide countries with mitigation actions and projects to protect mangroves and seagrass beds.

Countries will be able to achieve the greenhouse gas targets agreed upon at international climate meetings only through a multifaceted approach that includes efforts to reduce emissions, but also commitments to preserve and enhance nature's ability to store carbon.

The Example of the Cayman Islands

There are many options open to developing and emerging economies around the world, but overseas territories can find it difficult to gain access to financial resources. The Cayman Islands, as a British Overseas Territory, is categorized with Britain as an Annex 1 industrialized country and is therefore ineligible to participate in REDD and other more common sources of revenue. For that reason, the National Trust for the Cayman Islands is pursuing carbon offsetting as a way to gain capital to protect the carbon-rich mangroves found on Grand Cayman, protecting this rapidly

disappearing ecosystem and the services it provides for the people of this island group.

The Cayman Islands are located in the western Caribbean, south of Cuba and northwest of Jamaica. The country is made up of three islands - Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac, and Little Cayman. Most of the population lives on Grand Cayman, a very low-lying island, the highest point of which is about 22 m above sea level, but with an average height of only 2 m. More than 50% of Grand Cayman was originally covered in mangrove forests but most of the wetlands on the western end of the island have been converted to residential and commercial development. The 3500 ha Central Mangrove Wetland (CMW) is the largest contiguous mangrove ecosystem in the Caribbean but is being encroached upon from all sides. Canal-front residential and commercial development, road building, and agriculture (including farming and ranching) are all land use changes that are being felt along the margins of the wetland.

Oceanic mangroves such as those found in Grand Cayman are some of the highest carbon pools of any forest type in the world while being among the most vulnerable to the effects of land-use and land-cover change, as well as to global climate change including sea level rise. Because mangrove ecosystems are so rich in carbon, deforestation or disturbance of these regions results in large emissions of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere. For example, if just 5% of the CMW was lost, it can be estimated that a very significant quantity of carbon would be liberated to the atmosphere, a figure correlating to taking between 64,704 and 75,824 vehicles off the road for a year.

Carbon Offsets

The National Trust for the Cayman Islands is a non-profit organization tasked with the conservation of Cayman's unique cultural and natural heritage. In an effort to raise financial resources to protect rapidly disappearing wilderness areas, the Trust created Island Offsets (www.islandoffsets.org), a program that offers local businesses and individuals a way to offset their carbon footprint through the protection of mangrove ecosystems on Grand Cayman. A carbon offset is a method to compensate for unavoidable carbon emissions by funding the prevention or reduction of carbon emissions from another source. Carbon offsetting is the only way to reduce a carbon footprint to zero and thereby designate a business or individual as carbon neutral. Offsetting is also often the fastest way to achieve the deepest reductions of greenhouse gas emissions while delivering added benefits at the local level, such as community development programs and the protection of threatened ecosystems. In the Cayman Islands, participation is purely voluntary, although many countries around the world require businesses to offset emissions that they are unable to eliminate. The National Trust is pursuing international verification and validation of their program so that they may access these international markets. It is hoped that this novel approach to wetland conservation will enable the organization to conserve Cayman's unique natural heritage in the face of accelerating development pressures.

Mangroves - by Jeremiah James

Worldwide, deforestation accounts for almost 16 percent of total global greenhouse gas emissions, more than all

Mangrove Emissions Infographic

Mangrove Infographic

Mangrove Roots

the world's cars, trucks, and airplanes combined. In some countries, the conversion of forests to other land uses is the single greatest source of carbon pollution. It is now understood that it will be impossible to reach the needed international targets for reducing climate change without significantly curbing the clearing of forests. When included as part of a comprehensive approach to emissions reductions, investment in forest carbon offsets can represent an important way to minimize your carbon footprint with the added benefit that protecting forests also supports the well-being of local communities.

We are all responsible for climate change and we all must be part of the solution. Dirty energy use and transportation by car, truck and airplane are often unavoidable. But we have the power to effectively erase those carbon emissions by funding the purchase and protection of coastal wetlands that will store away that carbon forever. Mangroves are critical for so many things we take for granted - crystal clear water, an abundant fishery, protection from storms, important wildlife habitat - but their protection is also crucial in the fight to stop climate change. The protection of this critical habitat through carbon offsetting thus has a positive direct impact at both the local and global levels. Save your local wetland and transform the unavoidable negative impact of your emissions into a positive benefit for nature in your area, while slowing global climate change. The world is in your hands.

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1. *Herr, D. T. Agardy, D. Benzaken, F. Hicks, J. Howard, E. Landis, A. Soles and T. Vegh (2015). Coastal "blue" carbon. A revised guide to supporting coastal wetland programs and projects using climate finance and other financial mechanisms. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN (https://nicholasinstitute.duke.edu/sites/default/files/publications/carbon_finance.pdf).*

2. *IPCC 2014, 2013 Supplement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories: Wetlands, Hiraishi, T., Krug, T., Tanabe, K., Srivastava, N., Baasansuren, J., Fukuda, M. and Troxler, T.G. (eds). Published: IPCC, Switzerland (http://www.ipcc-nggip.iges.or.jp/public/wetlands/pdf/Wetlands_Supplement_Entire_Report.pdf).*

Lacquer - *Lakh*

Jatin Das

When I was about five or six, in my hometown in Mayurbhanj, my grandmother used to take me to various fairs and festivals. During the *Rathayatra*, hundreds of craftsmen would bring their toys, jewellery, paintings and basketry; spread them on the roadside and sell them. My favourite were the lacquer toys; I kept them safely in my little cupboard.

Since then, I have been collecting beautiful artefacts wherever I go. This is why I am shedding baggage at the JD Centre of Art in Bhubaneswar. Every penny of mine has been spent for collecting toys, paintings, and utensils and so on (folk, tribal, classical) other than my art material for painting. It is uncanny that I found a couple of lacquer, terracotta toys in a tiny box that my grandmother gave me, some seventy years ago.

Lac has been used all over India and the entire South East Asia and Far East. This is an organic material, the scarlet resinous secretion from a number of lac insects that colonise the branches of host trees and secrete lacquer.

Mirror and lac work, Gujarat

Lacquer Terracotta Toys

Lacquer terracotta toys are very special in Odisha and some parts of Bengal, only. Lac toys are mainly in the Balasor District of Odisha, adjacent to my hometown. There were only couple of families earlier; now there is a sensitive man, Kesu Das, who has taken up the project and many more are working on it. This is a craft, mostly done by women in their free time, for little children. Lac toys are usually unbreakable, non-toxic, smooth and shiny.

I had attended a wonderful Lac toys wedding, in Balasor, where the toys are made almost life-size, carried on a palanquin, like a bride and groom, with *band-bajaa,* which culminates into a massive celebratory dinner, in which the entire village participates.

The Southern part of Odisha, in Navrangpur in Koraput District, women embellish bamboo baskets with lac in bright colours like red, green etc. for the bride to carry her jewellery and belongings. Lac bangles are a must for all Hindu married women across country, coupled with iron, gold and glass bangles. These are made in many parts of India including Odisha, Bengal, U.P, Rajasthan etc. In Kondapalli in Andhra Pradesh, they make beautiful wooden bangles with lacquer on them, which is gentle on the skin.

In Gujarat, they make the '*Sankheda*' wooden furniture, coated with lac, which is very elegant. All kinds of wooden items have lacquer handles, whether it is a '*Belan*' (rolling pin) or a '*Pankha*' (hand-fan), so that it is smooth and gentle on the hand. Small wooden '*Sindoor Pharua*' boxes are coated with lacquer, for married women to keep their vermilion, as part of their toiletries and are available all over India. '*Khunti*' are wooden pegs, which are embedded into the wall in traditional houses and have the lac coating to hang clothes and sacks from.

Now, instead of lacquer, a lot of people paint them with oil paints, which looks like lacquer, because of scarcity of material.

The traditional miniature paintings, '*Patachitras*', are painted with tempura in Odisha; they put a lacquer coating on the top to protect them from weathering conditions.

The round '*Ganjappa*', playing cards (*Ganjifa, Ganjifo*), once they are painted are also coated with lac. In Sawantwadi near Goa, the Royal Family, especially the Rajmata, has revived and restored the craft. On my visit there in 2008, I made a large collection of lac-ware.

In Japan, lacques is called '*Urushi*'. One of my students, Uchiyama Takayoshi, who had been working with me for five years, is a lacquer artist from Kyoto in Japan and lac-ware is a very refined craft in Japan. In Japan and China, they also make folding fans with lacquer coating. In Burma, the whole method of lacquering is different; the complete opposite of Japan. In Bali, they even make bamboo back-scratchers with lac handles. Buddhist and Jain monks carry their begging bowls with lacques coating which can be washed and cleaned easily.

Of course, lac was also used as a sealing wax for important doors, locks and documents in courts, royal families etc. My artist friend Ramachandran has got a beautiful antique lacques bed from Kerala.

In Mahabharartha the Pandavas used the '*lakcha palace*' to escape from Kauravas attack, leaving behind other bodies for them to find.

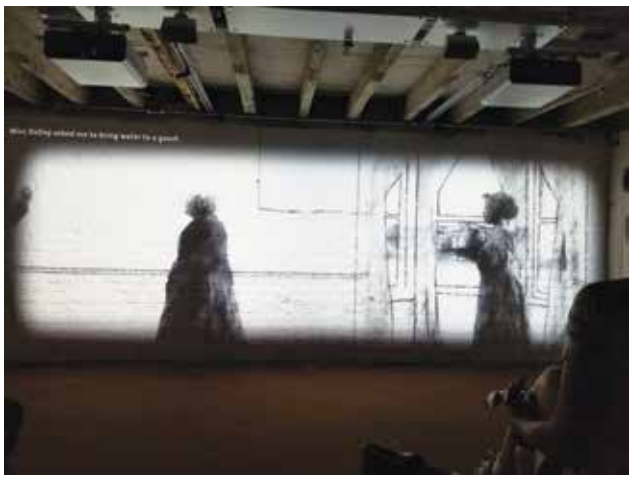
Lacquer Works

Existential and Evolving: Women's History at National Trust Sites

Katherine Malone-France

At National Trust Historic Sites, women's history is existential. At New Mexico's Acoma Pueblo, one of the oldest inhabited communities in North America, lineage and inheritance are matrilineal—women are the heads of their households and sole ownership of the houses passes from mothers to their youngest daughters. Mary Weeks' husband died before construction of the Shadows on the Teche was completed, and she actively stewarded it, as well as the family's agricultural enterprises, over the next 30 years. The riotous colors of the gardens at Filoli are the work of garden designer Isabella Worn, who developed the plant specifications, supervised the original plantings, and continued to work in the gardens until her death more than 30 years later. The Farnsworth House, a Modernist icon, is named not for Mies van der Rohe but for the remarkable woman, Dr. Edith Farnsworth—a nephrologist and classically trained violinist, who commissioned and paid for its construction on the banks of the Fox River in Plano, Illinois.

Many of our National Trust Historic Sites were also preserved by women. They were typically motivated not by their own legacies but by the desire to secure the legacies of men—of their husbands', fathers, their husbands' families or of famous men who had occupied or built the homes. By the time she bequeathed Decatur House to the National Trust in 1956, Marie Oge Beale had lived a remarkable life. She travelled to places where few American women had been able to venture in the early 20th century, like Iran and Peru and became a legendary Washington hostess known for carefully orchestrated receptions for the diplomatic corps and for reprimanding a young Senator John F. Kennedy when he arrived late for dinner at her Lafayette Square home. But it was the legacy of naval hero Stephen Decatur and her husbands' family that she sought to promote and preserve by writing Decatur House and its Inhabitants; by fighting an executive branch attempt to destroy the residential character of the president's neighborhood; and ultimately by giving her home to the National Trust



to serve as its first formal headquarters and one of its first historic sites.

First Lady Edith Bolling Galt Wilson played a significant—some might say extraconstitutional—role in her husband Woodrow Wilson's White House after he was incapacitated by a stroke. It was her husband's legacy that she sought to preserve when she donated their Washington, D.C., home to serve as a memorial to him. Margaret French Cresson was an accomplished sculptor in her own right, having exhibited at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Whitney Museum, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. But in preserving her father's home and studio at Chesterwood, she focused only on his body of work and securing his place in the history of American art. Marjorie Leighey fought the federal government to save the Pope-Leighey House from demolition not to tell the story of her life there but as an exemplar of Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian style of architecture.

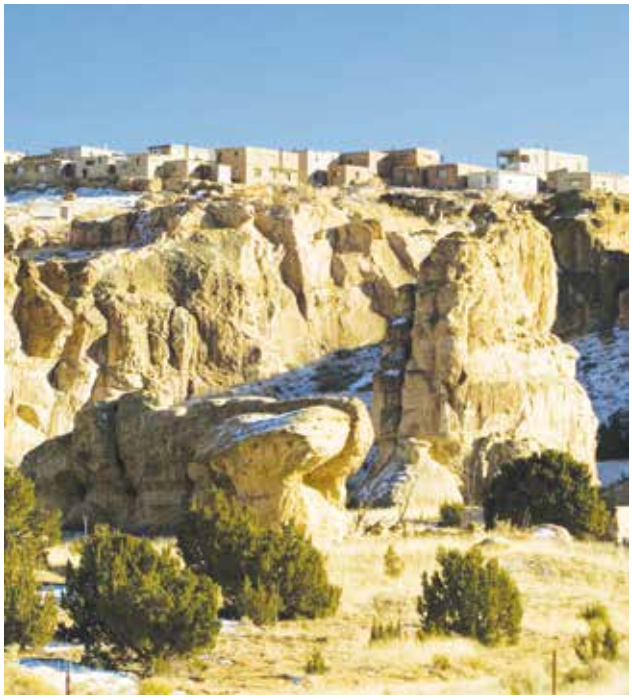
However, today we are working to tell the stories of the diversity of women, these and many more, whose histories are intertwined with our sites. Women are widely represented in the collections that we steward and interpret at National Trust Historic Sites—from a wedding bodice and mourning jewelry worn at Drayton Hall in the 19th century, to the pottery of Maria Martinez that made its way from New Mexico to Virginia in the 20th century. Villa Finale has just funded a new edition of a book on the prints of Texas artist Mary Bonner, whose work is a part of the National Trust's collection there. At The Glass House, the photographs of Lynn Davis are represented both in the permanent collection—in pieces selected by Philip Johnson and David Whitney and in 'On Ice', a stunning exhibition currently on view at the site that brings her contemporary work into the site's painting gallery.

For most of its time as a historic site, Lyndhurst has been interpreted with a focus on its architect, Alexander Jackson Davis and its most famous owner, financier Jay Gould. Today however, we tell stories of mostly immigrant women who lived and worked in the recently restored laundry building and the Defying Labels exhibition uses the clothes of sisters Anna and Helen Gould to tell the story of the changing roles of women in the 19th century and the barriers that the Gould sisters broke.

At Montpelier, as part of the new Mere Distinction of Colour exhibit, a short film titled "Fate in the Balance" tells the story of Ellen Stewart and her mother Sukey, Dolley Madison's enslaved personal maid and the perils of sale, separation and mistreatment they faced under Dolley's ownership.

At President Lincoln's Cottage, students learn about Elizabeth Hobbs Keckley, a woman born into slavery in Virginia, who purchased her own freedom and became the dressmaker and confidant of First Lady Mary Todd Lincoln. At Belle Grove, joint programming with the National Park Service brings to life a woman named Judah who was enslaved and worked as a cook there, even as new archaeological research begins to piece together, artifact by artifact, what her life might have been like. An upcoming play at The Shadows on the Teche will contrast the life of Mary Weeks and her daughters with those of the African American women who were enslaved on the property.

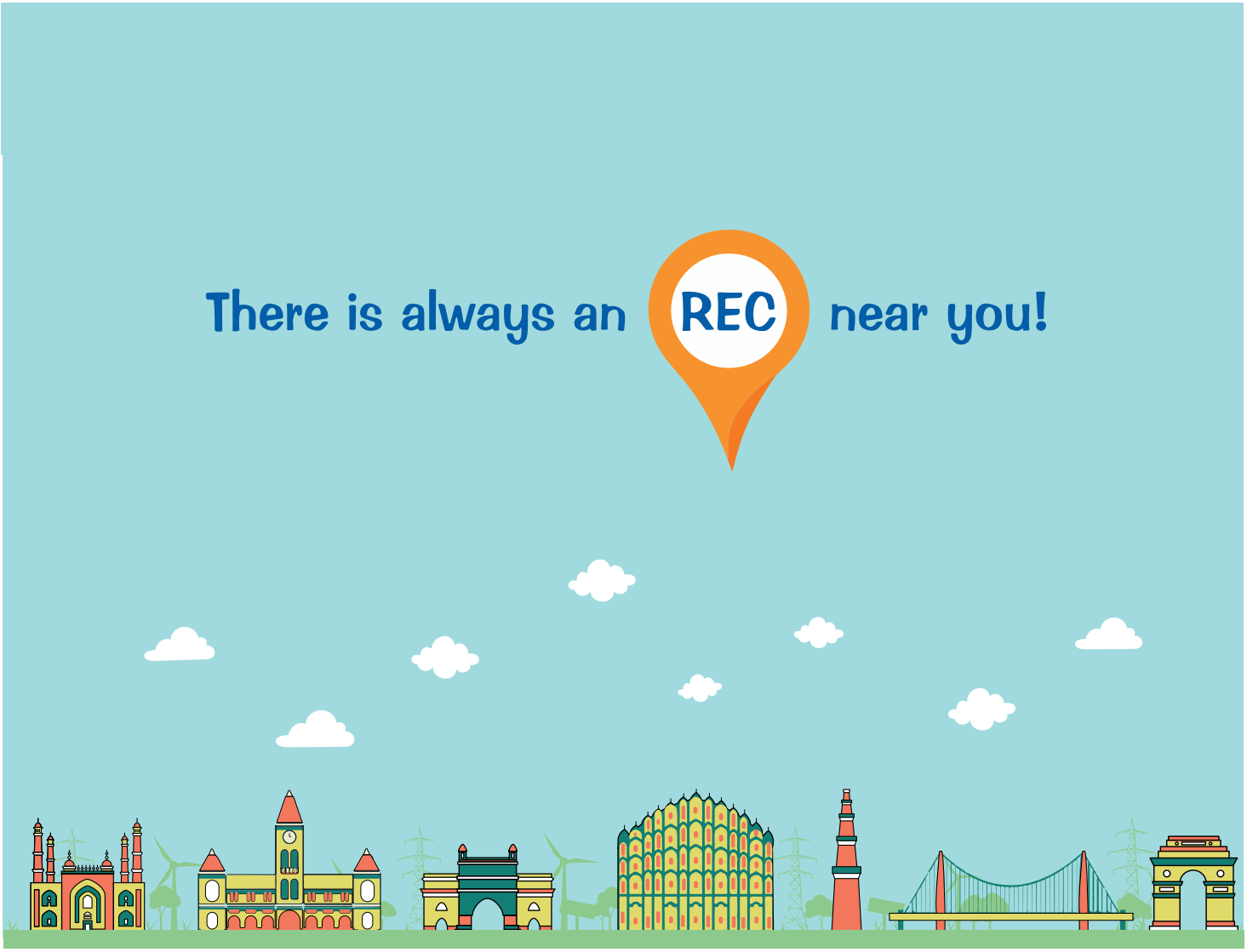
Black Evening Gown



I sometimes wonder what the women who preserved these places would think of the stories we tell today. What would Marie Beale think about the fact that Decatur House tells the story of Charlotte Dupuy, who was enslaved in the household of Secretary of State, Henry Clay when he rented the home and who sued him for her and her children's freedom? What would Anna and Helen Gould think of our focus on the women who worked in the laundry? What would Elizabeth Carter think about the fact, that her carefully kept diary informs our interpretation of Oatlands? We use it not only to tell the story of Carter, a woman who managed a large Virginia plantation through the Civil War and Reconstruction, but also as the basis of a database that allows researchers to identify the men, women, and children who were enslaved on the property. I am certain these women would be surprised and I am not entirely sure if they would be pleased. Many of them lived very privileged lives, their roles and their worlds narrowly defined and their prejudices often representing the worst of their times.

So, we don't do this for them, we do it for ourselves and even more so for those who will come after us. We participate in the continuing evolution of these places in order to support their ongoing relevance. I do hope that the women who played critical roles in preserving these places would be pleased that more than half of our National Trust Historic Sites are led by women directors, not to mention the women board and advisory council chairs, curators, educators, horticulturalists and preservation directors who work every day to make the sites sustainable and relevant for the long term. I also hope that they would appreciate the men who lead and work at our sites, also committed to ensuring that they tell full stories of the women who shaped them.

Therein, ultimately lies the power of place. Places hold stories until we catch up to them, until we are curious enough to uncover them and empowered enough to tell them. In this way, places are more powerful than our own narrow understandings of the past and the present. The most successful and sustainable historic sites are the ones where interpretation is not bound by legacies, where we continue to discover new stories and new ways to create meaningful experiences and to tell the stories that haven't been told. At National Trust Historic Sites, women's history is existential and evolving.



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Mother in law receiving the bridegroom

Wedding Rituals in Rajasthan

Dharmendra Kanwar

Of the sixteen *samskaras* that govern the life of all Hindus, marriage is the one of the most sacred and important *samskara*. Throughout Rajasthan, marriage ceremonies starting from the engagement to the actual marriage, is a long chain of ceremonies that are full of colour and traditional customs. Each community has its own set of customs that are observed to this day. Over the years the pomp and show may seem a bit scaled down but has certainly not diminished in any way because traditional marriages throughout Rajasthan are elaborate affairs. If it is a Rajput marriage then the charm and splendour increases manifold.

There are a lot of pre and post wedding rituals that are performed by the bride and groom in their respective homes. The first step is the matching of horoscopes to determine the couple's compatibility. There are 36 gunas (in both the girl and boy's janam kundali) out of which the accepted borderline is 18, if less than 18 gunas match then there are chances that the marriage will not last but anything above 24 is considered a very good match. In some rare cases almost 33 to 36 gunas match and that is considered an excellent match.

That out of the way, the girl's side must now call the *pandit* (priest) for the *lagan mahurat*, or the correct day for the marriage. The *pandit* studies the horoscopes in relation to the *panchang* and determines the auspicious day and exact time of the *pheras,* or the wedding ceremony. Once that is finalised these details are noted down and carried to the boy's home and handed over to the boy's father. This paper is then ceremoniously carried to the family puja room where it is stays until the *Ganpati Sthapna*, or the invocation to Lord Ganesha. This is the formal invitation to the boy to come and wed the girl on a specific day.

Tika (applying a tilak on the forehead) is the official engagement ceremony and the festivities start soon after the tika. Close male relatives of the bride go over to the boy's house and the girl's brother applies a *tilak* on the boy's forehead and hands him an auspicious coconut covered with either a gold or silver sheet. Several other gifts are also given to the boy and his family.

Pilla Chawal, yellow rice into which turmeric has been added, has always been the traditional invitation

to friends and relatives rather than the cards that are now sent. This is prepared a day before the *Ganpati Sthapna* and taken to the Ganesha temple the next morning. *The pilla chawal,* a wedding invitation card (the first card is always given to Lord Ganesha) and some jaggery is offered at the temple by both the boy and the girl's families separately. Then they come home and the *Ganpati Sthapana* takes place. After the boy has been selected and "booked" then this is the second most important ceremony – the *Ganapathi Sthapana* and *Griha Shanti,* or a *puja* conducted for peace and harmony in the house. The family requests the Lord to bless the couple and come and preside over the marriage ceremony. A pebble from near the temple is installed on a low *chauki* (stool) and the *pandit* conducts another *puja*, the pebble signifies Lord Ganesha.

After the first card has been given to Lord Ganesha, the rest of the cards are sent out. The mothers of the boy and the girl need to go personally to invite their parents and siblings, this is called *bhaat nyotna.*

The invitations done, the actual wedding ceremonies begin with the tying of the auspicious thread to which, have been attached a *cowri* (shell) and a tiny lac ring, to both the girl and the boy's wrists but separately in their own homes. Once this thread is tied, it is expected that the boy and the girl should not leave their house and the time from now up to the marriage is spent in beautifying oneself. This is the only significance of the *pithi dastoor*. This ceremony consists of the application of *pithi* (turmeric and sandalwood paste) on the hands, feet and face of the boy and the girl in their respective homes by seven married women from within the family. The sisters-in-law have great fun rubbing the paste vigorously on the face and in the hair. This is followed by the *tel chaddana* and the same seven ladies conduct this ceremony for five or seven days, while the *tel chaddana* starts from the toes upwards to the forehead, the *tel uttarna* is done on the final day, in reverse order, from the forehead to the toes.

On the wedding day, or a day before that, depending on the auspicious day and time appointed by the pandit, the focus is shifted to the maternal uncle of the bride and the groom. The *Mama's* family comes loaded with gifts, mainly clothes, jewellery and sweets. Before the simple and touching ceremony, the mama is received with much fanfare and escorted to the venue where his sister awaits him. He is welcomed with a tika on his forehead and he then hands over the gifts to his sister and her family. The ceremony known as *maira* or *bhat bharna* signifies the brother's contribution towards the expenditure that his sister has had to bear.

Puja during *pheras*

There is another interesting ceremony called the *janev* ceremony where the groom is given the sacred thread on the eve of his becoming a householder. He dresses up as an ascetic in saffron robes and performs a havan. The significance of this ceremony is that the boy has two choices before him, either he renounces the world and becomes an ascetic or he accepts the institution of marriage and all its responsibilities. After the *puja* there is another interesting activity – the groom pretends to run away from marriage and his maternal uncle chases him to catch him and convince him to accept marriage. Once the groom is ready he, along with his male relatives, leaves for the bride's house or the venue of the wedding this is the nikasi. Before the groom leaves he seeks the blessings of all elders who have gathered at his house for the *nikasi*, he touches their feet and they give him a token sum of money and wish him well. He is seen off by his mother and other older women relatives who apply *tilak* on him. There is an *arti* performed before he is ready to get on the horse.

The *barat* party, however, comprises only of men and all men are smartly turned out. The bridegroom is astride a horse with the party walking up ahead. Unlike other barats, there is no dancing by the barat party, the men walk with their heads erect and their swords held firmly by their side. It is not unusual to find elephants, camels and horses as part of the *lavazma*, or barat procession.

Ganesh *puja*

When the barat reaches the girl's town, there are a lot relatives from the girl's side waiting to receive them. Once they are settled, it is time to send the padla across. The clothes and jewellery, gifts for the girl's family, fruits and nuts that have been brought by the boy's side are called *padla*. The *poshak* that the girl wears for the *pheras* also comes from the boy's side.

There is much excitement in the girl's house when the *padla* is brought by the groom's family members. Along with the *poshak* some jewellery is also given, which is also to be worn on the wedding day. Female relatives of the groom spend weeks, sometimes months, before the marriage buying the *poshak* and the jewellery that the bride has to wear on the big day.

Though most of the customs are common with some other communities, the Rajput dress and jewellery stands out for its sheer magnificence. The typical clothes and jewellery that must be worn on the marriage day includes a *poshak*, usually a shade of red – but it could be pink, orange, golden yellow or a combination of these shades. In some clans a very bright green colour is also worn. The *poshak* consists of a full skirt called a *lahenga*, a two-piece blouse called *kurti- kanchli* and an *odhna*, also called *loogdi.* This is heavily embroidered with golden thread.

When the barat approaches, the male members receive the groom. Once at the door, the groom raises his sword and lightly touches the *toran* which is put up. The *toran* is a piece of wood with Lord Ganesha's image carved on it. By touching it, the groom invokes the blessings of Lord Ganesha and also signifies his victory in marrying the girl. Once that is over, he walks up to the main entrance where all the women are waiting to receive him. Traditional songs welcoming the groom are sung as he is welcomed by his mother-in-law who does the sasu arti with a beautifully decorated *thali* (plate), which has tiny lamps in the shape of a pyramid. The groom still waits outside and then suddenly there is a movement from behind the ladies as the bride is led outside and she throws a *laddu* (round shaped Indian sweet) at him. It is a matter of great interest to see where the *laddu* hits the boy. If it is around the heart, then it means she will rule his heart, if it lands below his waist then she would be dominated by him, and so on.

From here the groom is led to the *mandap* where the *pandit* waits with all the preparations for the *havan*. The bride joins him here and waits for the *pandit* to begin the *puja*. The *kanyadan* is performed by the bride's father who symbolically hands over his daughter to the groom. The *pandit* puts a lump of *mehndi* paste between their palms and ties a piece of red cloth around their hands and the young couple ritually walk seven times around the sacrificial fire -the *saat pheras.*

While all these festivities are taking place in the girl's house there is a lot of activity going on at the boy's home where all the womenfolk wait for the arrival of the new bride. They sing and play throughout the night.
At the girl's house when the *pheras* are over it is time for the newlywed couple to go to the *Ganesh sthapana* and pay their respects and seek the blessings of the Lord as well as all the elders of the house. The newly married couple then leaves for the *barat ka dera*, or wherever the *barat* is staying. The father of the boy gives the girl some sweets and a coconut, this is the *godh bharai* ceremony and signifies the family's good wishes for the girl's future in her new home. The groom also officially sees his bride's face and gives her a gift and they return to the girl's house where the girl spends the night.

There is a lot of excitement in the boy's house where all the women have been waiting to receive the newly married couple, this is known as the *badhana*. The boy's mother receives the couple at the gate with an *arti*. An interesting custom after the arti is when the boy leads his bride inside the house and with his sword scatters a row of thalis on the floor, the bride then picks up each *thali* and stacks it carefully – she has to ensure that there is no sound and it is important because the significance behind this custom is that the boy scatters the house while the girl binds it together, no sound means that there will be peace in the household.

The next day the new bride is formally introduced to her new family. There is also the custom of *mooh dikhayi*, or seeing the face, when the family members see her face for the first time and give her gifts and money. After these custom's the bride sits down to have a meal with six other married women this is called the s*uhag thaal.* All women eat from the same thaal and the bride offers the first helping to these ladies and they in turn offer the same to her. This is to signify that she has now become a part of the family.

The temple at Mukhba

The Natural as the Embodied Divine in a Himalayan Festival

Santanu Chakraborty and Francis F Steen

It is a place of power. One where giant massifs of stone rise all around you as far as the eye can see. Each layer superseded in frightening grandeur by yet another rising behind it until the eye can see no further. Masses of green, rows of imposing cedar, break the brown cliffs into more welcoming patches. Apple orchards blossom in the clearings. Small houses made of wood, stone and the charm of an world gone by reveal themselves on the slopes. A temple with white spires, many large and small rising into the sky, somewhat like the trees dotting the slopes, gleams away. The bite of cold mountain air, the smell of flowers and the sight of cedar trees melds with the gentle rushing of the streams as children dash through every now and then. You sit down for a bit to fully absorb the heightening of the senses in this magical place.

The temple nearby, resplendent in a white turned magical by the mountain light, prepares for some kind of an event. Only the priest looks slightly unnerved, even sad; his body drooping even as he powers through the hymns. An idol is brought out. You struggle to get a glimpse of the deity as s/he is covered by and in paraphernalia, garlands and the like. The entire village has gathered and it is clear that it is a special marked day of the calendar - a festival. Perhaps a few *parikramas* and the deity will return to her place inside the temple. But that is not to be, the deity is hoisted on two parallel wooden bars, carried aloft by young men who seem tougher than their builds. The village gathers, drummers and musicians, excited children and sombre adults, rich and poor, chanting priests an unbelieving visitor … and they all slowly begin walking away from the village.

We are in Mukhba, a jewel of a tiny village set in the Uttarakhand mountains, hanging from the heavens above the vigorously meandering Bhagirathi below. Hemmed by the mountains but still untamed in spirit. It is a journey that the village undertakes every year in spring to return the deity, Goddess Ganga, an

Day laborers from Nepal join the march

The deity being carried to Gangotri

embodiment of the great river that runs below, to her abode in Gangotri where she will spend summer and fall before it is time to be returned to Mukhba for the winter.

Is there a divine and if so what is it? This question has occupied humankind since the time of the ancients. On the Indian subcontinent, there has been a continued

The Gangotri temple, summer abode of the deity, comes into view

association of the natural with the divine. Arguably the earliest Indian subcontinental civilization was the Indus valley civilization extending over much of the North Western area of the subcontinent. Deity like figures, part human and part imaginary, have been found as part of seals. Well known amongst them is the Pashupati seal, which depicts a figure, possibly three headed, in a seated pose surrounded by animals.

From deeply natural roots, the notion of the divine has progressively moved on to more and more abstract notions. This kind of abstraction is particularly apparent in the more 'modern' notions of the divine as they stand today. India is interesting in the sense that a multitude of notions, including many that are still deeply connected with the notion of the natural as the divine still have a hold, however tenuous, on the psyche of the people. Nature continues to manifest itself in the experience of the divine as well as the in notions of pilgrimage and festival. And yet nature, our manifest concrete reality, is no longer the dominant notion of the divine. Considered primitive and relegated by the high priests of abstraction.

In these mountainous habitats, the sacred is everywhere: in the sky, the majestic clouds, in the sheer faces of soaring crags, in the glassy river, vast and life-giving. Down in the cities of the plains, the sacred is at times no more than an eddy in the maelstrom of life, a temple tucked away in a side alley, drowned out by honking traffic, courageously pointing to the infinite in a cacophony of busyness, a silent symbol gesturing to the beyond. Here in the mountains the sacred is reality itself, palpable, crushing down on you from all sides, overwhelming and yet uplifting.

For millennia, pilgrims have sought out these austere valleys, pine forests, and remote peaks in search of the immeasurable. In the Himalayas there exist multiple temples whose location and legend are entwined with nature. These include temples to the river goddesses Yamuna and Ganga, and to Shiva or Pashupatinath. Of the numerous temples to Shiva, the five Kedars – Kedarnath, Tunganath, Rudranath, Madmaheshwar and Kalpeshwar are well known. Kedarnath (or lord of the clay fields in Sanskrit) - the name holds in itself an allusion to nature, is situated over 3500 meters in altitude at the confluence of multiple river streams, which give rise to the Mandakini river, one of the major headstreams of the Ganges.

Ascetics at Gangotri, far from the Temple

It is a place of peace. To the faithful and sceptic alike. The unbeliever has been here many times. Easier to breathe here than in the cities, to think, to rest and also to push one's body and mind into new, possibly dangerous, directions. To get a respite from life and yet be made more aware of ones mortality. On one of these trips, in a small village by banks of the Bhagirathi, local ladies on their daily visit to the river Ganges and the associated temples to Ganga and Shiva ask him why he is there in a remote village with apparently nothing to do but sit by the Ganges for hours on end.

And wait. Does he look familiar? He says that he has been there many times and that he keeps returning. Perplexed, they gather around and ask him why. The answer spans a plethora of urban interests flitting from one incomplete sentence to the other: vanishing architecture, local cultures, the experience of being in the mountains, trekking, the writing of a book, the need for conservation, research and just the inexplicable experience of being there. There is a brief silence, permeated by the undulating breeze and sloshing water, where thoughts seem to leave. Even words vanish - important words. Verbose, heavy and powerful- the tools of an analyzing critic from the cities. They leave, refusing to return, leaving a void permeated only by the panic of not having an answer. Then even the panic deserts the mind leaving only an emptiness- a state in which one can perhaps finally receive. The cold wind pierces, a bit more so than usual. The warmth of the sun soothes, a bit more so than usual. A voice comes forth. One of the ladies, a towering middle-aged woman with piercing eyes, says with a gentle voice and a knowing nod.

"Gangaji ne bulaya hai." - The (River Goddess) Ganga has called you

I join the villagers and a handful of pilgrims in their spring festival, carrying the Goddess up to Gangotri. It is a long walk, for two days on a winding road, going through a spectacular landscape. The 'crowd' swells. Laborers from distant lands - as far as Bihar and Nepal - who work the roads every summer drop their tools, hammers, shovels and drills and join the walk alongside the deity aloft on a few villagers shoulders. Their supervisors join the walk as children vie with adults for a chance at hoisting the deity up on her journey to her summer abode.

In Gangotri the caravan is faced with a welcoming crowd, some gleaming with happy excitement and others sombre: tears rolling down their eyes as they are overcome with experience. A crowd, many holding incense, makes its way through winding alleyways of the city to towards the sparkling temple of Gangotri. The street intoxicated with incense and anticipation, with the warmth of chanting's and the refreshing bite of the cold mountain air that swoops down occasionally from high above. We march on shoulder to shoulder, body against body, soul with soul, locals, visitors, police and military, peasants and landlords, the faithful and the unbeliever: all united by experience for a few magical moments. Soon we are at Gangotri, a heady experience slowly winds down with a dip, a ritual or a few pensive moments by the river Bhagirathi, which when joined by numerous other waters becomes the Ganges- the river that nourishes India.

Some sit on steps waiting for the idol to ensconced and consecrated in the summer temple. A line of devotees form. Many run down to the river, sparkling with the spirit of molten ice, and make offerings to the river goddess. Some mediated by priests, but many more on their own. A communion with nature, partly formal but primarily an experience that is often best conveyed by a journey through a tremendous natural landscape that makes your insignificance apparent. The situation of the temple in a remote spot, the significant combination of efforts of the being, mind, body and soul pushing through pain, puts the seeker in a cognitive state – boundaries challenged – one in which s/he could have a contemplative revelatory experience that would be impossible otherwise.

Now that is a festival in our temple to the Goddess of the River Ganges. It will return next year, and then again, keeping pace with the seasons. In a few months it will be turn, once again, for the priest at Mukhba to welcome back the deity. And in a few months more she will return to Gangotri. These rituals in their cyclical nature, in part due to their dependence on nature's rhythms and in part apparently arbitrary man made rules; pull us into another notion of time. Perhaps these rules are anything but arbitrary in their mirroring of the seasons, in their cyclical dance of ascent and descent, they are meant to underline and draw attention to the real. A real that our abstraction fueled world has been too ready to forget. A fact whose effects are being felt increasingly in the environmental disturbances all around us.

East Rennell, Solomon Islands

The Pacific Islands Region

Robin Yarrow

The vast Pacific Ocean and the island countries, which it contains is the largest single geographic feature on our planet - it is approximately equal in area to all of the land masses combined and it is both the broadest and the deepest body of water anywhere. The combined land area of the 23 Pacific island countries and territories [PICTs] comprises less than 2% of the total area of the Pacific Ocean - with the world's 2nd largest island, Papua New Guinea [PNG] accounting for over 80% of this land area. The Pacific Ocean has been referred to as the 'aquatic continent' is for a very valid reason and yet the total population of the region is under 10 million, the majority of which are in PNG.

The independent 'small island nations' and the 'territories' which occupy this vast region are linked together through several regional intergovernmental organisations, in a pragmatic approach to their multiple shared challenges and constraints. The 'territories' are also included in the membership of these regional entities because of the benefits, which can be derived in a range of mainly technical fields. While these island groups, which collectively account for over 7,000 individual islands, are generally short of land and as a consequence have relatively high population densities per unit area, their huge adjoining ocean areas [and resources] serve as part-compensation. In addition to inshore fisheries assets and areas of great touristic potential, the Pacific Ocean also hosts the world's largest tuna resources as well as yet-untapped sea bed minerals and hydrocarbons. A number of Pacific rim states including Australia, New Zealand, USA, Japan and Chile, have strong historical and economic links to these islands as do the metropolitan countries of UK and France.

Nan Madol: Ceremonial Center of the Eastern Micronesia: The islet of Peiniot viewed form the corrider of Pohnmweirok

Levuka Historical Port Town

Levuka Historical Port Town

History

The first people to populate the region, Austronesians, entered what is now PNG from Indonesia 50,000 years ago, while a large part of the present population moved into the other Pacific islands only some 4,000 years ago - these were the forefathers of the Micronesian and Melanesian components of the region's people. The 3rd racial component, the Polynesians, are believed to have moved into the region about 1,000 years later, although they did not reach some locations, including NZ, until around 800 years ago. The first European contact took place in the 1500s and over the next 2 centuries Spanish, Dutch and English explorers visited many islands in the region. During the 1800s, European settlement commenced and traders and missionaries were increasingly active. Most of the Pacific islands were annexed during this period by a number of European powers, namely Britain, France, USA and Germany while Chile acquired Rapanui. [Easter Island] Independence was progressively obtained through the 1960s and 1970s although some 7 island territories remain, spread between Britain, France, Chile and the US. A large part of the island of Papua, namely Irian Jaya, remains under Indonesian administration. In the past 120 years, immigrants have been received from Asia, in particular from India, [to Fiji] China and the Philippines.

The Islands - Challenges and Constraints

While the islands are certainly romantic, picturesque and often still pristine [some are amongst the most strikingly beautiful islands anywhere on Earth] this outward impression can easily 'mask' the inherent fragility of so many of them. In addition to the higher volcanic islands, mainly in the Western part of the Pacific, [PNG, Fiji, Vanuatu and New Caledonia] there are many small coralline islands, some being atolls and others uplifted coral reefs, more toward the east. Because the low-lying nature of the coral islands, usually no more than 2 meters above high tide mark, this category of island is especially vulnerable to storm wave damage and in the longer term to the impacts of sea level rise, as a consequence of global warming. The soil on these coralline islands is often not very fertile, being composed largely of sand and reef particles - this makes the growing of food a special challenge. The wide 'scatter' and fragmentation of the Pacific islands, usually with small populations, both within countries as well as between neighbours, poses many additional challenges in servicing such remote communities, particularly in terms of providing energy, health and education. A good illustration is provided by the Republic of Kiribati - the distance from the western islands of this state to those in the east, is considerably greater than that between Los Angeles and the US east coast! To this 'tyranny of distance' must be added the general 'dis-economies of scale' which prevail in terms of people - small populations can make it difficult for some PICTs to possess adequate numbers of highly trained individuals, such a doctors, scientists and IT personnel. Narrow economic bases are also often the case, and when coupled with relatively high levels of food imports for expanding populations and growing tourist numbers, can result in huge pressures on the balance of payments. Increasingly, some of the Pacific 'micro-states' are having their economic viability questioned although rising remittance levels are assisting.

Conservation and protection of natural and built assets
The biodiversity of islands is on average greater than that of large land masses - and often this is quite distinctive and different because of isolation. However, these natural assets are also especially vulnerable to the consequences of invasive species and of man. Built heritage on the other hand has not generally been constructed of lasting materials, except in the last century or so. Severe cyclones, which are being increasingly experienced, also cause damage, which many man-made structures cannot easily escape. The extreme cyclone, "Winston" which hit Fiji in 2016, was the most severe ever in the southern hemisphere, with wind gusts of 300 km/

Nan Madol: Ceremonial Centre of Eastern Micronesia

Nan Madol: Ceremonial Centre of Eastern Micronesia

hour! Many communities live on the coastal fringe and are therefore vulnerable to sea water rise in particular, on the 'king' tide or from tsunamis. Special heritage locations at such risk are the UNESCO-listed sites of the Nan Madol built rock structure on the island of Pohnpei in the Federated States of Micronesia, the Roi Mata Chiefly Burial site on Efate Island in Vanuatu and the historic port town of Levuka in Fiji, all of which are on the coast. In addition, a substantial proportion of the amazing carved stone statues on Easter Island, are at risk to damage from the sea. Furthermore, Fiji possesses a good number of historic fortified villages, some of these also being at or close to sea level.

An attitude that unfortunately prevails amongst some of the region's population is that conservation can wait as the PICTs are developing ones and national development must therefore be the priority. A lesser but also concerning attitude is that some consider heritage structures, such as old buildings, as not very important because these are viewed as legacies of past colonial times. A possible indicator of this mind-set is that only one PICT possesses a national entity dedicated to conservation of both natural and built heritage - that is Fiji, which established a "National Trust" at Independence in 1970. While modeled to a large extent on the National Trust of England and Wales, the largest NGO is Britain, the National Trust of Fiji [NTF] is a statutory authority - as a Government entity with certain 'convening power', the NTF has produced good results as a national 'center' for conservation - and regularly hosts officials and others from neighboring PICTs interested in learning about its 'model' and successful track record.

The shared Pacific Ocean is considered by Pacific island leaders as a 'strength' which has the potential to be a driver of transformative change and deeper Pacific regionalism, through the sustainable 'harnessing' of the resources which it contains - a large proportion of which lie within the Exclusive Economic Zones of the PICTs.

Climate Change

The region is likely to be disproportionately impacted by the impacts of sea level rise coupled with an increase in extreme weather events and shifts in weather patterns, to hotter and dryer or wetter. A strong regional partnership has been established by the PICTs, in actions and strategic responses to mitigate the impacts of climate change and to support adaptation initiatives. The Climate Action Pacific Partnership, working closely with international and regional organisations and linked to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change [UNFCC] has played a commendable role in this regard - and this effort then linked through to the recent 23rd Conference of Parties in Bonn, Germany, which Fiji chaired. A special concern of the conservation sector is how to best mitigate the impacts of climate change on heritage and in this regard how to ensure responses, including those at the community level in particular, are effective.

Priorities include building resilience through expanding coastal 'green infrastructure' [for example through the strategic planting of mangroves] and strengthening both awareness and capacity at different levels. Increasing the recognition that conservation must be accorded greater priority now and not later, will be vital. While enhanced access to Climate Action Funds [with some focus on protecting heritage] will be necessary, linking protection and preservation to tourism wherever this is possible, is very sound as this will provide access to income streams which can support conservation. In some ways therefore, climate change may provide opportunities, which can be advantageous.

Chief Roi Mata's Domain

Conclusion

The vast Pacific island region is one of the least-degraded areas of the globe - and it possesses an extraordinarily rich mix of natural, cultural and built heritage. While tourism offers much potential to support conservation and protection of these valuable assets, this objective would benefit from the heritage sector being accorded higher planning and resource-allocation priority. The impacts of climate change are real and are likely to affect the low-lying islands disproportionately - and because of their small size and many competing national priorities for development, the PICTs will need special assistance in order to become more self-sustaining in the future. As more national entities for conserving nature and built heritage become established, increased regional cooperation and partnerships with and between relevant like-minded entities in this endeavor, including with members of INTO in Asia, will greatly assist with sharing lessons and success stories. In addition, as travel and tourism across the world is one of the fastest-growing sectors, increased visitation to the PICTs by tourists has great potential to assist with conserving heritage resources whilst also contributing to and diversifying island economies in the process. More international travellers are now interested in heritage so the timing and intent are both very coincidental and mutually re-enforcing.

For those who are interested in more information on nature in Fiji as well as in the wider Pacific island region, herewith are websites of several organisations located in Fiji and a 4th one based in Samoa.

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www.nationaltrust.org.fj
www.NatureFiji.org
www.iucn.org/regions/oceania
www.sprep.org

Art Ichol

Ambica Beri

Art Ichol is an arts centre and residency in Ichol village near Maihar in Madhya Pradesh. It is the perfect forum for workshops, offsite presentations, gatherings, conferences or brain storming sessions. With its specialized infrastructure and varied venues, Art Ichol poses itself as an unmatched artists residency and work space.

Parallel to its vision of promoting the creative arts, Art Ichol is committed to the cause of community development through the arts. The centre held a unique research residency in 2016-17, called Disappearing Dialogues.

Nobina Gupta, a Kolkata based artist initiated and curated Disappearing Dialogues, a research based art project. The objective was to stimulate a cultural response towards social enrichment and better living, by reflecting on our lost heritage and cultural resources. Interestingly, it motivated people from different communities and social structures, through interactive activities, to recall the cultural, social and environmental losses native to their region, and to revive a dialogue to re-invent themselves.

This project within the creative ambience of Art Ichol, brought together a collaborative multi-disciplinary team of 15 diverse local, national and international professionals to research on Environment, Art and Culture, Heritage & Tradition within the local community in and around Ichol.

The journey began with each collaborator adding a new dimension to the initiative by expanding its boundaries, fusing cross-cultural views, researching through individual standpoints and organically moving beyond their usual practices. The region in focus was Baghel and Bundelkhand. The researchers identified ways and means of creating a dialogue across their respective fields. The days were spent travelling into the interiors of the region, engaging with the locals, with support from the staff at Art Ichol. The evenings were hours to share experiences and deliberate over germinating ideas. The process was made motivating by the subtlety of the developments. No one knew what would emerge from the process; yet there was a vivid picture waiting to unfold after authentic documentation and archiving. This 'collective' aims, in due course, to create innovative avenues for community enrichment.

Clare Elizabeth Kennedy, an Architect from Australia studied traditional Indian vernacular architecture, and techniques of craftsmanship and brick making around Maihar. She found an opportunity to deeply engage with a particular area, understand its history and the present. Her focus was on building with earth, and in Ichol, she found fantastic examples of traditional earthen architecture that is slowly being replaced by concrete homes. Clare designed a small residential eco building at Art Ichol, fusing successful elements of traditional mud buildings with modern detailing which could be explored and replicated.

Sandeep Dhopate, a photographer from Mumbai worked on the grace and grandeur of the 'Maihar *Gharana* of Hindustani classical music' depicting mood of popular ragas through staged photography, along with the wool weavers of Surkhama who continue the tradition of making woolen rugs. He believes that through photography he can address some economic issues by building a contemporary, aesthetically appealing visual narrative of the products, in the hope that it would generate new opportunities for Indian hand woven crafts.

Amritah Sen, a visual artist from Kolkata worked on the life of Baba Allauddin Khan and his Maihar school of Hindustani classical music. Visiting Madina Bhavan, Baba's house in Maihar, provided her an incomparable vibe of simplicity, dedication and purity that she misses in her contemporary life. Amritah documented her discovery by creating a book art that narrates the story of the house -- its past and present.

Shashwati Garai Ghosh, an Odissi dancer from Kolkata worked with a local folk singer Shashi Kumar Pandey and his troupe of musicians, and a young collaborator Mahima Sabherwal to create a performance. The fusion of their expertise resulted in a vibrant dance and music performance executed by the local school children, celebrating the region's cultural heritage. This show also infused pride into the hearts of the young audience.

Trish Bygott and Nathan Crotty, textile designers from Australia worked to explore the meditative aspect of stitch and cloth. They set-up an embroidery and crochet

workshop in October 2016 along with women of Ichol village, who are now co-creating a line of products. Their idea was to refine this skill, latent in these women, which would provide sustained livelihood and financial independence. Besides, the larger community would enjoy a sense of pride for playing a meaningful role in preserving native forms, patterns and art and craft techniques fast disappearing in India.

Nidhi Khurana, a textile artist from New Delhi studied the biodiversity of the place, and created visual maps of the region. At a skill development workshop with the villagers at Art Ichol, using natural resources from the area, she demonstrated various techniques of natural dyeing like eco-prints, bandhani, shibori, thereby making locals value mundane elements of the environment. This promises an opening for a better occupation for women with proper training.

Payal Nath - Kadam India, a social entrepreneur from Kolkata works with communities across India creating means of livelihood using product design. Having realized that the communities of Maihar had lost faith in their knowledge of basic crafts and/or arts due to the rapidly changing socio-economic fabric of societies, she instilled confidence in the ladies and girls of the village, through a basic workshop, involving a young collaborator Antara Gupta. The women are now creating a range of interesting products on base materials like recycled cement bags, fusing music with craft.

Abhisheka. K, an ecological artist and educator from Bangalore feels that though education is important for local communities, knowledge dissemination methods in rural schools have done significant damage as they are disconnecting students from nature. The younger generation is losing out on traditional knowledge. Through her project, involving all interconnected locally available resources, she created a marriage of traditional knowledge and science facts which can result in solutions to problems.

At Art Ichol we work together using pedagogical tools and programs, conducting art workshops for children and youth to build links with their traditional knowledge.

Ceremony of glans in a modern interpretation

Wedding Ceremonies in Russia

Yuri Mazurov

Modern wedding in Russia is a tradition that goes back to ancient times. The historical development of the wedding rite and the transformation of its semantic forms have left unchanged the basic social functions of the wedding - the legal and public sanctioning of marriage, as well as its aesthetic and educational significance.

The basis of the Russian Federation's population are Russians, which now accounts for about 84% of 147 million people in the country. The cultural traditions of the Russian people largely determine the culture of the country as a whole. Among them, a special role is played by the traditions of the national wedding ceremony. Their role in modern society is to maintain the connection between the present and the past. This function is most successful in rural areas and in small Russian cities, which are an organic environment for the preservation of the intangible cultural heritage. Next is a short digression into the history and current state of the traditions of the Russian wedding ceremony.

Formation of the Russian Wedding Ceremony

Traditions of the Russian wedding rite have been formed for many centuries and this process continues in our time. Scientists pay attention to the phenomenal stability of many old wedding traditions, in the country where various attempts to radically replace the wedding ceremony with completely new forms clearly did not stand the test of time. Moreover, there is a growing tendency of the authority of old folk wedding traditions and their flexible adaptation to modern conditions. It is right to assert that in the society there is a growing demand for traditional forms of the wedding rite.

The core of the Russian wedding ritual is a complex rethinking of mythical representations of pagan antiquity and Christian ideas. For example, an integral part of it was the actions that reflected the old ideas of people about the dying of a girl's soul when she was transferred to the category of married ladies. Some rituals went back to the cult of distant Slavic ancestors and often, the magical activities performed during the wedding, were pagan. Great importance in Russia was

given to the blessing of parents and they asked for the protection of Christian saints, who were mentioned in ancient lamentations.

The modern Russian wedding rite developed by the end of the XIX century. It is based on the traditions of the all-Slavic wedding rite, formed mainly by the middle of the fourteenth century. In the written materials of that period, descriptions of weddings are often found using the usual words: "groom", "bride", "wedding", "glans", "matchmaker" and many ancient miniatures and drawings depicting wedding feasts and wedding rituals have been preserved.

Geographical Features of the Wedding Ceremony

The huge size of the Russian territory - 17 million square km - cause significant differences in almost all traditional social phenomena and processes within a culturally unified Russian ethnos. Differences are manifested in the peculiarities of wedding clothes, the specificity of folklore elements (songs, dances, etc.) and in the details of the wedding ceremony itself. Territorial features of the wedding rite are associated with various conditions for the formation and historical development of the population of the respective regions. Natural conditions of the area also played and play a certain role, so the time of weddings was determined by the agricultural calendar - usually weddings were planned during the period free from agricultural work.

Almost everywhere in Russia, all stages of the Russian wedding ceremony are accompanied by songs. Songs and their performance can vary significantly, but their functions usually coincide. In the old days, almost everyone knew the order of the wedding ceremony and each participant acted according to the established custom. Due to the inherent variation in the wedding stereotype and creative activity of the participants, each wedding was in its own way unique and very special.

Wedding dancing in a village of the Northern part of Russia in olden days

Russian Wedding Ritual

Despite the variability of the wedding rite in Russia, its overall structure remains unchanged including its main components: matchmaking, bridesmaids, engagement (collusion), hen parties, wedding train, wedding ransom, glans and wedding feast.

Matchmaking*:* In the role of matchmakers (swats) usually acted close relatives of the groom - father, brother, more rarely - the mother and other relatives. Matchmaking was preceded by a certain agreement between the parents of the bride and groom. Swat, going to the bride's house, performed some ceremonial actions, determining his role. Often the matchmaker did not speak directly about the purpose of his arrival, but pronounced some ritual text and in the same manner, the bride's parents answered him. This was done in order to protect the rite from the actions of evil spirits. The text could be:

You have a flower, and we have a little garden. Cannot we transfer this flower to our garden?

Parents of the bride should, the first time refuse, even if they are happy with the wedding. Swat had to persuade them and after matchmaking, the parents gave the matchmaker the answer. The consent of the girl was not required and if she was asked it was just a formality.

Nikolai Pimonenko "Matchmakers"

Bridesmaids: A few days after the matchmaking, the bride's parents go to the groom's house to look at his farm. This part of the wedding was more "utilitarian" than all the others and did not envision special rituals. From the groom, they demanded guarantees for the prosperity of the future wife. Therefore, her parents examined the farm very carefully and the main requirements were the abundance of cattle and bread, clothing, and utensils. Often, after inspecting the farm, the bride's parents refused for the marriage.

Engagement (collusion): If, after examining the groom's farm, the bride's parents agreed, a day of public announcement of the decision on the wedding was scheduled. In different traditions, this ritual was called differently, but here, it was from this day that preparations began for the wedding itself, and the girl and boy became "the bride and groom". As a rule, "collusion" was conducted approximately two weeks after the matchmaking in the house of the bride and family, friends and villagers usually gathered there. The "conspiracy" was supposed to be a treat for the guests.

The announcement of the engagement was usually done at the table. The girl's father announced the engagement to the guests and after his speech the young people went out to the guests. The couple were first blessed by their parents, then the guests brought their congratulations, after which the feast continued. After the engagement, the parents of the bride and groom agreed on the day of the wedding, who will be the crony (the steward at the wedding), etc. The groom gave his first gift to the bride - often a ring, as a symbol of strong love and the bride, accepting it, gave her consent to become his wife.

Mikhail Shibanov. "Wedding collusion"

Hen Parties: A hen-party is the meeting between the bride and her friends before the wedding. This was their last meeting before the wedding, so there was a ritual farewell to the bride. At the girls' party, the key moment of the whole wedding ceremony was the intertwining of the maiden braid. The weaving of the spit symbolizes the end of the girl's former life.

The hen party was an important element of these preparations and farewell to the home. The bride gathered about 15 girls who sewed together, sang farewell songs and lamentations and in the evening, the groom visited them with a casket of delicacies (nuts, spice-cakes, sweets, raisins), rings and other gifts. The bride, in return, treated the groom and the boys who accompanied him with tea, and gave the future husband a bear figure. The bigger and more refined the figure was, the more respect the bride showed to her betrothed. The symbolism of this gift originates from the tradition according to which, in the wedding ceremony a 'bear' is often called the bridegroom, since this animal in paganism was sacred and was a symbol of the ability to be a hardworking master of the world, a wise reserve keeper and a skillful merchant - that is, possessed the main male features that are important for building a strong family. The bear in the symbolism of old Russian symbols and signs also means the ability to be a good teacher, the educator of children - in the family it plays an important role. For a man, this gift was a reminder of the responsibility that lay on his shoulders. After the wedding, the bear figure was placed in the newlywed's house as a guardian of a happy marriage and peace in the family.

Wedding Train: In some traditions on the morning of the wedding day, a crony must visit the bride's house and check if she is ready for the groom's arrival. The bride at the arrival of the crony should be in her wedding clothes and sit in a red corner. The groom and the crony along with friends and relatives make a wedding train and as the train moves to the bride's house, the participants sang special songs. Elements of magical actions in this part of the ritual are especially important. Sweeping the road is common -the crony and the guests carefully watched that no one violated the cleanliness of the road. Since earlier times, it has been customary to make an offering to a local sorcerer, so that they do not harm the wedding train. In this case, the sorcerer could purposely come to the train and stand there until he received sufficient gifts.

Andrei Ryabushkin "The Wedding Train in Moscow (XVII Century)"

Wedding Ransom: The groom's arrival was accompanied by one or more ransoms. In most of the regional traditions, this is a ransom for entrance to the house. The subject of ransom may also be a gate, a door, etc. An essential detail of the rite, is the immediate redemption of the bride. She can be redeemed either from girlfriends or from parents and sometimes there was a ritual deception of the groom. The bride was taken to him, covered with a handkerchief and the first

time, it was not the real bride, but another woman. In this case, the groom either had to go look for the bride or redeem it again.

Glans (Venchaniye*):* The culmination of the traditional wedding ceremony is the glans (Russian *Venchaniye)* performed by clergymen in churches and is the main part of the church blessing of marriage. In a broader interpretation, this is the church ritual of marriage. The name is due to the fact that the crowns (*ventsy*) of those who marry are crowned and in Slavic countries metal crowns are used and sometimes precious metals.
In modern cities, the ceremony of glans is largely replaced by the procedure of civil registration of marriage, performed in the palaces of marriage and other specialized institutions. Usually it is very solemn and at the same time a touching procedure. It is held in the presence of official witnesses of marriage, who are most often the closest friends of the bride and groom, sometimes also their parents and relatives.

Wedding Feast*:* From the moment of the wedding (or registration of marriage), the joyful and festive part of the rite begins. Young people go with gifts to the bride's house and the groom brings the bride to his house and the wedding feast begins.
During the feast, majestic songs are sung. A feast could last two or three days and on the second day, it is necessary to move everyone to the bride's house, where the feast continues. If the feast continues then the third day they return to the groom's house.

Konstantin Makovsky "Wedding feast in the boyar family of the XVII century"

Conclusion

Over the past decades, many traditions of the Russian wedding have been irretrievably lost, and the remaining exist in a very changed form. Almost everywhere there is a tendency to simplify and shorten the wedding ceremony. However, these days the interest of young people in the Russian wedding traditions has significantly increased and more and more young couples want to celebrate the wedding in the same way as their forefathers did hundreds of years ago, with observance of the beautiful and memorable rites and traditions inherent in it.

Our Rural Scene

Padma R

Some twenty years ago, I visited the village where I was born, more than eighty years ago. I was stunned and shocked that I had survived. It was a small, dark and dingy place even then. It seemed just big enough for one person to lie down and maybe deliver a baby. For a delivery, the local 'midwife' would be summoned. The moment she got the baby out it would be handed to her second in command who was eagerly waiting near the door, to take it and clean it while proclaiming its sex - relatives were anxiously waiting for the announcement of sex as well as time of birth so that the horoscope details could be noted on that basis. Alas in my case, I was the last of six children, with only one boy above me, that is to say that we were five girls and one boy. Superstitions and proverbs were alive in everyone's mind for ready exchange. There was undoubtedly no celebration for my birth, a girl child - everyone was keen on quickly getting the place cleaned so that normal work could start without much delay.

This village, where I was born is in Ambasamudram Taluk of Tirunelveli District of Tamilnadu, where there is a large temple which attracts many people. The village has remained the same, with very little progress - only that many have left it for places where their children are working India or abroad. Even the number of midwives must have gone down, as only those who cannot move out have remained.

Why am I mentioning all this?—many villages are being abandoned for greener (indeed would towns be greener?) pastures and more lucrative trade and income. One could single out Kerala for situations where the village and city merge—in what was termed as "rurban" areas by the World Bank --where the rural and urban keep merging.

But most areas have remained the same, the villages getting more and more isolated, as it is being ignored by people and governments. Superstitions, want of male child and patriarchy, with all that follows with it have got strengthened along with discontentment .Women, in particular are badly hit, for the girl child is not welcome. No special steps are taken for proper and safe sanitation for them. Girls, more than boys, are at a handicap in most rural situations. When a woman has to go outdoors for basic requirements, and darkness is necessary as there are no other way of ensuring privacy, it could be real snakes or the human variety that can and would take advantage. So the female is in constant fear and hurry and you can imagine the misery of half completed essential tasks, which can harm one's health. So the scope for women to have freedom even in the most basic but essential aspects of life is highly restricted. Illness is frequent and essential health care is restricted, the women is an eternal martyr denying herself the most needed things. Truly, it is no exaggeration to say that most women are second class citizens and they themselves succumb to that kind of selflessness

But all is not lost. There are many good organisations who are engaged in doing work in many of our rural areas. Take for instance 'Mitraniketan' on the outskirts of Tiruvananthapuram, Kerala's capital where education and employment for the less blessed is undertaken in rural surroundings in a unique way. In Trivandrum, there are also many dedicated women of the All India Women's Conference, who are unceasingly working towards many aspects of upliftment in women's lives.

One refreshing programme that my grand-daughter attended for a year in 2009, with a US grant, was run on the border of Chattisgarh in Gadchiroli in Maharashtra. (We used to hear frequently in that period, about the hard time Naxalites were giving to the police in this area). It was a health oriented programme for men, women, adults, or children who had little or no access to medical help. It is called The Society for Education Action Research (SEARCH) founded more than thirty years ago by Dr. Rani and Dr. Abhay Bang with their mission to 'uplift the poor' by catering to their medical needs. For my grand - daughter, it was an amazing, interesting and most useful trip to precede a medical education degree. Six days in a week she helped in the clinic that took in patients without charge. She could learn spoken Marathi, the local language and work in the laundry as well as the kitchen.

Eminent persons from all over the State volunteered their time and experience for operations, and dealing with everything including complicated cases and life-saving surgeries. Most people in that rural and tribal area were farmers with little access to medical help and this clinic was most useful to them especially as their incomes were not enough for going into the city for medical relief.

The experience was an eye-opener for her, not only

because it gave her a good bird's eye view of the less privileged people in India and how they have to manage on minimum facilities and the arduous lives of volunteers, who have to be a dedicated lot - infact finding workers to help is not an easy task, for the attributes needed for sincere and self-less work are rare. Even for those mentally oriented to public service, the compulsions they have to pay heed to, stand in the way of volunteering for a tough life in the rural/ tribal areas. Then again, there must be a good flow of money for the work, in addition to excellence - so there has to be constant effort to maintain and manage the finances. People want to be sure that it is a successful organization before they promise or give any funds. So these organisations have to perform well and gain a reputation before they can attract more.

People are living in the remotest of places in India and many of them need support in many forms and ways. Volunteering organisations, which can give their best whether in education, health or improvement in this situation are greatly needed.

Mending the Rural Backbone

Steve Borgia

A Model of a Successful, Responsible and Sustainable Rural Tourism Business:

Walking out of mainstream corporate, United Nations, press, motivation speaking, art, cinema etc, in early 90's Steve Borgia returns to india- to remote rural india. Thimmakudi village in Kumbakkonam near Tanjore in Southern India. He finds a cluster of villages abandoned since independace, surviving on a per capita income of mere 5 US dollars, launches big tourism businesses in small villages. Today the 5 dollars has grown to about 600 dollars per family per month. As a pioneer of rural tourism in india Steve Borgia talks of his ideas for mending the rural back bone through sustainable & responsible tourism business with what the neighbouring community has, with what they know and what they do.

When I came back to India in the early 1990's after successful stints in the corporate environments, sessions of motivation speaking and a stint at the United Nations, the rural and urban inequalities in India were the most striking to me. Tourism had emerged as a solution for development issues and sustainable tourism had a direct impact on the local communities. After a lot of thought, I decided to channelise my energies in developing rural tourism. When I was scouting for villages to implement my ideas, I discovered Swami Malai, a tiny sleepy village near Tanjore in Kumbakonam District of Tamil Nadu. It is believed to be the source of the *Pranav Mantra* '*AUM*'. The village is also known as the world capital of Iconography. *Purana* Gods and Goddesses are created, cast and shaped here. The river Cauvery sways across here not only crowning the region as the Rice Bowl of India but also like wild grasses have planted Carnatic music and Bharatanatyam dance all over the banks. Fortunately the art forms still sway here. There is music in the air and birds fly off from the finger tips of tender dancers who have descended from the *devadasis* of the times of the kings.

The concept of Rural Tourism as a means to mend the breaking backbone of Indian villages hit me as early as early 1980's, which was strengthend by my meaningful stint at the UN. The UN cutting back on charity and rural India losing skills and giving up its traditional occupations, were both a matter of deep concern. Understanding development helped me see the issue and a possible solution on the same plate. Thankfully, there

were no government takers for my ideas and I was forced to make it my business. At that time, any development initiative needed external funding. It was then that INDeco was born, India Ecology. This was the message, means and the medium. The hotel business became the funder and development became the mission. Today, both exist in humble harmony. A redefinition of the hospitality business had to evolve. It would have to be a deviation from the typical hotel management graduate with his western diction and style and would have to be redefined alongwith the business for it to be successful. The usage of terms such as 'development', 'poverty' and their associated terms have undergone a transition with respect to this area. The mantra was 'self-help.' It was about equal opportunities for all and it was about self respect. It was about marrying local resources to external demand

This business has touched various aspects that are integral to the tangible and intangible heritage of the area such as art, culture, lifestyle, food, architecture, education etc.

The story of the business actually began in 1896 when in Thimmakudy, a small hamlet in Kumbakonnam, foundation work for an epic home started. In 1906, the massive project was completed by Sri.Srinivasa Iyer and generations of his family lived here until the 90's. The house, 'Anandham' had played host to many freedom fighters and religious leaders including the great Sankarachary and the renowned poet Subramanya Bharathi. Then in 1996, the familial household changed hands and was baptised 'INDeco Hotel Swamimalai", and it became a unique heritage hotel exactly a hundred years after the original house was built. It now became home to a hotel, a hotel created by local craftsmen where the global market could experience the local flavour of life. This was a hotel serviced by the neighbourhood and entertained with local talent. A hotel by them, with them and for them. Subsequently, the number of these very unique heritage hotels across Tamil Nadu increased to three across varied locations but woven together with the same thread of values.

A. INDeco Hotel Swamimalai: The 1896 Tanjore Village

This hotel is India's only winner of the Global Eco Tourism Award. As described hereinabove, it is teeming with history, art and culture and started with just 8 rooms in 1996 and is now a hotel with about 100 rooms spread over 3 villages that serve about 18 odd villages. The impact of this hotel on the local economy has resulted in an increase in the per capita income from about 4 US dollars to over 600 US dollars per family per month and has noticeable increased the happiness quotient of the region. There is no unemployment and all children go to school while the elderly are taken care of. This has also gone a long way in preserving the intangible heritage by preserving the local culture and lifestyle. Nearly 80% of the operational expenditure and 60%

of the project expenditure goes directly into the villages.

B. INDeco Hotel Mamallapuram: The 1820 British Camping Site

Nestled close to the legendary Shore Temple and the popular 7th century monoliths, is INDeco Mahabalipuram. This hotel is located right in the heart of the town and spread over a tranquil beach, offering contemporary luxuries in a historical back drop. The hotel is set in an antique museum "Steve Borgia's Indian Heritage Museum". The hotel contains 30 standard rooms and some luxury royal suites as well. INDeco Mahabalipuram is the only branded hotel inside the destination set within walking distance to all tourist attraction. Interestingly, the hotel was manifested in just 30 days respecting all coastal building regulations and scored a record of producing its entire requirement locally and preventing urban branded shelf buys. As against normal hotel project budget ratios, this one scored a 60% spend on local labour and wages. The project has redefined engineering.

C. INDeco's Lake Forest Hotel, Yercaud

One of the most breathtaking realms in the world became an inspiration for the design on this vibrant hill station, Yercaud, about 4920 feet above sea level near Salem town in Tamil Nadu. A beautiful lake and a marvellous forest cover, choose to accommodate the product in The Eastlynne Farm Estate developed during the early 1800s. With lake views, forests, and chalets existing in shy harmony, hospitality and indulgences co-exist. 70 odd royal english bungalows hide in a live coffee estate on the banks of the Yercaud Lake. This continues to be a signature project for 're-use and recycle' practices and the Fortune magazine rated the concept as the 6th of the top 10 ideas to go green in the world.

Constants in Change

Though the projects of INDeco hotels are spread across three different ecosystems and offer a different experience across each property, there are some consistencies that are the manifestation of the organisation's purpose. Some of them may be classified as under:

a. The Indian heritage museums: Every hotel of INDeco has a purpose and is unique and houses a museum that showcases the authentic India in its rural glory.

b. Relationship with the local environment: The hotel will necessarily have a relationship with the environment where it exists, the villages, the neighbourhood and the people. The local lifestyle, beliefs, practices, art, curture, heritage and traditional livelihood are not only respected but celeberated.

c. Local employment: At any given point of time 75 % of the employees are recruited from within a 10 kilometre radius and are trained, inducted and motivated in career and life plans.

d. Social Causes: The organisation also approaches social causes as a local would and not as a typical entrepreneur would and some of the initiatives are defining social responsibility and large heartedness.

   1. For every room added to the hotel, INDeco adds a milking cow to its in-house dairy. Not more than 50% of the milk is supplied to the hotel, the rest are distributed to mothers who have just delivered and pregnant women and is now proposing to add a portion to the girls who go to school.

   2. Those handicapped and senior citizens over the normal retirement age are also employed. They are provided jobs that they can handle along with all welfare measures and minimum wages.

3. The organisation identifies and employs indigenous, traditional and local craft persons of various forms.

4. The banks of the river Cauvery were once the repository of musicians. Most of them have migrated from here for want of survival livelihood. INDeco engages musicians from this community to perform in the hotel to create employment opportunities for them and to enable the preservation of this intangible heritage.

5. For every 50 rooms to the hotel, INDeco creates a school for the children of the neighbourhood.

The work carried out in furtherance of the mission that is INDeco has resulted in everyone connected to it being passionately involved with the objectives of the mission and it has become a way of life for each one of us. Whether it is the idea of planting various species of trees, the effort to save any piece of heritage, whether intangible or tangible, INDeco is at the heart of the effort and this is effortless for us as it flows out of the passion that we feel for the mission's objectives.

INDeco is an idea, an idea with impact and an idea whose time has come. Just as the Mcluhan theory states, 'Medium is the Message', INDeco has by itself, become a message, 'INDIA ECOLOGY.' The hotels that we have created are the manifestation of a mission. The mission is our message, the hotels are only our medium. To put it simply, the hotels essentially serve as our revenue source for all our dreams and desires. The happiness quotient, peace, equal opportunity, art, culture, heritage, temples, monuments, protection and conservation, neighbourhood, traditional practices and life style, communication, education, employment and training, flora and fauna, museums and publication policy, politics and public administration were all later manifestations of the message. Rural India, a trouble free one as it was a long, long time ago, is our dream. The back bone of this nation is its villages and the villages need to be the focus if India as a country has to truly develop and become sustainable.

I am not a social worker or a guru or a fanatic who is crazy about India. It's just that I love my country and I desire that the world respects it as much as it should be respected.

Keshopur - A Bird's Paradise

K.L. Malhotra

Keshopur is a village situated at a distance of about 6 km from the district headquarter of Gurdaspur. The swamps of village Keshopur and Magar Mudian find mention in Punjab District Gazetteer of Gurdaspur District in 1914. These are the dynamic freshwater ecosystem, which now form a part of India's first notified Keshopur Chhamb Community Reserve under the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972. The wetland is spread over an area of 850 acres situated across five villages and is an important waterfowl habitat and migratory bird corridor. According to the gazetteer of Gurdaspur district, there were many smaller 'Chhambs' in the area in the past. But their number declined due to encroachment and cultivation.

The Department of Tourism and Department of Forests and Wildlife have carried out good work for the conservation and eco-tourism development of the area. Due to these conservation works undertaken with the cooperation of the people, the wetland has gained new lease of life and it has started attracting more birds during the winter season. Between 2012-16, the count of migratory birds visiting Keshopur Chaambhas increased from 4,581 to 25,203. Almost same number of birds reach the world famous Bharatpur bird sanctuary every year in the winter. Some of the migratory birds like Saras Crane has become native in the Keshopur wetland.

Keshopur Chhamb is rapidly becoming a bird's paradise. The State Government had also organised its first ever bird festival at Keshopur in January, 2018. The infrastructure development works undertaken in the Community Reserve attract tourists from the country and abroad. The Department has also taken steps to develop tented accommodation for the visitors and the same is likely to become available in the coming winter season.

Apart from inviting more than 80 species of migratory birds during the winter, the beauty of Keshopur Chhamb does not diminish after the winged guests leave the wetland due to lotus cultivation. Large stretch of lotus flower area during summer season gives the wetland a stunning look. The wetland also cultivates water chestnut and the *Panchayat* is earning revenue from the sale of water chestnut and lotus stem.

Keshopur is fast becoming a centre of tourist attraction. Once in Keshopur, one gets the feel of the rural life of Punjab.

Nearby attractions: The attractions nearby are Takhat-e-Akbari where the Emperor Akbar was crowned. Chhota Ghallughara site is another attraction, which has witnessed the valour of Sikh forces.

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Santanu Chakraborty is an independent researcher and photographer with a B.Tech in Civil Engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology at Mumbai and a PhD in Biological Sciences from Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, New York, USA.

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Robin Yarrow was a Fiji civil servant for 30 years and served as Permanent Secretary for Agriculture and Foreign Affairs. He was also the Fiji Ambassador to Japan, China and Korea. He was recently the Chair of the National Trust of Fiji and is also a Founding Trustee of NatureFiji. His keen interest lies in the environment, natural resource management and Fiji's heritage and sustainable development. He has been awarded the Fiji Civil Service Medal and in 2014 received the Order of Fiji.

Ambica Beri is the Director and Founder of Art Ichol, Madhya Pradesh and is also owner of Gallery Sanskriti, Kolkata. A textile designer by training, she chose to nurture art and artists through her gallery and other establishments.

Yuri Mazurov is a Professor at the Moscow State Lomonosov University in Russia and introduced heritage studies in Russian universities. He is an expert in environmental economics & management, sustainable development, ecological & cultural policy and geography of natural and cultural heritage, and active in numerous national and international projects on heritage management.

Padma R is an IAS officer, Kerala State from 1956 to 1992 in various capacities and finally as Chief Secretary to the Government of Kerala. She pursued her interest in women's status in India and was the Director of the Asian and Pacific Center for Women in the UN. She was also the Vice Chancellor of MS University Baroda and writes various articles for newspapers.

Steve Borgia is the Chairman and Managing Director of INDeco Leisure Hotels the only Indian Hotel group to win the distinguished 'Global Eco Tourism Award' and the Embassy Nomination for American Museum Partnership. He is the Vice President of the Indian Heritage Hotels Association, founder member & President of the Ecotourism Society of India and Chairman of the Rural Tourism Society of India. He is also the member of the Advisory Committee to the World Heritage Matters under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture. He has authored several books and established several museums.

K.L. Malhotra is the Chief Conservative of Forests, Government of Punjab.

Indian Trust for Rural Heritage and Development

About 70 per cent of India's population still lives in rural and tribal communities. Sadly, poverty remains a chronic condition for almost 30 per cent of this population. Yet even the most poverty-stricken areas, lacking access to basic facilities, often hold wealth accumulated over centuries. These are their heritage assets, not just historic sites and structures, but also a vast array of traditional skills. Conserving and nurturing rural heritage can be a powerful tool for sustainable economic growth in India's villages, ensuring livelihood to rural residents in their traditional homelands, enhancing the pride and self-confidence of the entire community.

Recognizing this, a number of professionals and specialists in relevant fields came together to establish and manage the Indian Trust for Rural Heritage and Development (ITRHD), a registered body. The Trust's two-fold aim is very specific: firstly, the preservation of our vast rural heritage – some of it fast disappearing – for its intrinsic meaning and value; secondly, linking this preservation with improvement in the quality of rural life in areas such as income generation, education and literacy; health and hygiene; waste and water management and issues of women and the girl child.

ITRHD is actively involved in projects relating to conservation of rural heritage and rural developmental programmes in six States viz. Uttarakhand, UP, Haryana, Rajasthan, Nagaland and Telangana. Rakhi Garhi in Haryana, which is a site of Indus Valley Civilization, is a major project in which ITRHD is focusing on developmental programmes. A Primary School in Hariharpur in Azamgarh District in UP is in its fourth year and a number of friends and members have agreed to contribute at least Rs. 3000/- each every year for the education of one child. We appeal to our Members, who have not so far responded to our appeal, to come forward for a good cause. The potters and weavers of Nizamabad and Mubarkpur villages in Azamgarh District have also received our attention. We have helped them in opening up new markets for their products. In each of the projects undertaken by ITRHD local bodies are fully involved in planning and implementation processes; the Trust's frontline workers, the Heritage Ambassadors for Rural Traditions or HARTS, serve as local project coordinators and resource persons, working in development areas to benefit their respective locations and communities.

JOIN HANDS WITH US : There are many rural areas in our country that await your support and action. That is why we invite you to join hands with us by becoming a member of the Indian Trust for Rural Heritage and Development.

There are compelling reasons for becoming a member. The long-term future of our country lies in the revitalization and appropriate utilization of assets inherited by our rural and tribal populations. The benefits are many, not just economic development and poverty alleviation. Equally, they are markers of identity, reinforcing a sense of ownership amongst communities, encouraging grass-roots leadership and innovation, and instilling dignity and pride. An improved quality of life is an incentive for rural populations to remain in their own surroundings rather than migrate to the misery of choked urban conglomerates.

In this sense, your membership is actually an investment in the future. Certainly no investment can be as fulfilling as that which restores and nourishes the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of people and highlights their assets as national treasures. That is why we invite you to join us in this endeavour to recognize and respect our rural and tribal heritage in a manner that will keep it alive for the benefit of all.

MEMBERSHIP FEE

VOTING MEMBERS, one-time payment
INDIAN
Life Member (Individual): Rs 5000
Institutional Member: Rs. 25,000
Corporate Member: Rs. 10,00,000

FOREIGN
Life Member (Individual): US$ 500/ UK£ 300
Institutional Member: US$ 1250/ UK£ 800
Corporate Member: US$ 25,000/ UK£ 16,000

NON-VOTING MEMBERS
INDIAN
Associate Member Rs 2000 (renewable after 5 years)
Rural Member: Rs 100 (one-time token fee for rural residents)
Associate Member Corporate: Rs. 1,00,000

FOREIGN: one-time payment
Associate Member Corporate: US$ 5,000 / UK £ 3,000

Donor Member: Donors paying over Rs.1,00,000 will be offered complimentary Associate/Full Membership

Please note:
*Membership fees in other currencies will be equivalent to the amounts given in US$.
*Donations to ITRHD are eligible for deduction u/s 80G of the Income Tax Act, 1961.
*Cheques should be made in favour of

Indian Trust for Rural Heritage and Development
and sent to the Registered Office at
C-56, Nizamuddin East, New Delhi - 110013.

*Membership fee can also be remitted to
Bank Account no. 31738466610,
State Bank of India, Nizamuddin West, New Delhi 110013.

*Foreign parties may remit the membership fees to:
FCRA a/c no. 31987199987 in State Bank of India, Nizamuddin West, New Delhi- 110013.
Swift Code: SBININBB382,
IFSC Code: SBIN0009109

For more information, write to us at mail.itrhd@gmail.com.

Indian Trust for Rural Heritage
and Development

Photograph

APPLICATION FORM FOR MEMBER
(VOTING CATEGORY)

INDIAN TRUST FOR RURAL HERITAGE AND DEVELOPMENT (RHD)

"Just as the universe is contained in the self, so is India contained in the villages." Mahatma Gandhi

1. Name of the Applicant .....

2. Address of the Applicant .....

   .....

   .....

3. Educational Qualifications .....

   .....

4. Profession/Present Employment .....

   .....

   .....

5. Date of Birth .....

6. E-mail 7. Mobile No. .....

8. Landline No. .....

9. Previous experience in the field of Rural Heritage/ Rural Development
   Or
   Area of Specialisation/ Field of Interest. .....

   .....

   .....

   .....

Turn Overleaf

Category of Membership	Admission fee	
	Indian INR	NRI/Foreign Origin USD
Life Member Individual	5,000	500
Life Member Corporate	1,000,000	25,000
Life Member Institutional	25,000	1,250
Associate Individual Member for 5 years (renewable after 5 years on same terms)	2,000	
Associate Corporate Member	100,000	
Associate Rural Member	100	

Note:

1. Unless otherwise specified all fees are one-time payment only.
2. Any academic or cultural body, including a University, Department or Registered Society engaged in cultural, academic or social work is eligible to apply for Life Member Institutional.
3. Associate Members will not have any voting rights.
4. Any person residing in a rural area, who is interested in rural heritage and development, can become a member on paying a token fee of Rs. 100 only.

I am enclosing cash / cheque / demand draft for Rs. / USD ..... as

admission fee for (category of membership).....

Signatures of the Applicant

I recommend the application of ..... for membership.

Signatures of Trustee / Life Member

Name of Trustee / Life Member

(The Membership Committee appointed by the Trustees reserves the right to reject any application for membership of the Trust).

Please note: A cheque / demand draft is to be made in the name of the **Indian Trust for Rural Heritage and Development** payable at Delhi.

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