
A STUDY ON WORLD CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES IN INDIA

B. ANITHA

Assistant Professor in History
St Joseph's College for Women (A)

Abstract

Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today and what we pass on to future generations. Our cultural and natural heritage is both irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration. Based on some norms and conditions UNESCO recognized some of the tourist places as cultural heritage sites in India. By preserving our cultural heritage these important places became prominent and government has taken some steps to continue their recognition. These tourist places has revealed India's heritage and culture which made India as unique country in the world as a whole. These sites are more in number in Northern India than in Southern India. Hence to protect and preserve our cultural heritage government has to give some incentives to develop further.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To identify the number of world heritage sites in India.
2. To examine how UNESCO recognized cultural heritage sites in India.

KEY WORDS: Culture, Heritage sites, recognition, UNESCO, Generations, Preserving, and Unique.

METHODOLOGY: This paper is written taking secondary data as main source. Books, internet, UNESCO convention, journals are referred.

INTRODUCTION: UNESCO, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization seeks to encourage the identification, protection, and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity. This is embodied in an international treaty called the convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and Natural Heritage adopted by UNESCO in 1972. World Heritage is the designation for places on Earth that area of outstanding universal value to humanity and as such has been inscribed on the world Heritage list to be protected for future generations to appreciate and enjoy.

SELECTION CRITERIA: The criteria are regularly revised by the committee to reflect the evolution of the world Heritage concept itself. Until the end of 2004 World Heritage Sites were selected on the basis of six cultural and natural criteria. With the adoption of the revised operational guidelines for the implementation of the world heritage convention, only one set of ten criteria exists which is as follows:

1. To represent a masterpiece of human creative genius.
2. To exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world on developments in architecture or technology, monumental art, town planning or landscape design.
3. To bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization this is living or which has disappeared.
4. To be an outstanding example of a type of building architectural or technological ensemble or landscape that illustrate significant stage in human history.
5. To be an outstanding example of traditional human settlement land-use or sea use, which is representative of culture or (cultures) or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change.
6. To be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions with ideas, or with beliefs with artistic and literary work of outstanding universal significance.
7. To contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance.
8. To be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant ongoing geological processes in the development of land forms or significant geomorphic or physiographic features.
9. To be outstanding examples representing significant ongoing ecological and biological processes in the evolution and developments of terrestrial, fresh water coastal and marine eco-systems and communities of plants and animals.
10. To contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.

MISSION:

1. Encourage countries to sign the world Heritage convention and to ensure the protection of their natural and cultural heritage.

2. Encourage states parties to the convention to nominate sites within their national territory for inclusion on the world heritage list.
3. Encourage states parties to establish management plans and set up reporting systems on the state of conservation of their world Heritage sites.
4. Help states parties' safe guard world Heritage properties by providing technical assistance and professional training.
5. Provide emerging assistance for world heritage sites in immediate danger.
6. Support states parties' public awareness building activities for world heritage conservation.
7. Encourage participation of the local population in the preservation of their cultural and natural heritage.
8. Encourage international cooperation in the conservation of our world cultural and natural heritage.

There are 37 UNESCO world heritage sites in India. The sites are broken down into the following categories:

NATURAL SITES: 9, MIXED SITE: 01

NATURAL SITES	STATE	YEAR OF NOTIFICATION	AREA IN SQ KM	UNESCO SITE ID
1. Kaziranga National Park	Assam	1985	429.96	337
2. Keoladea Ghana National Park	Rajasthan	1985	28.73	340
3. Mamas Wild life Sanctuary	Assam	1985	391.00	338
4. Nanda Devi National Park and valley of Flowers	Uttarakhand	1982 2005	630.00 087.50	335
5. Sundarbans National Park	West Bengal	1984	1330.10	452
6. Western Ghats	Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala	2012	160,000.00	,
7. Great Himalayan National Park	Himachal Pradesh	2014	1905.4	
MIXED SITE:				
1. Khangchendzonga National Park	Sikkim	2016		

CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES: 29

SNO	CULTURAL SITES	STATE	YEAR OF NOTIFICATION	UNESCO SITE ID	
1	Agra fort	Uttar Pradesh	1983	251	
2	Ajanta caves	Maharashtra	1983	242	
3	Buddhist monuments at sanchi	Madhya Pradesh	1989	524	
4	Champaner pavagadh archaeological park	Gujarat	2004	1101	
5	Chhatrapati shivaji terminus	Maharashtra	2004	945rev	
6	Churches and convents of goa	Goa	1986	234	
7	Elephant a caves	Maharashtra	1987	244	
8	Ellora caves	Maharashtra	1983	243	
9	Fatehpur sikri	Uttarpradesh	1986	255	
10	Great living chola temples	Tamilnadu	1987	250	
11	Group of monuments at hampi	Karnataka	1986	241	
12	Group of monuments at pattadakal	Karnataka	1987	239	
13	Group of monuments at mahabalipuram	Tamilnadu	1984	249	
14	Hill fort of Rajasthan	Rajasthan	2013	247	
15	Humayun tomb	Delhi	1993	232	
16	Khajuraho group of monuments	Madhyapradesh	1986	240	
17	Mahabodhi temple	Bihar	2002	1056rev	
18	Mountain railways of India	Tamilnadu	1999	944	
19	qutbminar	Delhi	1993	233	
20	Rani- ki- van	Gujarat	2014		
21	Red fort	Delhi	2007	231	
22	Rock shelters of bhimbetka	Madhya Pradesh	2003	925	
23	Sun temple konark	Orissa	1984	246	
24	Tajmahal	Uttar Pradesh	1983	252	
25	The jantar mantar	Rajasthan	2010	1338	
26	Archeological sites of Nalanda mahavihara	Bihar	2016	-	
27	The architecture work of le Corbusier	Chandigarh	2016	-	
28	Historic city of Ahmadabad	Gujarat	2017	-	
29	Mumbai Victoria art	Mumbai	2018	-	

EXPLANATION OF HOW THESE CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES HAVE BEEN RECOGNIZED BY UNESCO

1) Mahabodhi temple complex at Bihar:

This temple complex is not only a world heritage site in India but also considered as one of the four holy sites relating to the life of Buddha much of the property left today is part of the ruins of temple complex built in the 5TH and 6TH century AD. It is one of the first Buddhist temples that were constructed solely out of brick. In fact it started the development of brick architecture in the centuries to follow. UNESCO recognized both the temple area and the lotus pond around it in the listing.

2) Humayun Tomb Delhi :

This Tomb was commonly referred to as the precursor to the Tajmahal, which introduced several. Innovations by the time it was built. Built in the 16TH century. This site was listed by UNESCO due to its cultural value. It was built for by the widow of Mughal emperor Humayun and is a work of Mirza Ghiyath using mughal architectural style. It has also earned the name as Necropolis of the mughal dynasty. The property holds the tomb of Humayun and 150 tombs from the royal family.

3) Qutb Minar and its monuments Delhi:

This complex of monuments was inscribed in to the list of world heritage sites in India by UNESCO in 1993. The main feature of the complex is the red sandstone tower. Qutb Minar that rises to a height of over 72 meters. These complex structures were built in the 13th century that testifies to the Islamic depredating during that time. It is most notable for showcasing the artistic and architectural excellence of Islam.

4) Red fort complexes:

This palace fort was built for the 5th mughal emperor in the 17th century. In 2007 it was inscribed as one of the UNESCO world heritage sites in India. Due to the unique architectural design that features a blend of Indian, Persian and Timuri styles In fact, it is believed that the Persian capital was the source of inspiration for the construction of this fort complex. The enclosure wall surrounding this palace. Complex is made out of red sandstone, which is why it was named as the red fort complex.

5) Churches and Convents Of Goa: This is another cultural property listed by UNESCO as a world Heritage site. These monuments were built by the Portuguese colonial rulers during the 16th and 18th centuries in Goa. The Basilica of born Jesus is the primary structure among these monuments, which also houses the tomb with the relics of St. Francis Xavier. This site has been dubbed as the "RAME OF THE ORIENT"

6) Champaner Pavagadh Archaeological Park Gujarat:

This cultural site was inscribed in 2004 as it holds a large collection of unexcavated archaeological properties within a pre-historic landscape. Within this archaeological park is a prehistoric Chalcolithic site, hill fortress what is left of the 16th century Gujarat capital. From palaces to religious buildings to fortifications and agricultural structures. All of these combine to making this site important to the region.

7) Groups of Monuments at Hampi:

This group of monuments dominates a somber but ostentatious town of Hampi. It was named a world heritage site by UNESCO IN 1986, as the temples showcase how the town became an important religious center for the Hindu worshippers. The Virupaksha temple and several other monuments comprise this cultural heritage site.

8) Groups of Monuments at Pattadakal:

This site is composed of nine Hindu temples and a Jain sanctuary. The most important architectural edifice belonging to this group of monuments is the Virupaksha temple. This should not be confused with the temple of the same name in Hampi. Most of these temples were built during the reign of the Chalukya dynasty from the 6th to the 8th centuries. The temples also showcase a combination of architectures styles inspired by northern and southern India.

9) Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi Madhya Pradesh.: This site holds collections of Buddhist monuments that date back from 200 to 100 B.C. However, many believed that the site developed under the rule of Mauryan Empire in the 3rd century B.C. until the 12th century, these sanctuaries serve as active Buddhist religious monuments. You will find a variety of structures in the area including palaces, monasteries, temples and monolithic pillars.

10) Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka Madhya Pradesh: The rock shelters of Bhimbetka were inscribed as one of the UNESCO world Heritage sites in India, in 2003. It was recognized by UNESCO as a repository of rock paintings within sandstone formations expanding up to nearly 2000 hectares of land area. The most interesting part about these paintings is that the 21 villages that surround the area strongly correlate to the subject of these paintings.

11) Khajuraho Group of Monuments (M.P.): These monuments were attributed to the Chandela dynasty in India. It was recognized by UNESCO as a world heritage site as it masterfully combines architecture and sculpture in its art form. There are a total of 85 temples built within this complex but only 22 survived. All of these temples have been around since the 10th century. It was inscribed by UNESCO in 1986 as artistic proof of the Chandela culture in India.

12) Ajanta Caves: This is another cultural site listed as one of the UNESCO world heritage sites in India. This is Buddhist cave system that was initially built in the 2nd century BC. The second phase of the cave was built in the 5th century AD. These caves showcase richly decorated paintings and frescoes. There are 31 rock –cut cave monuments found within the site which are believed to be representatives of Buddhist religious art.

13) Ellora Caves: This site is a blend of religious arts from the Jainism, Buddhism and Hinduism practices. The cave is home to 34 monasteries and temples that were sculpted into the rocks of basalt cliffs. This site is notable for its reflection of the ancient civilization in India.

14) Elephanta Caves: This series of sculpted caves are located in Elephanta caves in India. There are two groups of caves on this site. One group consists of five Hindu caves and the other consists of two Buddhist caves. The rock cut architecture

used in both caves date back to the 5th century however, it remains unknown as to exactly who built them. The group of caves underwent renovation in 1970 and was listed as a world Heritage site to further aid in its preservation efforts.

15) Chhatrapati Shivaji: Terminus formerly Victoria Terminus. This historic railway station is located in Mumbai, India. It is also headquarters for the central Railways in India. This station is one of the busiest in the country. The station was designed during the late 19th century by architect Frederick William Stevens. The completion of the project took 10 years and was originally named after queen and Empress Victoria. It features a Gothic architectural style and was named as a world heritage site in 2004.

16) Sun Temple, Konark: This is another temple complex listed as a cultural site by UNESCO. The temple itself is shaped like gigantic chariot with details including walls, pillars and carved stone wheels. Majority of the temple is now in ruins. It was also included in the list of the seven wonders of India.

17) Jantar Mantar, Jaipur: This site is home to collection of architectural astronomical instruments in which the construction was commissioned for by Maharaja Jai Singh II. These are 5 facilities within total that were built in different locations. The one in Jaipur is the largest and best preserved out of the five facilities. UNESCO described it as an "Expression of the astronomical skills and cosmological concepts" during that time.

18) Great Living Chola Temples: There are three temples included in this site all of which were built during 11th to the 12th centuries. The temples are as follows. Brihadeeswara temple, Airavateswarar temple, Ganga kondacholiswaram. All of these temples exemplify the architectural achievements of the chola culture in India. It also shows the other art forms they excelled in bronze casting painting and sculpture.

19) Group Of Monuments At Mahabalipuram: carved from a rock, this collection of monuments was founded by the Pallava kings during the 7th and 8th centuries. The temples shaped like chariots together with the cave sanctuaries and open air reliefs.

20) Agra Fort: Agra Fort also referred to as the Red Fort, is the best example of how the Mughal dynasty flourished in India. It serves as the remainder of that opulent power that the empire held throughout its reign. The fort is built from red sandstone and surrounded by the towers, Moats, palaces and Mosques it is located next to the bank of the Yamuna River.

21) Fatehpur Sikri, Uttar Pradesh: This is a city in Agra district which was founded in 16th century and served as capital for the Mughal Empire. The construction of a new walled city was planned and it took 15 years to undergo planning and construction. It resulted in the construction of royal palaces, mosques, courts, private quarters, and many other buildings. For this reason the site is dubbed as the "city of Victory".

22) Taj Mahal : Recognized as one of the seven wonders of the world. Taj Mahal is a notable tourist attraction not just in India but all over the world. The building of the Taj Mahal was commissioned by Emperor Shahjahan in memory of his third wife after she died in 1631. Taj Mahal exemplifies the principles of Mughal architecture style while the edifice is made purely out of white marble. It took 16 years to build the Taj Mahal.

23) Mountain Railways of India: This property is a combination of three railways in India that are located in the mountains. These railways were built in the 19th and 20th centuries. These railways are part of the Himalayan Mountains in Northern India. The other two are located in Southern India.

24) Hill Forts of Rajasthan: Located in Northern India this world heritage site is composed of six forts Chittorgarh Fort, Kumbhalgarh Fort, Ranthambore Fort, Gagron Fort, Amber Fort, and Jaisalmer Fort. These forts are located within the Aravalli Range and date back to the 5th century AD

25) Rani Ki Vav- The queen's step well. Located in the town of Patna, this is listed as a cultural monument of India by UNESCO. It is intricately constructed near the banks of Saraswati River. It is a subterranean water resource and storage system. It was constructed featuring the Maru-Gurjara architectural style and consists of seven levels of stairs and an inverted temple. There are also about 500 sculptures found within this property.

26) NALANDA: In 2016 three new sites were inscribed to the list of UNESCO world heritage sites in India. It is an archaeological site consisting of scholastic and monastic institutional remains that date back to the 3rd century BCE. Within the site you will find art works like stuccoes, stupas, shrines and viharas. The site is believed to be an important example of the development of Buddhism as a religion and how it was used for educational and monastic purposes.

27) The Architectural Works Of Le Corbusier: The architectural works of Le Corbusier is one of those transnational properties. The particular listing is spread out to over 17 sites in 7 different countries. The other countries where these sites are located are Japan, France, Argentina, Belgium, Germany and Switzerland.

28) Historic City Of Ahmadabad: The historic city of Ahmadabad is a walled city in India which was founded in the early 18th century by Ahmad Shah I of Gujarat Sultanate. It is the capital and important political and commercial center of Gujarat. This urban settlement was recognized by UNESCO for its cultural value and continues to symbolize the heart of metropolitan Ahmadabad despite the threat of overcrowding from its surrounding areas.

29) Mumbai Victoria Art: The Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles of Mumbai is a collection of 19th century Victorian Neo Gothic public buildings and 20th century Art Deco buildings in the Fort area of Mumbai in Maharashtra, India. This collection of the Victorian Gothic buildings and Art Deco buildings are set around the Oval Maidan, a large recreational ground that was once known as the Esplanade. The east of the Oval is flanked by the

Conclusion

Cultural heritage plays a very important role in our life. What keeps us attached to our religion tradition & beliefs context we refer to cultural identity? The best way to preserve our cultural heritage is to share it with others. It is our responsibility to keep world history intact for the coming generation.

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