

Identification of Tangible and Intangible Heritage and Preparation of Conservation Proposal for the Historic City of Karanja Laad

Authors : Prachi Buche Marathe

Abstract : Karanja Laad is a city located in the Vidarbha region in the state of Maharashtra, India. It has a huge amount of tangible and intangible heritage in the form of monuments, precincts, a group of structures, festivals and procession route, which is neglected and lost with time. Three different religions Hinduism, Islam and Jainism along with associations of being a birthplace of Swami Nrusinha Saraswati, an exponent of Datta Sampradaya sect and the British colonial layer have shaped the culture and society of the place over the period. The architecture of the town Karanja Laad has enhanced its unique historic and cultural value with a combination of all these historic layers. Karanja Laad is also a traditional trading historic town with unique hybrid architectural style and has a good potential for developing as a tourist place along with the present image of a pilgrim destination of Datta Sampradaya. The aim of the research is to prepare a conservation proposal for the historic town along with the management framework. Objectives of the research are to study the evolution of Karanja town, to identify the cultural resources along with issues of the historic core of the city, to understand Datta sampradaya, and contribution of Saint Nrusinha Saraswati in the religious sect and his association as an important personality with Karanja. The methodology of the research is site visits to the Karanja city, making field surveys for documentation and discussions and questionnaires with the residents to establish heritage and identify potential and issues within the historic core thereby establishing a case for conservation. Field surveys are conducted for town level study of land use, open spaces, occupancy, ownership, traditional commodity and community, infrastructure, streetscapes, and precinct activities during the festival and non-festival period. Building level study includes establishing various typologies like residential, institutional commercial, religious, and traditional infrastructure from the mythological references like waterbodies (kund), lake and wells. One of the main issues is that the loss of the traditional footprint as well as the traditional open spaces which are getting lost due to the new illegal encroachments and lack of guidelines for the new additions to conserve the original fabric of the structures. Traditional commodities are getting lost since there is no promotion of these skills like pottery and painting. Lavish bungalows like Kannava mansion, main temple Wada (birthplace of the saint) have a huge potential to be developed as a museum by adaptive re-use which will, in turn, attract many visitors during festivals which will boost the economy. Festival procession routes can be identified and a heritage walk can be developed so as to highlight the traditional features of the town. Overall study has resulted in establishing a heritage map with 137 heritage structures identified as potential. Conservation proposal is worked out on the town level, precinct level and building level with interventions such as developing construction guidelines for further development and establishing a heritage cell consisting architects and engineers for the upliftment of the existing rich heritage of the Karanja city.

Keywords : built heritage, conservation, Datta Sampradaya, Karanja Laad, Swami Nrusinha Saraswati, procession route

Conference Title : ICHTCHP 2020 : International Conference on Heritage Tourism, Cultural Heritage and Preservation

Conference Location : Amsterdam, Netherlands

Conference Dates : January 20-21, 2020