

Theme 2: The Historic Urban Landscape and Evolution of Urban Heritage Governance Concept.

11. PARTICIPATORY APPROACH AND DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION OF BUILT HERITAGE, CAN THE TWO MEET ?

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In the last two years, the Center for Heritage Conservation, CEPT Research and Development Foundation has engaged in many digital documentation initiatives, some located in the Historic City of Ahmedabad (a World Heritage Site), Dharmaj a provincial town and Bela, a village in seismic zone. The Center is also deeply involved in initiatives for engagement of communities and inhabitants in conservation processes where documentation plays an important anchor point for conversations with communities and stakeholders on values. Principles for the recording of the monuments, groups of buildings and sites, ICOMOS (1996) clearly outlines the importance to promote interest and involvement of the people in preservation of heritage through dissemination of recorded information. For the intervention criteria in historic environments, the Valletta Principles (2011) underscores the importance of method and scientific discipline which talks about up to date precise documentation and recording, it also talks about direct and continuous dialogue and consultation with residence. The section on governance states that participation by the residents can be facilitated through distributing information, awareness raising and training. The Historic Urban Landscape Approach (2011), echo these principles by introducing relevant tools.

The preliminary experience with the digital documentation process is that it is a non-invasive technique which gives us more accurate documentation and records, in relatively shorter time span with less human resources. It also provides a potential to record heritage sites that are physically inaccessible and reduces human biases while recording. The opportunities that long time periods of analogue processes of documentation provide include familiarity with the site and inhabitants, more chances of engagement and involvement with the spirit of place and people. The outcomes of the digital documentation create a digital twin for experts to observe the place beyond the life of the place itself and they create curiosity among the inhabitant due to its closeness to their reality. It however, also creates a digital divide due to issues of accessibility of technology and skills. Digital documentation primarily engages with the built fabric as per its existing condition. However, the relationship of that fabric and traditional knowledge systems, day to day life, communities' aspirations, heritage futures in living settlements are not necessarily covered through digital methods.

This presentation will unravel a conversation on the identified theme among three researchers and practitioners, each representing a position of importance of people's engagement in governance, the positions as identified by the charters and the new opportunities presented by the digital tools. The discussion would lead towards a direction that will outline ethics and processes of documenting with digital technologies that could include the question of participation.

Authors:

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Mrudula is a Conservation Architect with a 10 year practice experience. She has done her masters from Department of Archaeology, University of York and is trained in digital documentation processes such as 3D Lidar Scanning and Photogrammetry through a partnership with Nottingham Trent University. She is currently pursuing her doctorate in exploring the role of technology in documentation of historic sites from CEPT University.

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Jayashree is a graduate of World Heritage Studies from Brandenburg University of Technology, Cottbus – Senftenberg. Her research for ICOMOS titled *Analysing the effectiveness of the 'Heritage at Risk' initiatives of ICOMOS and developing ideas for a comprehensive framework for Cultural Heritage at Risk*, has been recently made available on the ICOMOS open archive. The research has later also been incorporated into her Master's Thesis which has been published by BTU in close collaboration with ICOMOS.