

Research paper of Dr Sudhin Chevan

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Cultural Landscape Of Ancient Temples Sites From Solapur District

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Background & need:

Cultural history has gained significant importance in the modern times. It has found expression in literature, art and Archaeology. Indian peninsula is embellished with the beauty of arts, cultures and traditions in the form of Rock-Paintings, Petroglyphs, Caves, Stupas (pillars), Shrines, Temples, Idols, etc. India is known for cultural landscape sites which are varied & versatile gifts of heritage. Such majorly pilgrim sites & built (temples) are deteriorating due to large toll of pilgrims - capacity building & strength. To review & conserve such sites conservation awareness, pilgrim's behavior & financial management has three constraints.

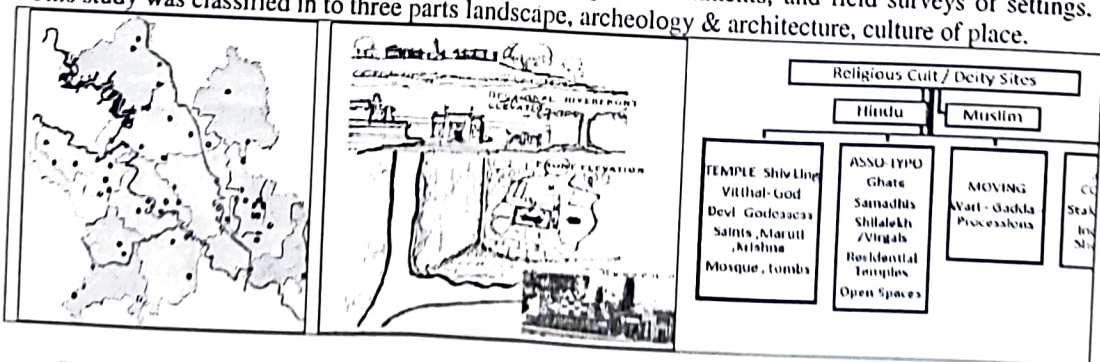
The case Solapur district is hot & dry drought prone area with very flat terrain with rich black cotton soil. It has & few rivers & many manmade water tanks. People primarily being farmers are hard workers. This district culture has lot traditional beliefs & truths such as Wari & Gadda Fair - Bhakti Movements for various religious cults. These regions have large number of unrecognized but well in condition religious heritage with beautiful natural settings. Tourism is pilgrims which periodically visit the places for passive recreation. So overall these places- spaces & culture is valued. Over a time these unique cultural-archeological landscape sites are unknown & under threat needs attention. Few ancient temples sites are, Barshi, Karmala, Velapur, Mangalwedha, Mahalung, Pandharpur, Hattarsang -kudal, & Solapur. Almost 40 temples are documented & overall analysis are done for its settings, architecture, culture.

Research aimed for development of heritage conservation plan & its tourism of cultural archeological landscape sites of Sholapur district. This study had **Objectives** like,

- To select & find delineation of each heritage archeology site from district (From all 11 Tahsil).
- To study archival review to find & establish significance of research four components i.e. culture-landscape-heritage & archeology (ABCD) by EIA-inventories - mapping - records etc.
- To evaluate findings, values & knowledge systems & to find association / correlation within & in between its attributes.
- To find damage - losses - defects - deterioration - issues about present status of each site - its causes & give solution to conserve.

So all sites will be put forth to people and throw light on such heritage & To develop a taste and liking for these artistic monuments & to preserve and conserve these for the future generations.

Methodology used for this study is archival research, Inventories, structural defect mapping, behavioral tracking & activity mapping of users, expert's comments, and field surveys of settings. This study was classified in to three parts landscape, archeology & architecture, culture of place.



Research outcomes are, listing cultural sites of district & delineate most significant as a case of conservation & grade as per UNESCO criteria's, documentation of regional information, knowledge systems and values of nature culture built of region, designed coding, toolkit & model steps to



conduct such cultural landscape project & Propose conservation management plan for the same. Case analysis zones classified criterias were based on association-connectivity between water bodies with temple sites.

1. Sitting regional level review:

Zone 1 at distant sites from water body, to zone 3 there are 75% are religious pilgrim sites & 25% are other tourist site. We see maximum sites privately owned & ASI or govt owned sites ranging from 13 % to 27 %. In all 3 zones more than 50% temple sites are associated with natural or manmade water body, but we see it is slightly more in zone 3, 75%. Similarly in zone 3 more sites from Yadava & Maratha than zone 1 & 2 with Maratha period. All 3 zones have more than 50% structures having enclosure typology having compound- osaries & moat portion.

All temple sites are EW oriented facing deity to East in all zones a Hindu religion character. From all zones 80% structures are in good condition, 20% need attention to restore. Half sites are medium / big scale sites & half are very big or small sites. In zone 1 & 3, 75% sites have shikhara intact, but in zone 2 we see this as lesser to 50%. In zone 1 & 2 ling temple is maximum but in zone 3 it seems to be mixed with goddesses & others. Heritage value of structures reduces from Zone 1 to zone 3 from 80% to 50% & zone 1 cultural performance are more than zone 2 & zone 3. So In water side zone 3 sites, we see mixed deity established from Bahamani – Yadavas to Maratha period, but heritage value is slightly lesser than zone 1 & 2. Almost 1/4th sites are under ASI. In general 50% structures do not have shikhara & they are free standing. Cultural value festivals are reduced from zone 1 to 3 except 2 places from zone 3 i.e. Pandharpur – vitthal & Solapur – Siddheshwara whose delineation of heritage is town & precinct level.

Zone 1 temples are enclosed with heightened stone wall (with osaries inside) dead without any ornamentation. It may be because they were with context of climate & absence of natural potential. Hence gateways- deepmalas- shikharas were very well decorated. They are on raised terrains & heights of gateways is heightened by placing nagarkha above it. Minertes – deepmalas were acting as watch towers. Zone 2 are enclosed type but are having water body close by outside. Zone 3 all temples are inside / abutting water – adjoining with raised plinths.

2. Architectural review at building level

• Following are few categories found based on walks / access to temples

A. Free standing temples with semi enclosed edge

B. Plain / raised or sunken land topography (entry normal or top to bottom or vice versa)

C. Walk along natural water body / ban

D. Access from congested areas

E. Built with open space around

F. Dilapidated form or wrongly renovated

These can create focus of distant attraction of temple architecture called as Shikhara & Ghumat dome in Muslims. They are destroyed in many sites due to earthquakes or canon attacks by warriors. They are renovated in many sites periodically. These are very much decorated with different styles such as Bhumija & Nagara basic classified in temple architecture in India. Many floral patterns, miniatures, arches, diagrams, animals, gods, motifs, decorative are seen in shikharas. Deity sculptures are most active participatory elements of users in temple architecture. Deepmalas are elements of lighting the courtyard, now it is lamped during festives. The heightened minertes are beautiful which communicates to distant settlements about performance signals. These are focused build skyline & enhance visual environment. These even have stairs inside. Iconography on walls, Miniatures in walls, Miniatures on Ceiling are focused attractions of visitors. They associate themselves with ancestral values, memories, respect & truth. It artforms tells us messages, likings, events.

3. Temple architecture review

Planform– Every temple had Garbhagraha – Antarala & Mandapa. Few oldest temples at Kudal & Solapur, Velapur, Mhalungi, Karmala had mukhmandapa. All were in east west axis symmetrical on one axis. But in Akkalkot Swami temple it was west oriented facing. Garbhagriha in Velapur, Akkalkot & Sangmeshwar Kudal temple has 2-3 shrines. There is no ambulatory around temple separately – it is done in courtyard. We found temples character in this region as Hemadpanti - Hoysala style whose characteristics is as below.



- East west orientation -with gabhara- antarala- mandapa- sabhamandapa- nagara-giant dwars
- Raised platforms
- Giant wall shrines- Two tiered walls with many shrines , sculptures and shilalekhs& tamralekhs
- Banded plinth.
- Variety in projections of vimanas (nagara type with saints sculptors in devalis or projections)
- Gabharashikharaisrotation of square 4 times to create 16 points with odd divisions of squinches at corners.
- Richness in quality & homogeneity in moldings
- Well ornamented pilaster – parapets is of plant leaves - floral based –nagfanis –animals
- Nandi's , kasav, ganesh motifs , sculpted welcoming projected hands on doors , deepmalas, gomukhas, huge bells, gods palkhis, gods ornaments, gods poshakhs , temple musical instruments , chariots etc are ancillaries

4. Conclusion as trends

Ambient Environment: Hot & dry climate, frequent Draughts affects settings quality. Uncomfortable-unbearable hot summers to pilgrims made enclosure courtyard to be covered. There is darkness & suffocation in garbhgriha due to inadequate openings. Settings on river/lake front become pleasing sites & precincts. Low water or no water dries water bodies such as river/nala/lake/ wells / kund / ghats, which damages the built & spoils visual environment.

Ambience Environment: Site locations within or on fringe of city, we see encroachments, affects macroclimate of place along with ambience environment. Economy & encroachments affecting less or no site development makes site sad. Climb up; go down access with waterfront sites are loved by people. So, access to site, scale, and settings especially natural is under threats whose cause is climate change – lack of economy of place. Crowd, encroachment of shops, parking lots, smell of flowers around temple is typical environmental quality.

Social Environment (Culture): Colorful processions in year festivals are meaningful yet till date bringing all people together. Associated commodities & communities sustain on this, and is town economy source. Rare traditions of living culture, knowledge systems, unique - rare architecture from various site typologies is observed.

Conclusion as trends:

We see lot of variety in different types of temple elements / space quality through visual . We tried to organize / categorize for its simileraty – disparity based on context – location . Here we found that there is not much diffence in zonewise. We saw variety based on,

Annexure Illustrations documented zone wise as Traditional Knowledge Systems as