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CONTENTS

PREFACE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

COMMITTEES

THEME I: CONSERVATION

- i. Evaluating Settlement form and pattern of Estado da India (Old Goa), A mediaeval Portuguese town using guidelines for medieval cities by Morris A.E.J.- *by Ar.Ajit Madkaikar & Ar.Pramod Joglekar* 1
- ii. Changing landscape of Vetel tekadi, Pune- *by Ar.Anuja Gurjar & Ar.Nikita Mahajani* 12
- iii. Understanding Secret Landscape along River Kukadi near Nighoj, At Ahmednagar District- *by Prof.Asmita Joshi, Ar.Anagha Kotkar & Dr.Sharvey Dhongde* 20
- iv. Hindu mythological festivals: A boon or curse to nature- *by Ar.Bhakti Umbarkar & Ar.Mukta Gokhale* 32
- v. Conservation and Promotion of Rural heritage of historic town Aundh (District-Satara) for Cultural Tourism.- *by Ar.Maithili kulkarni & Ar.yogita Pandit* 43
- vi. Understanding Nature-Culture Relation in Temple Settings at Konkan, Maharashtra- *by Ar.Manjiri Shendye & Ar.Poorva Patil* 56
- vii. Three New Gadhegals from Karvenagar and Dongargaon, District Pune,- *by Ar.Nikita Mahajani & Ar.Anuja Gurjar* 66
- viii. NAADBAMH”‘Soundscape of a Temple precinct’ Case – Temples of Ahmednagar, Maharashtra- *by Ar.Shreekrishna Dolase & Ar.Mukta Gokhale-Kulkarni* 71
- ix. To Outline the “Cultural Landscape” of the Krishna River in Maharashtra and emphasize the need for planning Conservation Strategies for the same so as to conserve associated “Rural Heritage” at a Regional Scale- *by Ar.Yogita Pandit & Ar.Maithili Kulkarni* 94
- x. Development of dado Ornamentation in Mughal Architecture- *by Ar.Ruchita Gharate* 105

Conservation and Promotion of Rural heritage of historic town Aundh (District-Satara) for Cultural Tourism.

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Abstract: India is known for its heritage, natural and cultural resources in the form of tangible and intangible values. Temples, religion and associated mythology are an essential part of Hindu culture and such concentrations attracted patronage.

In Maharashtra, large number of temple towns or religious centres were settled because of the temple as the focal point and the settlement around. The places like Pandharpur, Aundh, Madurai etc. with temples of goddesses on hill and the settlement at foothill. This paper describes the historic town Aundh and its heritage potential to promote it for cultural tourism.

Aundh is a tirtha kshetra because of Mulpeetha of Shri Yamai Devi temple. The mythological association of the place and its built heritage and cultural, religious significance have shaped an interesting form of a settlement which shows different layers of development through cultural, traditional knowledge systems and flourished due to contribution of patronage. During British rule, Aundh was founded in 1699 by Parshuram Trimbak Pant was declared as a Maratha princely state, in the Deccan States Agency division of the Bombay Presidency.

In the historical layers, the development of Aundh under the patronage had remarkable architectural establishment like Rajwada of patron Shri Pant Pratinidhi, Yamai devi mulapeeth temple on hill and in town, bazzarpeeth and museum consists of original paintings of patron and collection of Raja Ravi Verma's original paintings. As it has museum and Yamai Devi temple there is a sudden boost in number of tourists visit per day. It needs to be developed with conserving and restoring its integrity for the society, facing intense urban issues of economic developments, haphazard planning and negligence towards our heritage and cultural values have been documented and analysed in the study. Such towns with significance should be identified and protected as a whole for sustainable cultural heritage.

The documentation and analysis of the city's conditions, followed by policy development and applied conservation interventions that will reveal and maintain Aundh's rural heritage, as well as support to boost-up to become sustainable place for cultural tourism.

Keywords: *Rural heritage, Historic town, Cultural tourism, Promotion*

Introduction:

India is known for its heritage, natural and cultural resources in the form of tangible and intangible values. Temples, religion and associated mythology are an essential part of Hindu culture and such concentrations attracted patronage. A Historic town is a town which has a mythological as well as physical evidences from the past. A Rural heritage is a local architectural style based on the cultural and natural heritage in that region considering the values and traditions.

According to United Nation World Tourism Organization, a Cultural Tourism has a positive economic and social impact. A Cultural tourism includes architectural and archaeological treasures, festivals and events, historic / heritage sites/ monuments and landmarks. Museums, religious sites and temples etc. Aundh being a historic town; known for its rural and cultural heritage; can be conserved and promoted for cultural tourism is explored in this paper.

Aundh- Princely state: Aundh is a historic pilgrim town in Khatav Taluka (Satara District) of Maharashtra State, India, which was a Maratha Princely state in (1699–1947). Aundh sansthan's territory was not only at one single place but is expanded in surrounding places of three districts i.e., Satara, Solapur and Vijapur. There are two main water sources, one is from North-West to South -East and other is from North to South. Aundh accommodates total eight villages. The natural slope of the town is towards South direction.



Figure 1 Location map of Aundh

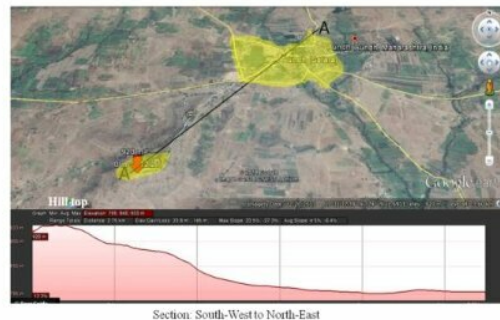


Figure 2 Topography of town

Natural features in the town: The town has hill in the North- West side on which the fortified temple is situated. The town contain five lakes (*Taali*) from which only two lakes are existing at present which are used to circulate water in the town. The town also has old wells called (*aad*) as water sources to fulfil people's daily need. *Odha* flows from the outer boundary of the gaathan area.

Occupation: There were factories and workshops for iron ploughs, water moats, wooden furniture and flour mills. Workshop started by Shri Balasaheb Pant Pratinidhi for stone sculptures and workshop for colour painting. Instruments repairing, Silver, gold, brass casting and coppersmiths were also there which were later on took over by government. In State prison of Aundh, carpets (*satranjya*) were made. There were two printing presses from which, one was under government and used for official printing of papers and gazettes. Jawar, Bajara, tur and sugar cane in some amounts are the main crops. The weekly bazaar in Aundh is on every Tuesday mainly for grains and animals like sheep and goats other than fruits and vegetables, cloths etc. which people get it from the nearby villages to sale.

History and evolution:

Etymology: In mythological stories, Aundh was a dense forest where demon named "Aundhasur" was killed in battle by Devi Shri Yamai. Aundhasur requested Yamai Devi and then later on by his name the village got named as Aundh, which is later on became Aundh Sansthan during Shri Pant Pratinidhi.

Physical history: Mythology: Aundh was a very small village. Maa Jagdamba is known as Yamai, Moklai & Tukaai. In village temples of these three Avtar off Maa Jagdamba are located. There is a plenty hilly area around Aundh. Out of which the temple on the hill where Maa Jagdamba climbed up is known as Mul Peeth (Original Destination). there is also a belief that it has been a residence of Lord Shiva & Parvati. Near Aundh towards North a mountain named as Shri Jotiba Mountain, it is also known as Natha's Place. People have belief that Shri Nath observes Maa Jagdamba from this place. There are many other stories related to Aundh.

To Outline the “Cultural Landscape” of the Krishna River in Maharashtra and emphasize the need for planning Conservation Strategies for the same so as to conserve associated “Rural Heritage” at a Regional Scale.

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Abstract : Rivers have always been important to people. The World’s first great civilizations arose in the fertile flood plains of the mighty rivers like the Nile, the Indus, the Tigris and Euphrates and the Huang He. Rivers remain important today. In fact, settlements and built aspects along river banks are usually the oldest parts of any rural or urban setup anywhere across the world. The River Krishna, which originates in the Western Ghats in Mahabaleshwar in Maharashtra and ends in Bay of Bengal through Andhra Pradesh is one of the major Rivers that make up the river system in India. This river has tremendous religious and cultural significance in Maharashtra. Satara and Sangli districts have several Ghats and Temples built on Krishna River banks, most of which are located in rural settlements along the river banks like Menawali, Mahuli, Limb, Govegaon, Dhomb, Vaduth, Targaon, Bhujinj, Mardhe, Ozarde and many more. Most of these Ghats and Temples were built during the 18th Century Peshwa Period and strongly reflect the Architectural Characteristics of that period. These Ghats and Temple complexes transformed the Krishna River banks into religious sites through combination of Architecture and Landscape. They became a place for social and cultural interaction. The Ghats were not only used for religious purpose but also catered to the daily water related activities of the people. These Temples and Ghats together constitute the Cultural Landscape of the Krishna River and each Ghat and Temple built on the banks of Krishna River during the 18th Century Peshwa Period constitutes the Rural Heritage of that particular settlement. These Heritage structures which are a testimony to the 18th century landuse, in terms of interface between the settlement and the River are rapidly succumbing to deterioration due to Natural and Man-made factors. This research is an attempt to identify and document all the Temples and Ghats built on the Krishna River banks during the 18th century Peshwa period so as to create a base map on which further detailed studies can be undertaken. This research also explains and emphasizes the need for formation of a technical conservation council at a Regional level subsequent to enlisting and analysing the threats to these rural heritage structures which form a part of the “Cultural Landscape” of the Krishna River in Maharashtra.

Keywords: Cultural Landscape, Krishna River, Ghats and Temples, 18th Century Maharashtra, Rural Heritage

1. Introduction :

Water is of special significance in Hinduism, not only for its life-sustaining properties, but also because of its use in rituals and because of the stress given to cleanliness. Bathing also has religious significance, especially in rivers considered sacred.

The prosperity and power of any settlement during a given period is evident in the Architecture that shaped during that period. Architecture is one of the languages through which we perceive the culture and society of a particular era.

As each new dynasty came to power, kings/emperors wanted to emphasize their moral right to be rulers. Constructing places of worship provided rulers with the chance to proclaim their close relationship with God, especially important in an age of rapid political change. Hence we find that religious architecture received patronage from various sources and for varied reasons which resulted in an abundance of temples taking shape through each era. The 18th century Maratha period was not much different.

This research is an attempt to co-relate and understand these two vital elements of the Hindu culture, the "River" and the "Temple" together with the Ghats and to emphasize the significance of River Krishna as a Natural and cultural resource during 18th century Maharashtra. It is also an attempt to trace the construction of Ghats and Temples in settlements along the Krishna River during the 18th century Maratha Rule which today have become an inseparable part of People's life and culture and thus constitute an important part of Rural Heritage which needs to be conserved and Maintained.

2. The Krishna River :

India is known as the land of rivers. There are Seven major rivers (Indus, Brahmaputra, Narmada, Tapi, Godavari, Krishna and Mahanadi) along with their numerous tributaries that make up the river system of India. Towns sprung up on the banks of these rivers and rose to great importance and sanctity.

The Krishna River, the lifeline of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, has witnessed many a civilization thrive and dissipate along its course. The Peshva and other Maratha feudators favoured the Krishna river banks for their temple sites.

The most important aspect of the Middle Phase temples were the ghats or flights of steps that connected the temples to the river. The building of ghats was just as auspicious as the sponsoring of a temple and attracted wide patronage.

It was not long before the Krishna River banks were transformed into religious sites, where temples and ghats were built within the thick groves of trees and embankments. The ghats gave the temple complexes a character of liveliness and divine grace through the combination of architecture and landscape. They were used for religious rituals as well as for daily bathing, cleaning and drinking water. Soon they became a place for social and cultural interactions.

3. The Maratha & Peshwa Patronage to Temples

Hindu architectural patronage had started to emerge from the rich Maratha families serving in the 16th-17th century Deccani courts of the Adil Shah and the Nizam Shah.

Though limited, these were the earliest efforts of the Marathas to build temples under Islamic rule. By the middle of the 17th century, i.e. in the early days of the independence struggle, the Marathas were too busy with warfare, and the unsettled political conditions left them little time or resources for leisurely pursuits such as art or architecture.