

Conservation of Monuments in India

Why in News?

The approach of conservation of monuments in India requires a renewed relook.

How Monuments in India are conserved?

- **Monuments** - They are remains of our prestigious past, representing culture, art architecture and structural technology of bygone days.
- **Types** - Prehistoric sites, stone age rock-shelters, Neolithic sites, Megalithic burial sites, rock-cut caves, stupas, temples, churches, synagogues, mosques, tombs, palaces, forts, bathing ghats, tanks, water reservoirs, bridges, pillars, inscriptions, mounds, kos minars, excavated sites, etc.
- **Number of Monuments in India** - Central Government has declared **3696 monuments and sites** as of **national importance** under the provisions of the **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958**.

The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 provides provision for declaring a monument or sites as of national importance, provided it should fulfill the criterion specified.

- **State Monuments** - State Government and Union Territories have also declared the monuments/ sites as of State importance under their respective Acts.
- **ASI** - Archaeological Survey of India is responsible for protecting and maintaining these 3679 monuments and archaeological sites declared as of national importance.
- **Conservation Regulation** - An area up to the limit of **100 meter** from monument or site has been declared as **prohibited area** and an area up to the distance **of 200 meter** further beyond prohibited limit has been declared as **regulated area**.

What is the Adopt a Heritage - program?

'Adopt a Heritage: Apni Dharohar, Apni Pehchaan'

- **Adopt a Heritage Program** - It is an initiative of the Ministry of Tourism, launched in 2017, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and the Archaeological Survey of India.
- 66 monuments across India have come under the adoption scheme.
- **Feature** - Government invites entities, including public sector companies, private sector firms as well as individuals, to develop selected monuments and heritage and tourist sites across India.

- **Development** - Provision and maintaining of basic amenities, including drinking water, ease of access along with advanced amenities such as surveillance systems and tourism facilitation centres.
- **Monument Mitras** - Public sector companies and select private business houses that engage in the conservation of monuments.
- **Use of CSR** - There is no financial bid involved and the corporate sector is expected to use corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds for the upkeep of the site.
- **Benefits** - Adopted landmark would be both scrupulously maintained and appropriately highlighted for tourism
- **Adopt a Heritage 2.0** - ASI launched the programme on in 2023 to foster collaboration with corporate stakeholders to preserve monuments.

What are the issues in managing heritages in India?

- **Isolation of Monuments** - Not absorbing the monuments in to townscape and the daily lives and part of residents.
- **Non Usage** - Not opening the monuments to public and keeping them closed deteriorates the structures of the building.
- **Inconsiderate Usage** - Use of monuments to private functions, such as conferences and fashion shows and using it without the concern for conservation.
- **Reuse issue** - Use of monuments as office or institutional buildings.
 - Converting Kerala's Padmanabhapuram Palace into a dental collage, or Delhi's Red Fort into a film city.
- **Rigid Preservation** - Monuments are kept highly inaccessible to public and it creates a sense of otherness.
- **Threat of polarisation** - Religious polarisation of cultural and heritage sites and spreading hatred among the public towards the monuments.
- **Lack of Interest** - Inadequate concern by the trusts and big corporations.

What can be done?

- Change the perspective and relationship of cities with the monuments.
- Bring together the frame of history and contemporary life in ways that make them easily compatible.
- Utilization of monuments in productive manner and make it more accessible to the public.
- Renovation with fresh landscape and Constructive upgradation of monuments with modern art without damaging the structure.

The Kashi Vishwanath Temple Corridor project in Varanasi is aimed at transforming pilgrims' experience of the temple town.

- Careful consideration of local requirements and national ideals to create policy on reuse.

Reference

[The Hindu | Adopt a Heritage Programme](#)

