

The Role of Community Participation in Management of Cultural Heritage of South Asia: A Case Study of the Mahābodhi Temple Complex (UNESCO World Heritage Site) in Bodhgayā, India

Executive Summary

The significance of sacredness goes beyond scriptural texts and archaeological remains *per se*. It lies mainly in the active interaction between religious architecture within its dynamic ritual settings. As the Mahābodhi Temple complex and its surrounding sacred landscape is a 'living' heritage, which has been produced socially and constitutes differential densities of human involvement, attachment, and experience, it is highly unlikely that everyone would equally share and experience this sacred place in a similar way as written in the official discourses often produced without or less understanding of the working of 'living' sacred places.

The decisions/ recommendations made by the so called heritage experts and bureaucrats to safeguard people's heritage without proper community engagement hardly make any positive impact in the lives of stakeholders/ users. On the contrary, it creates a great divide between authorities responsible for policy planning and the actual users of the heritage who often feel apprehensive with the idea of rapid development rather than managing the change through better understanding with regard to the continuous evolution of the heritage place and its immediate surroundings.

The Buddha in the *Ariyapariyasena Sutta* of *Majjhima Nikaya* described Bodhgayā having "a very peaceful environment, a delightful grove, with crystal clear water flowing Nirañjanā River with pleasant smooth banks and a nearby village for alms. I decided this will serve for my striving." (Bhikkhu nd.) Presently, the sacred landscape of Bodhgayā has completely changed into a bustling small village (at least during the tourist season from October until April every year) full of hotels, guest houses, shops, restaurants, Buddhist monasteries, themed landscape parks, museum, and, an almost dried Nirañjanā River. One thing, however, that remained unchanged since the Buddha's enlightenment some 2,559 years ago is the faith of people in him and his teachings. The Mahābodhi Temple that acts a 'mediator' between the past and the present is a living example of people's multivalent faith and devotion towards Bodhgayā. Thus, to create a sustainable future and the sense of peace and harmony for

users to enjoy Bodhgayā's shared and vibrant landscape, it is imperative to find a development model that looks beyond the authoritative universalism of values and pilgrimage-based tourism and celebrate religious diversity of Bodhgayā.

Our religious attention and gaze on historic structures and events related to only a particular cultural group often limit our understanding of a place as a shared resource. In Bodhgayā such narrow consideration has created boundaries that often exclude non-Buddhist communities from being a part of a diverse and larger cultural community. This report would demonstrate that the interaction of the Mahābodhi Temple with the ongoing diverse ritual practices and prevalent social activities, which take place in its immediate surroundings, have created a dynamic environment. In order to maintain harmony among various stakeholders and users it is pivotal to understand the complex processes contributing to the historic environment of Bodhgayā.

1.0 Multivalent Bodhgayā as a shared “living” heritage

Bodhgayā is situated on the banks of the Phalgu River, which is located eight miles south of the famous Hindu pilgrimage site of Gayā. According to the legend recounted by the famous seventh-century Chinese pilgrim scholar, Xuan Zang, the young Siddhārtha spent six years of painful and profitless penances at an isolated cave (now known as Mahākāla cave) on a hill (presently known as Prāgbodhi hill/ Dungeśwarī-devi hill) before realizing the futility of self-mortification. It was only after the warning by the mountain *deva* that Siddhārtha then followed the middle path and accepted food offering from Sujata, daughter of the chieftain of the nearby village of Senanigama. He later commenced his journey to a spot about three kilometres south of Prāgbodhi hill. On his way to the Bodhi Tree, he was offered eight handfuls of *kushā* grass by the grass-cutter Sotthiya, which he placed on his seat under the Bodhi Tree. While meditating under the Bodhi Tree, the bodhisattva vanquished Māra and his forces, developed the higher knowledge and attained supreme enlightenment. It is believed that the supreme Buddha (*Samma-sambuddho*) had arisen in the world on the full moon day of Vaisakha in 588 BCE. However, it must be noted that affixing dates to the Buddha's life presents a quite a conundrum, as there are a number of different chronologies presented in Buddhist texts. There is some agreement within religious circles on the sixth-fifth century BCE, c. 483 BCE for his death. Since authorities responsible for the recent construction of Bodhgayā – i.e., Indian archaeologists, historians, Government officials, Theravadā monks, and members of the Bodhgayā Temple Management Committee – have tended to draw on what has been referred to, in scholarly circles, as the ‘long chronology’ (one taken from several Sri Lankan chronicles, which locate the Buddha's birth in 624 BCE and *parinirvāna* in 544 BCE), for the sake of convenience, I have decided to do so as well.

Fa Xian visited Bodhgayā in 409 CE and in his travel records he mentioned that for a long time pilgrims had raised towers and placed figures, some of which are still in existence, at each significant spot associated with the life of the Buddha (Legge 1886: 88). Even several centuries after Fa Xian's visit, certain architectural elements still remain in-situ (thanks to the British archaeologists who heavily restored the Temple complex in the late 1870s and to the Archaeological Survey of India for repairing it again in the latter half of twentieth century), which are presently venerated by visitors. Hence, every year a large number of travellers from around the world visits Bodhgayā, the sacred site of enlightenment, mainly to perform rituals and receive divine blessings of Lord Buddha. On the one hand, Bodhgayā has immense significance for the Buddhists as the most important pilgrimage place in India because of the ‘Diamond Throne’ (*vajrāsana*), the place where the Buddha attained

supreme wisdom, while on the other, due to its close proximity to Gayā and its inclusion in Hindu pilgrimage network, it also draws thousands of Hindu pilgrims, primarily to worship the Buddha *deva*, commonly viewed as Vishnu's *avatāra*, and to perform ancestral rites called *Gayā-śrāddha* (figure 1 and 2).



Figure 1: Hindu pilgrims performing the *śrāddha* ceremony under the holy pipal tree near Muchalinda Sarovar at the Mahābodhi Temple complex. (Source: By Author, 2011)

For numerous centuries, Bodhgayā was venerated both by the Hindus and Buddhists and was regarded as a 'shared' sacred place. However, it was during the colonial period when the contestation started and control over it was sought by Anagarika Dharmapāla, a Sinhalese Buddhist, who started a movement in 1891 by founding the Mahābodhi Society to rescue Bodhgayā from the hands of the Hindus. After a long legal battle between the Hindu *mahant* and Dharmapāla, and several failed attempts by the British colonizers to hand over the charge of the Mahābodhi Temple to the Buddhists whom they considered as its rightful inheritors, the Bodhgayā Temple (BGT) Act of 1949 was passed soon after India's independence by the Bihar Legislative Assembly to secure peace between the Hindus and Buddhists. The mere existence of the BGT Act and the structure and working of the Bodhgayā Temple Management Committee has been continuously debated at various levels. It could be argued that the BGT Act of 1949 is nothing more than a short-term reaction to a much deeper religious conflicts. And a strong proof of it being the apprehensive situation of this sacred place since the last two decades as several Hindu and Buddhist religious organizations held demonstrations in Bodhgayā and elsewhere in India, demanding for the complete control of the Mahābodhi Temple complex.

It is interesting to note that although Bodhgayā is being primarily associated with Buddhism in almost all the authoritative discourses, the largest population residing there are the Hindus followed by the Muslims, as per 2011 census. The Muslims also owned a significant part of land surrounding the main Temple complex. A fifteenth century Jama Masjid, which sits partially on the archaeological remains of the Taradih excavated site (figure 3) has been flourishing. The management authorities of this Mosque are planning to develop the current facilities and build a new *madrasah* (Muslim educational institution attached with a mosque) to accommodate around hundred students from all parts of Bihar, mainly Gayā and surrounding areas. A large and old Muhammadan burial ground on the north of the Temple, which was also mentioned in Alexander Cunningham's report about Bodhgayā, can now only be accessed through a narrow gated passage between the Bodhgayā Temple Management Committee's (BTMC) office and the currently closed down Bodhgayā Multimedia Museum.

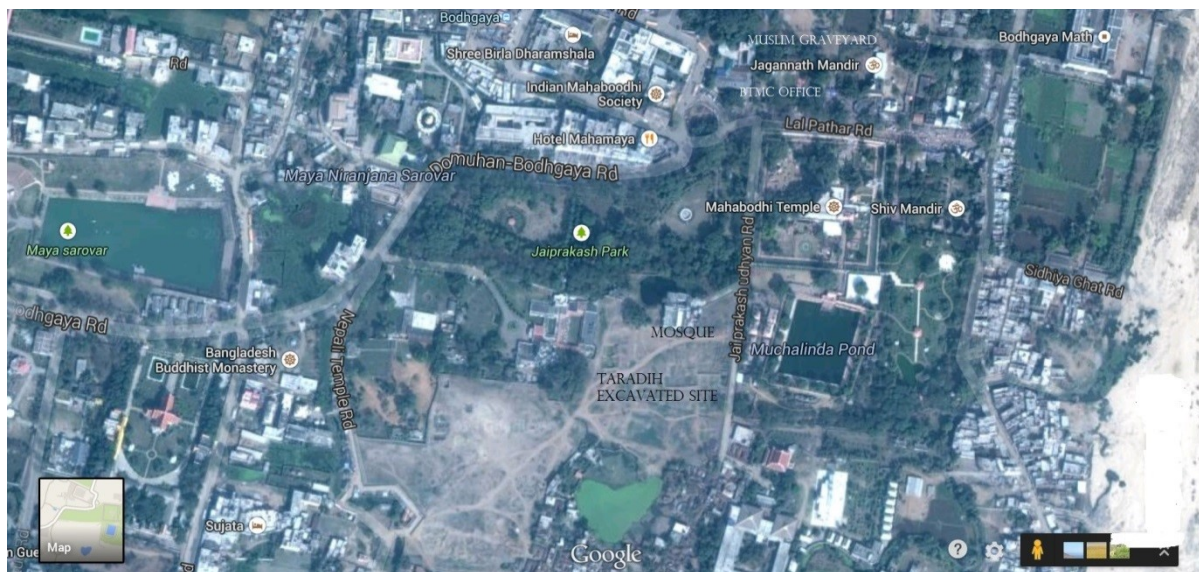


Figure 3: Aerial view of the Mahābodhi Temple complex and the location of the Jama Mosque and Taradih archaeological site. (Source: Google Maps, 2013)

In 2002, the UNESCO inscribed the Mahābodhi Temple complex to its list of the World Heritage Site (WHS). After the WHS recognition, Bodhgayā saw a huge influx of tourists, which very rapidly and significantly changed the surroundings sacred landscape into a fractured touristscape. On 7 July 2013, the unrest and conflict surrounding the sacred Mahābodhi Temple took a drastic new turn. It is on this day that a series of ten low-intensity bombs exploded in and around the main Temple complex during the early-morning hour concurrently with the meditation and *sūtras* chanting at the sanctum sanctorum. The events following blasts caused some dramatic changes to both the intangible and tangible fabric of the Temple complex that have since created a wide rift between the authorities responsible for management of the Temple and the local residents.

2.0 The Mahābodhi as a 'living' heritage

Some recent scholarships (both published and unpublished) on how the Mahābodhi Temple has been approached theoretically are available to us from the existing literature: Geary (2009) uses the metaphor of 'global bazaar' to illustrate the commercial activities that are linked to and around the UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) of the Mahābodhi Temple. Geary, in his thesis highlights the on-going commercial activities that take place in Bodhgayā in relation to the WHS designation of the Temple complex. Nevertheless, the author

overlooked significant interlinked issues of the rapid commercialization of immediate surroundings of the Temple complex and appropriateness of the WHS boundary, which was decided by authorities, based a few thousand miles away from Bodhgayā who were also oblivious of the state of the locals. It could be argued that this high handed top-down approach and no public engagement could be the main reasons for successive failures in the last few decades to implement several development plans for Bodhgayā.

Trevithick (2006) highlights the role of Anagarika Dharmapāla in the 'revival' of Buddhism at Bodhgayā in particular, and in India at large. He uses the term 'revival' to describe Buddhist pilgrimage at Bodhgayā from 1811 till 1949. However, this was not true as it is a known fact that pilgrims regularly visited Bodhgayā even before the arrival of the British East India Company officials and their so-called 'discovery' of several Buddhist sites in and around Bodhgayā. Hence, the Great Temple of Mahābodhi was never lost and the faithful pilgrims regularly visited it, therefore, the question of its revival is irrational. Nevertheless, the in-depth detail of the legal case between Dharmapāla and the Hindu *mahant* of the Bodhgayā Math provided by Trevithick is commendable. Nugteren (1995) describe the rituals around the Bodhi tree(s) in the Mahābodhi Temple complex in order to highlight the 'multivalent' nature of this sacred place. Doyle (1997) with the help of ritual performances illustrates the two faces of Bodhgayā – one that is sacred to Hindus and the other to Buddhist pilgrims. Interestingly, all scholars overlooked (either intentionally or unintentionally) the presence of Muslim population in Bodhgayā since at least fifteenth century CE, as per the *Imam* of Bodhgayā mosque. In recent years the land prices in Bodhgayā have been rapidly increasing, consequently transforming its sacred landscape into a fractured Touristscape. Hence, it is not only important but also necessary to involve the local mosque authorities in any discussion regarding the future of this place as the mosque own a large extent of land adjacent to the WHS boundary of the Mahābodhi Temple. It is important to note that though Muslims are considered as minority population in India (only second to the Hindus) but they still holds a vital place when it comes to politics based on the religious issues. Religion based politics is nothing new to Bihar where majority of the current population are illiterate and lives under severe poverty. And this is where the role of the Mahābodhi Temple complex comes into play when various political parties use it often to gain mileage such as by promising a comprising formula to end the controversy surrounding the mandatory Hindu Chairman position in the Bodhgayā Temple Management Committee, and also by promoting Bodhgayā as a monovalent Buddhist site to mainly please the minority vote bank.

3.0 Packaging domain identity and architecture

For several years the heritage conservation fraternity of India in particular, and Asia in general raised the issue of conserving the soul of the structure rather than only its body, i.e. fabric. It is only recently, the UNESCO and other heritage preservation related world organisations ratified the so called Eastern philosophy of heritage conservation. Although it may be slightly easy to talk or even write about the 'intention' yet it would be rather difficult if not impossible to understand the original intention of the builder or people who had done successive repairs and alterations to the building fabric to keep it in use since it was first constructed. These transformations can well either be tangible (in the case of physical changes) or intangible (rituals surrounding the structure) depending on the community participation and different interpretations, nonetheless, it certainly adds a new meaning to our understanding of sacred landscape (in this case, the sacred landscape of Bodhgayā).

In the following study, it will be highlighted that how in the recent past, mainly after the UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) designation in 2002, the sacredness of the Mahābodhi Temple and its surrounding areas is being continuously re-packaged by the government authorities to suffice their political and religious agendas. After 2002, both the Buddha and Bodhgayā found a more prominent position in the tourism map of the world, which started a mad rush in Bodhgayā where almost everyone including hoteliers, Buddhist monasteries, tourist agents are all marketing the 'Brand Buddha.' I have argued elsewhere¹ that sacredness of a place goes beyond scriptural texts and archaeological remains per se. Instead, its significance lies mainly in the active interaction between religious architecture within its dynamic ritual settings. In this study, I would argue that by defining the universal essence and a site/ boundary of this 'living' sacred place [as recently seen in the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the UNESCO WHS], it could be seen as to dominate, limit and control the sacred experience. This report will also illustrate the responsive processes for incorporation of the on-going contestations in Bodhgayā, which now finds itself as the focus of transnational political conflict. However, this endless contestation of sacredness and its meaning per se should not be seen as the 'death' of the Mahābodhi Temple; on the contrary, it demonstrates the vitality of the on-going debate on the meaning, understanding, and use of the sacred in Indian context.

3.1 Political use of the Mahābodhi in post-colonial India

Soon after India's independence in August 1947, the newly formed government was put under pressure by Buddhist delegates from various Asian Buddhist countries to “hand over Bodhgayā Temple to the Buddhists of Asia” (Anon. 1947). Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of the independent India, assured his full support for the cause. Nehru was a clever politician and hence, he used the opportunity of the long prevailing discord between the Buddhists and Hindus with regard to the control and management of the Mahābodhi Temple with the passing of the Bodhgayā Temple Act in June, 1949. This bill provided for a joint though unequal representation of both the Buddhists and Hindus (Hindus in majority) for management of the Temple by formation of the Bodhgayā Temple Management Committee (figure 4). This move could be seen as a reassurance for religious minorities in India that they are heard in secular, though, Hindu-dominated India and that the Indian National Congress was genuinely interested in protecting their religious freedom. This could have also been served as a fitting example for other adjoining neighbouring small independent Buddhist states, such as Sikkim (which later became part of India), Bhutan, Nepal, and Tibet, to consider India as their culturally compatible friend. The appointment of non-Indian Buddhists in the advisory committee for managing the Temple could be seen as another sign of respect and admiration of the Buddha as portrayed to the larger Buddhist world. The sacred Mahābodhi Temple silently continued to be used in the political game in the post-colonial India.

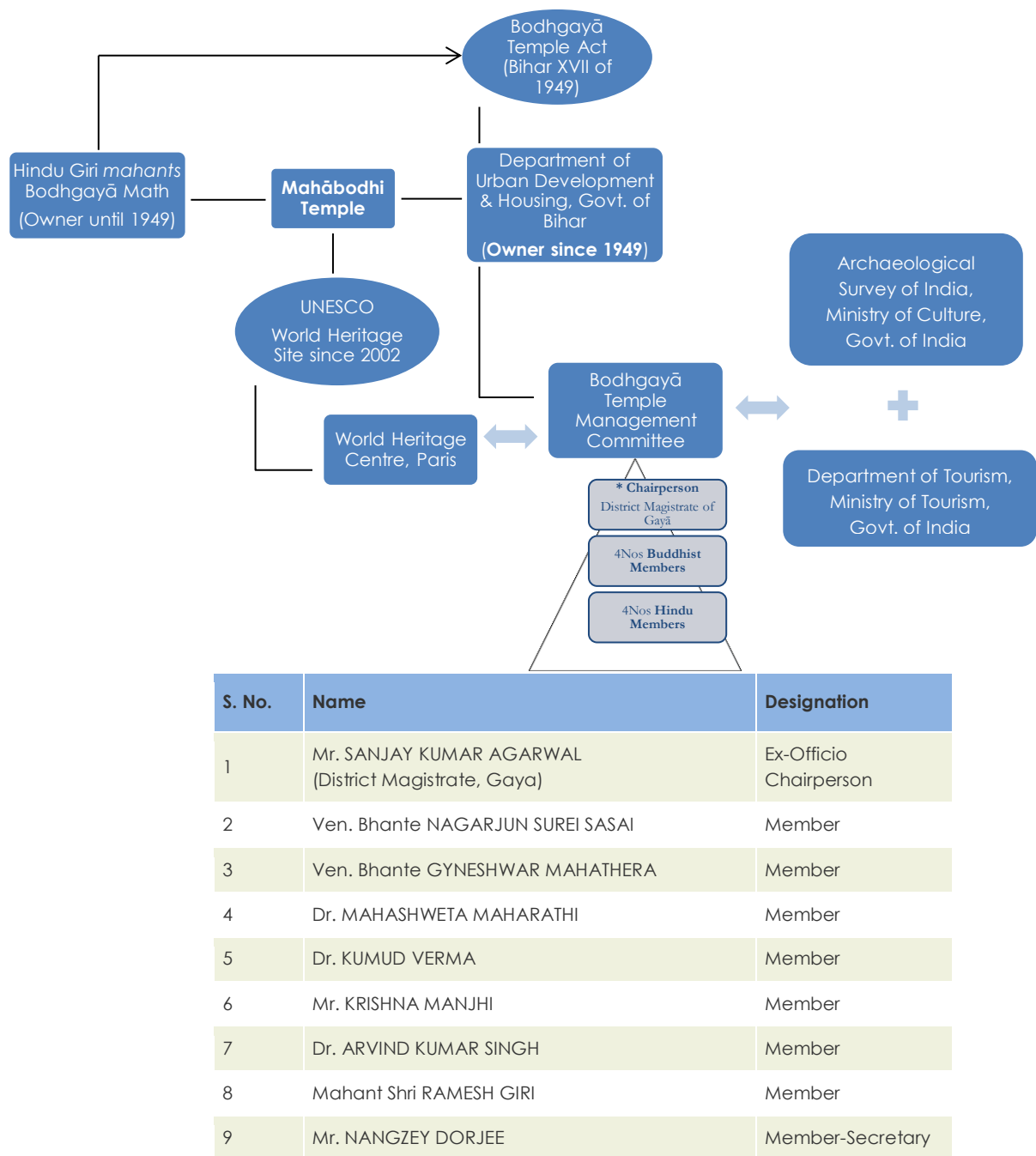


Figure 4: Chart showing the current main stakeholders responsible for maintenance of the Mahābodhi Temple.
(Source: By Author, 2015)

What Dharmapāla and the British colonizers could not achieve after several decades of legal battles and negotiations with the *mahant* of Bodhgayā Math, Nehru together with his political colleagues achieved within two years of India's independence by placing the Mahābodhi Temple under management of the Bodhgayā Temple Management Committee. However, this was not seen as an isolated event and should be examined with regard to the socio-political condition of Bihar during that time. According to Barua (1934), Bodhgayā Math was the second wealthiest landlord in Bihar district, and the richest religious establishment. At the time of independence in 1947, the math was determined to have owned about 16,000 acres of land and the enormous revenue these holdings generated. The newly formed government of Bihar made its first post-independence legislative attempt to abolish the zamindari system in Bihar by passing the Bihar Abolition of Zamindari Bill in 1947, which later amended and published as the Bihar Zamindari Abolition Act of 1948 and eventually got approval as the Bihar Act XVIII of 1949 by the Governor-General on 6 June 1949. The concerned parties, mainly rich and politically connected zamindars, quickly acted against this Act and challenged it in the Patna High Court. This Act was later repealed and a new and weaker legislation, the Bihar Land Reforms Bill, 1949 was passed in 1950. Nevertheless, this new Act was equipped with several clauses to indirectly protect the interest of zamindars. The implementation of this Act was extremely slow and ineffective and hence, the land was only redistributed and the power rich zamindars retained its hold. It is difficult to presume exactly how much did the changing post-independence socio-political scenario in Bihar influence the *mahant* to seriously rethink his stand with regard to ownership of the Mahābodhi Temple and to also retain extremely large area of land under his ownership, which was then under threat from the Act of 1949.

On the auspicious Vaisakha day, 28 May 1953, a ceremony was held at the Mahābodhi Temple, which was attended by few thousand people including monks, laypeople, and dignitaries from several Buddhist countries, to mark the transfer of the Temple from the *mahant* of Bodhgayā Math to the Bodhgayā Temple Management Committee (BTMC). The transfer ceremony was quite suited for a shared and contested sacred site like the Mahābodhi as it consisted of chanting of Sanskrit hymns as well as reading excerpts from the Pāli Sūtras. During the ceremony, the then Chief Minister of Bihar, S K Sinha, made an announcement of his Government's plan to celebrate the 2500th Buddha Jayanti celebrations in 1956 and hoped that more people would join the celebrations at that time. Soon after the transfer ceremony, the BTMC started work on the Temple improvement that was long overdue and beautification projects for the immediate surroundings of the Temple complex.

3.2 Shifting sacred terrains in and around the Temple complex

Soon after the take-over in 1953, the Bodhgayā Temple Management Committee started works on the repair and development to the Temple and its surrounding areas. The works, which included the re-excavation of the Lotus Tank in which the Buddha is believed to have bathed, took three years to complete just in time for the grand Buddha Jayanti celebrations in 1956.

The development works continued even after 1956 and in September 1966, the first draft Master Plan for the development programme at Bodhgayā was published. Nothing much happened for some years, but after few revisions were made to the original Master Plan, several important schemes were adopted in the 1970s, viz.: “(i) a plan was being worked out to suitably locate the Pañca Pāṇḍava Temple situated now almost adjacent south-east to the Mahābodhi Temple in a better looking building;” “(ii) a scheme had been taken up by the Government of Bihar for the clearance of the slum colony at the southern side of Buddha Gayā Temple” (Barua 1981: 125). While in 1970s the Government authorities were busy finalising plans for the development of Bodhgayā, generous Buddhist donors from various countries were zealously funding significant alterations both tangible and intangible to the Temple surroundings:

- In mid-1970s, the BTMC together with the help of the Bihar State Archaeology Department fixed the cement replica of the original Aśoka stone railings all around the sacred Bodhi Tree to secure it from desecration by pilgrims and animals.
- From 1968-74, the compound walls and massive entrance gates were built to secure the Temple complex with generous donations from Thai pilgrims. With effect from February 1977, the BTMC levied entry ticket, ‘renovation fee,’ for people intending to visit the Temple, except for monks and clergy of all religions. The BTMC argued that it was done for the security and also to raise funds for further development programmes. Nevertheless, it created a boundary separating the local villagers and the Temple.

Soon after the Government of India submitted World Heritage Site nomination dossier, another face-lift programme by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) started on 13 February 2002 and continued until 2010 with an approximate expenditure of INR 40,00,000 (approx. USD 75,000). During these eight years several conjectural works to the Temple fabric

were undertaken, which significantly changed the outer appearance of the Temple. Although, the ASI argues that most of the repair works undertaken were urgent repairs necessary to preserve the Temple and its surroundings.

The year 2002 was remarkable for Bodhgayā as during this year Gayā International Airport started its operation and the Mahābodhi Temple was inscribed as the UNESCO World Heritage Site after being nominated by the Department of Tourism of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Government of India. All the authoritative discourses make strong references to the Mahābodhi's unique architectural, historical, artistic and religious significance exclusively as a Buddhist sacred site. The *Information Dossier* (Anon., 2002) for the Mahābodhi Temple complex claim that not much is known of the state of the Temple from the thirteenth century when the Muslim invasions took place until the sixteenth century when a Hindu *mahant* or High Priest made the Temple his hermitage. In the same document, it has been also stated that directly opposite this building is a memorial to a Hindu *mahant* who had occupied this site during the fifteenth-sixteenth century. As per the Outstanding Universal Value of the Temple complex, as defined by the UNESCO's World Heritage Centre, this property has immense significance due to its association with the Buddha's enlightenment and the grand Temple building is an architectural marvel in brick built during the fifth-sixth centuries CE. It is once again that the long history of the Hindus and other religions and their contemporary presence at Bodhgayā such as the Jama mosque, the Pañca Pāndava Temple, which are all situated adjoining the main Mahābodhi Temple complex got no mention in the official discourses making it a perfect case of selective history where the past is always subject to editing, omission, co-optation and selective memorisation. The history of the Mahābodhi Temple from the thirteenth century till its re-discovery by the British in the mid-nineteenth century is not very clear, although, the re-branding of places surrounding this sacred Temple whether it is the Hindu *mahant*'s memorial, or the missing Śivalinga from the middle of the sanctum floor, or even omitting any reference to the Pañca Pāndava Temple in the authoritative documents could well be seen as way to dominate, limit and control the sacred experience of pilgrims by authoritative people.

4.0 Histories of the immediate past

It was during the 2500th Buddha Jayanti celebrations in 1956, Pandit Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India, invited neighbouring Buddhist nations to establish their 'own' religious institutions at Bodhgayā. Although, in the past there were several Master Plans being prepared for Bodhgayā's organised growth and development, however none being implemented successfully. Consequently, in less than fifty years it resulted in Bodhgayā being synonymous with haphazard growth, congestion, degradation and the Temple complex mired in corruption, crime and shocking sacrilege. Bodhgayā in its present setting is no longer a sleepy village where pilgrims and monks used to travel from faraway places to pay their respect to the Bodhi Tree and perform rituals; on the contrary, it is now a thriving tourist destination with a few hundred guesthouses (both legal and illegal), fifty-one monasteries and temples, which also serve as guesthouses providing accommodation to thousands of visitors visiting Bodhgayā every year. The immediate surrounding farmlands around the Temple complex have been gradually replaced by metalled roads and concrete buildings. After the UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) designation in 2002, the land prices have increased drastically in Bodhgayā. Consequently, the new religious institutions and hotels are forced to buy land as far as three to five kilometres on either side of the Temple complex. Although, as per the recommendations of the World Heritage Site (WHS) framework (these are not statutory laws) no new construction (even within any existing property, except essential infrastructure and cultural facility) should be allowed in the WHS core zone and construction in the buffer zone should follow strict height restrictions and be only of religious and cultural nature. Most importantly, it should be sympathetic to the Mahābodhi Temple both in its construction and use. However, the foreign Buddhist monasteries can be seen flouting guidelines blatantly. They are also criticised by the locals for evading taxes since they are not purely religious institutions and provide accommodation to visitors as well. The registered religious institutions are exempted from paying certain taxes by the Government of India. Some large and heavily decorated and Buddhist monasteries that are too close to the Temple complex are a threat to its Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) since their architecture style is out of context and completely alien as compared to Bodhgayā's original serene landscape.

5.0 Architectural-ritual interactions: Understanding sacred placeness

Rituals as an “agreed-on and formalised pattern of ceremonial movements and verbal expressions carried out in a sacred context” are found in all human communities, though, their levels of meanings and functions are significantly different to one another, which are most of the times not obvious but latent, obvious only to participants (Livingston 2005: 81). It would not be wrong to say that ritual plays a central role in both Hindu and Mahāyanist Buddhist religions. Pilgrimages are part of almost all religions and they are, perhaps the most powerful rituals performed by religious members. When pilgrims perform the ritual of ‘*pradaksina*’, which consists in moving around the structure by keeping it always on the right hand, it is believed that they would ascend through the three worlds (*kamadhatu*, *rupadhatu*, and *arupadhatu*) and its different states of existence in the form of spiral, spiritual circumambulatory path. This ritual thus becomes an act of devotion to the stūpa or the representation of the Buddha.

Circumambulation along the sacred structure or landscape is a very important part of both Hindu and Buddhist rituals. The basic requirement of movement in the landscape (appropriated or built as in the case of the Mahābodhi Temple complex) govern the structure of pilgrimage, for it is in moving that people perceive the oneness with the holy – even the layout of cosmos [figure 5(a), (b), (c)]. It is this relationship between the people performing rituals and what they consider sacred that sanctifies the Mahābodhi Temple complex, which is both ritually and socially defined. In brief, the sacred architecture, particularly in Indian context can be best understood within its dynamic ritual setting.

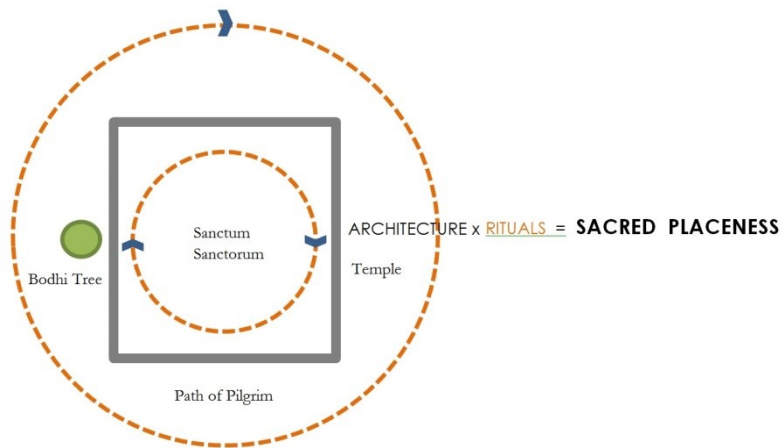


Figure 5(a): Circumambulation (*pradaksina*) by pilgrims inside the Mahābodhi Temple complex, thus, creates 'Sacred Placeness.'

(Source: By Author, 2012)

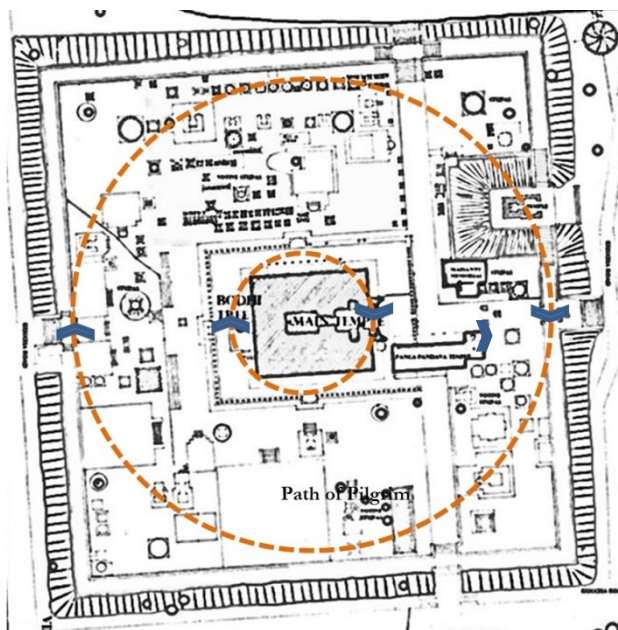


Figure 5(b): The path of the pilgrim overlaid on the ground plan of the Mahābodhi Temple complex ~ inner *pradaksina*. (Source: By Author, 2012)

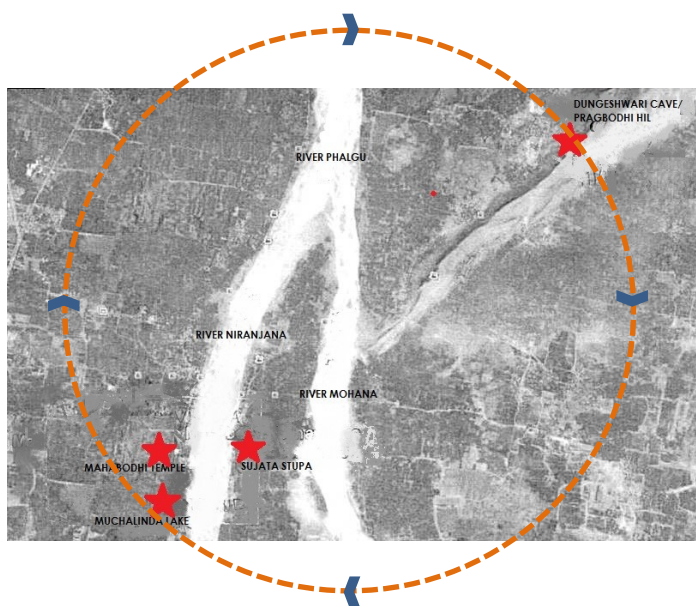


Figure 5(c): The path of the pilgrim to cover other religious sites surrounding the Mahābodhi Temple complex ~ outer *pradaksina*.

(Source: By Author, 2012)

The Mahābodhi appeals to a large mass of people from multiple nations for many different reasons, though mainly religious. The Temple receives millions of visitor every year (over three million in 2011). These visitors travel to Bodhgayā for different purposes, such as pilgrimage (explicitly religious) and cultural tourism (explicitly secular), which have a significant overlap and hence, often complex and resulting in one being indistinguishable from the other. Nevertheless, it creates polarities between different types of visitors that could be clearly observed, especially while they practice their respective rituals at the Mahābodhi Temple complex. While some pilgrims perform circumambulation (*pradaksina*) around the main Temple, always clockwise, some count their beads and chant mantras while rotating their prayer-wheels, some make prostrations, some sit silently under the Bodhi Tree and meditate while some practise walking-meditation, some tie Buddhist flags and banners to the stone railing around the Tree and the Temple, some apply gold-leaf to the stone railing and to Padmapani bodhisattva statue located in one of niches in the lower part of the Mahābodhi, some gather the fallen leaves from the Bodhi Tree early in the morning, some offer gifts such as flowers, cloth with Buddhist sacred symbols, coins, some revere the Temple, the Tree, and the Buddha's feet by touching them with their hands and forehead, some just gather around the open space near the Tree and listen to the sermons delivered by monastics, while others simply relax on lawns around the Temple.

One of the examples that could be witnessed during the *pitr-paksha* month, as per the Hindu lunar calendar, at Muchalinda Sarovar (earlier known as Buddha Pokhar or Buddha Ganga) situated at south of the Mahābodhi Temple complex illustrates the emergence of sacred placeness as a result of each group following what is important to them. Several parties of Hindu pilgrims and local *gayāwals* performing *Gayā-śrāddha* ritual at the Mahābodhi since it is considered as one of the *vedis* prescribed in the Hindu *Shastras* to perform 'sacred performances'⁶ of offering *pindas* to the spirits of the dead (a Hindu ancestral rite) [see figure 1]. The *śrāddha* pilgrims could be seen as exceedingly careful not to have any physical contact with Buddhist pilgrims in the Temple complex. After entering through the main entrance gate of the Temple complex, they all would straightaway go to the *chabutra* (platform) near bathing *ghats* (as they were known earlier) of Muchalinda Sarovar to perform *śrāddha* ceremony. This is quite different from their Buddhist counterparts who would visit first either the main Temple or the Bodhi Tree to pay their obeisance to the Buddha. This difference clearly suggests the current existence of demarcation of priorities and sacred spaces between the Hindus and Buddhists at the Mahābodhi Temple complex. In addition, most Buddhists are oblivious of the fact that the Temple complex is also a place to perform religious Hindu *śrāddha* ceremony and that the Buddha is considered as the ninth

incarnation of Lord Vishnu by some Hindus. Hence, the Buddhists view the entire *śrāddha* ceremony as another attempt by the Hindus to annex their most sacred Buddhist Temple.

It is interesting to mention that the entire *śrāddha* practices at the Mahābodhi are being tailored to suit the time in hand, economic status of the pilgrims, and also to accommodate other local practices. Furthermore, the motives and expectations are also greatly varied as the *gayāwals* at Bodhgayā emphasize that it is possible to perform all ancestral rites associated with Saraswatī Tīrth; Matangavāpī; and Dharmāranya – all of which are situated several miles from the Temple – from the Mahābodhi Temple compound itself without causing any inconvenience to pilgrims to travel across the Nirāñjanā River and climb rocky hills.

5.1 Creating boundaries by packaging Bodhgayā as a monovalent sacred place

The World Heritage Sites attract millions of tourists. Tourism as an industry could be a great economic booster for any nation. However, like every coin, it has two sides, the same tourism could well harm the authenticity of the heritage site and its surroundings, gentrify the place, and significantly change the landscape. In the case of Bodhgayā, only in the last decade, several acres of agricultural land gave way for swanky hotels and guesthouses, and large Buddhist monasteries appeared in the close vicinity of the Mahābodhi Temple. In recent years, the sacred site of the Mahābodhi has been transformed into a global Buddhist bazaar. Here one could experience a huge overlap between sacred pilgrimage and cultural tourism together forming a complex system. It is interesting to note that, be it the locals or foreigners, monastics or state authorities almost all are marketing the “Brand Buddha” and trying hard to sell the universal spirituality to attract material gains and political mileage.

The local shopkeepers and street vendors are the ones most affected by the Mahābodhi Temple’s World Heritage Site status both in a good and bad way depending on their financial status and their political contacts. For example, prior to July 2013 the street vendors near the main entrance of the Temple complex who used to sell religious products such as flowers, incense sticks, prayer flags, etc. were forced to close their stalls sometimes for few days due to visit by special dignitaries to the Mahābodhi Temple. The government officials’ would cite security issues for the same, however, beautification of the site was another hidden agenda. Most of the street vendors who could only sustain their families on a daily basis lived under a continuous threat. Few years ago, the local authorities based on the recommendation of the Site Management Plan and City Development Plan even relocated

a large number of street vendors from near the Temple compound to an obscure location around 500 metres away from their earlier location. Most of them suffered major losses and either left the business or went back to their earlier location illegally.

Prior to July 2013, there were fifty-eight single-storey shops in a complex near the entrance of the main Temple. Of them, the Bodhgayā Temple Management Committee owned twenty-seven, the Bihar State Tourism Development Corporation (BSTDC) twenty-three, and the remaining eight were owned by the Bodhgayā Nagar Panchayat. Some of the shopkeepers had been running their businesses for generations. Yet, as soon as the Temple complex got the World Heritage Site designation in 2002, the government authorities planned to demolish the shopping complex in order to segregate the sacred site from the contemporary world in order to make it look authentic so that it could be packaged and presented as something universally accepted as being a World Heritage Site (WHS). The shopkeepers protested against the demolition and their relocation to another site quite far from the Temple complex. The shopkeepers challenged the authorities move in the Patna Court and got a reprieve as the Court suspended the order against demolition. However, this was only a temporary relief for them as they kept receiving eviction notice every alternate year. In July 2011, the shopkeepers received another notice from the local authorities to either relocate or their shops would be sealed on 31 July 2011. The shopkeepers appealed against the order and got another short-term relief.

On 7 July 2013, the entire world was shocked to hear the news of ten low-intensity bomb blasts in and around the Mahābodhi Temple complex. Fortunately no one was killed in the blasts and no harm occurred either to the main Temple or the Bodhi Tree. However, several drastic and hurried 'top-down' measures taken by the authorities following the July 2013 blasts acted as the last nail in the coffin for the locals. Following the blasts, the fifty-eight local shops near the Temple complex, which used to serve mainly the pilgrims and tourists, were demolished by the local authority citing that gathering of people around the shops was a great threat to the security of the Temple. The shop-keepers were given a short notice to vacate the premises and to which most of them were against. They even filed a case against their forceful eviction in the Patna High Court, but before the judgement was announced, the shops were demolished on 25 July 2013 (figure 6) and the affected businesses were left to find an alternate location or even other livelihood. Most of them are even till date are struggling to cope with this reality and some of them are even doing petty jobs to earn a living.



Figure 6: The local shops and street vendors outside the Mahābodhi Temple complex entrance before their businesses were demolished on 25 July 2013. These pictures were taken at the day of demolition by authorities citing security concerns for the Mahābodhi Temple. Note the deployment of armed forces to threaten the locals. (Source: By Author, 2013)

As if the demolition was not enough for the locals, the authorities built new high walls creating new boundaries between the Temple and the locals. They even increased the height of existing compound walls all around the Temple complex (figure 7). In order to legitimise the construction of the new boundary walls and encourage 'Buddhification' of the entire area, the Bodhgayā Temple Management Committee have already started fixing stone panels depicting scenes from the life of the Buddha at plinth level of the newly constructed walls in order to legitimize its existence.



Figure 7: Existing boundary walls are made even higher to cut off all connections with the surrounding settings and people. (Source: By Author, 2015)

In a recent development, on 27 September 2015, the Patna High Court accepted a petition against the Bodhgayā Temple Management Committee, the District Authority, and the State Government of Bihar for unlawfully demolishing the fifty-four shops near the Temple entrance in July 2013 and even advised them to stop construction of compound walls on the disputed property of shops while the case is in the court for hearing (figure 8).

दैनिक भास्कर
गया
गया, मंगलवार, 29 सितंबर, 2015
3

विवादित निर्माण पर बीटीएमसी के विरुद्ध अर्जी स्वीकृत

पटना उच्च न्यायालय करेगा सुनवाई, महाबोधि मंदिर में बम ब्लास्ट के बाद 25 जुलाई 2013 को प्रशासन ने हटा दी थीं दुकानें

सिटी रिपोर्ट/ गवा

पटना उच्च न्यायालय में बीटीएमसी, जिला प्रशासन व सरकार के विरुद्ध दायर मामले 18262/13 में याचिकाकर्ता श्रीकांत ने बीटीएमसी द्वारा विवादित जगह पर कराए जा रहे निर्माण पर रोक लगाने की मांग की है। कोर्ट ने इसे सुनवाई के लिए स्वीकार कर लिया है। उनका कहना है कि जब मामला कोर्ट में विचाराधीन है, तब बीटीएमसी को निर्माण नहीं कराना चाहिए। याचिकाकर्ता के अधिवक्ता निखिल कुमार अग्रवाल ने बताया कि मामला सुनवाई के लिए स्वीकृत है।

बिना अनुमति नहीं तोड़ सकते दुकान

सरकार ने दुकानों का निर्माण रोजगार के अवसर उपलब्ध कराने को किया था। प्रशासन बिना न्यायालय की अनुमति के उन दुकानों को नहीं तोड़ सकता था। ऐसे में न्यायालय व्यापक हित में दुकानों को फिर से बनवाने का आदेश भी दे सकता है। सार्वजनिक जमीन का उपयोग जनहित में किया जाता है।

मुआवजा के साथ देनी होगी दुकान

अग्रवाल के अनुसार, मुआवजा के साथ-साथ दुकानों को फिर से बनवाकर देना पड़ सकता है। उन्होंने बताया कि सरकारी दुकानों को तोड़ने की विहित प्रक्रिया होती है, जिसे प्रशासन ने नहीं माना। एक प्रश्न के जवाब में उन्होंने बताया कि धारा 144 लगाकर दुकानों को बंद कराया गया था। उसे हटाने की सूचना प्रशासन ने नहीं दी थी। बंद दुकानों को तोड़ने के पत्र में प्रशासन को मुआवजा देना होगा।

नोटिस का नहीं कराया तामिला

अग्रवाल ने बताया कि प्रशासन ने बाद में जो भी नोटिस जारी किया, उसे कहां पवती कराया। बंद दुकानों में नोटिस थिएटरों ने उसे तामिला नहीं माना जा सकता है क्योंकि उन दुकानों को धारा 144 लगाकर बंद कराया गया था। बिना धारा 144 हटाए दुकान खाली कराने का नोटिस भी गैरकानूनी है। उस स्थिति में दुकान खोलने वाले पर कानूनी कार्यवाई भी हो सकती थी।

तया कहते हैं विधि विशेषज्ञ

उच्चतम न्यायालय के एक अधिकारी ने राय प्रकट करते हुए कहा कि सुरक्षा कारणों से किसी को रोजगार से विस्थापित नहीं किया जा सकता है। उन्होंने कहा कि धारा 144 के तहत उन दुकानों पर अहंका के आधार पर आरोप नहीं लगाया जा सकता है। उन्होंने ऐसा नौ जुलाई को तब तक नहीं करवाया जब तक कि दुकानदारों पर विरुद्ध कोई आदेश-प्राप्त करने की अहंका जताए जाने के प्रश्न पर कहा। तब उन दुकानों की जांच की गई थी? विधि विशेषज्ञ ने माना कि सरकार व प्रशासन ने जल्दबाजी में गलत और जबरदस्ती कदम उठाए हैं। यह एक ऐसा कदम था, जिससे बचा जा सकता था।



लाल पत्थर क्षेत्र में बीटीएमसी द्वारा कराया गया निर्माण।

तया है मामला

बोधगया में सात जुलाई 2013 को हुए बम ब्लास्ट के बाद महाबोधि मंदिर के बाहरी तैयारीकृत लाल पत्थर क्षेत्र से 25 जुलाई को प्रशासन ने 54 दुकानों को तोड़ डाला। इन दुकानों को तोड़ने में प्रशासन ने विहित प्रक्रिया और कानून को राक पर रख दिया था। गौरवलेख है कि महाबोधि मंदिर के समीप डेड पेडस्टल के बाहर बीटीएमसी की 27, कगर पंचायत की 8 तथा पर्यटन विभाग की 23 दुकानें निर्मित थीं। ये सभी दुकानें व्यवसायियों द्वारा संचालित थीं।

Figure 8: The news about the Patna High Court accepting the petition against the authorities was given due significance in local newspapers. [Source: Dainik Bhaskar (Gaya Edition), 29 September 2015]

Figure 9: Visitor facilities of the Mahābodhi temple complex on the public footpath adjoining Jai Prakash Narayan Park. (Source: By Author, 2015)



Whilst it was announced by the local authority told that after reclaiming the place where the local shops existed, it would be used for a permanent entrance ticket counter and visitor facilities, etc. However, until March 2015, no such visitor facilities were being built and the entire area was only being converted into super spacious public toilets. Currently, the so-called visitor facilities are constructed on the public footpath adjoining Jai Prakash Narayan Park (figure 9). It is important to note that the affected shop-keepers were offered rented

shops by the local authorities in a newly built shopping complex around one kilometre away from their previous now demolished shops. This compensation did not come cheap though as the monthly rental for the shops being offered was around INR 3,000 and the earlier rental paid by the shop-keepers was in the range of INR 800-1,000 depending upon the location of their shop.

In another similar situation, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) after over two decades of selective memory loss with regard to the Taradih excavated site adjoining the Temple complex, have recently came up with a proposal to develop this site as an archaeological park at a large expense of taxpayers' money (figure 10). It is important to note here that this site was a full-fledged village here until 1980s when the government decided to undertake an archaeological excavation there and displaced the entire village. Since the excavation, no report has been published till date regarding the findings and the entire stretch of land was a part of everyday landscape for the locals. It was being used by them for various purposes such as for open-air defecating, playground for the local kids, passage to connect neighbouring villages, etc. However, in February 2015, the ASI suddenly recovered their memory and without any public engagement or announcement recently started construction of an archaeological park on this same site. Looking at the current condition and usability of the existing Jai Prakash Narayan Park, which actually share the boundary with the proposed new park, it is not difficult to predict the future of the proposed archaeological park. It has been argued elsewhere that the development works for culturally sensitive communities in historic settings should represent the cultural identity of the locals and should be as per their needs and aspirations. The development works, which are designed for the people, therefore should be designed with people. The culture of a community informs their various needs, which are derived mainly from circumstances caused either within or outside the community. Hence, community engagement and awareness should be the first step in making informed decisions in shared places such as Bodhgayā, which are shared among various stakeholders and users.



Figure 10: Construction of the proposed archaeological park on Taradih excavated site. (Source: By Author, 2015)

In the following section, this report will highlight the socio-economic situation of Bodhgayā, which is pivotal not only to understand its current situation, but also to make recommendations on public engagement methods for sustainable management of change to the historic landscape of Bodhgayā and its immediate surroundings.

6.0 Economic analysis of Bodhgayā

6.1 Employment and occupation pattern

As per the Census of India in 2001, the total population of Bodhgayā was 30,883 out of which 16,751 were males and 14,132 were females. The work force was about 9,410 persons, comprising of 6,977 males and 2,434 females. The total working population of the town was about 30%. A larger proportion of male population (42% of the overall male) constitutes the work force as compared to the female population (17% of the overall female).

22% of the total population is in the category of main workers and 27% are marginal workers, signifying availability of full time work opportunities. In 1961, the workforce participation rate stood at 30% of the total population. It rose till 1981 but is again at nearly 30% at present. The participation rate of Bodhgayā is on the lower side compared to the state average of 34% and the national average of 39% (2001). The low levels of participation could be due to increase in student or institutional population.

Agriculture is still the main source of employment for the local people (table 1, 2, & 2.1). However, between 1961 and 2001, there has been a significant shift in occupations from primary sector to secondary and tertiary sectors. Bodhgayā still continues to be a primarily agrarian economy. This is, in part, due to expansion of the town boundaries to include the outlying settlements that are still primarily agricultural. The remote hamlets that have come into the town are almost all dependant on agriculture for sustenance.

There is also lack of diversification of job opportunities that leads to migration of rural educated population towards the urban areas such as Patna. Industrial activity is rather insignificant in Bodhgayā. This is due to a planned policy that has not encouraged growth of heavy or polluting industries here to protect the heritage of Bodhgayā. However, that does not stop from creation of jobs in services, education, cottage industries sectors, which are compatible with the primary essence of Bodhgayā. To achieve this aim various skills development centres should be set-up in Bodhgayā.

The study of occupation pattern shows that nearly 35% of the workers are agricultural labourers, probably with low and seasonal incomes. This shows a lack of job opportunities in the town. The high percentage of the other workers shows greater dependence on tertiary sector, including people employed in tourism related industries. In brief, the local economy is heavily dependent on tourism industry.

Table 1: Occupation distribution of workers

CATEGORY	WORKERS	TOTAL PERCENTAGE
Cultivators	1343	14%
Agricultural labourers	3296	35%
Workers in household industries	754	8%
Other workers	4018	43%
Total	9411	100%

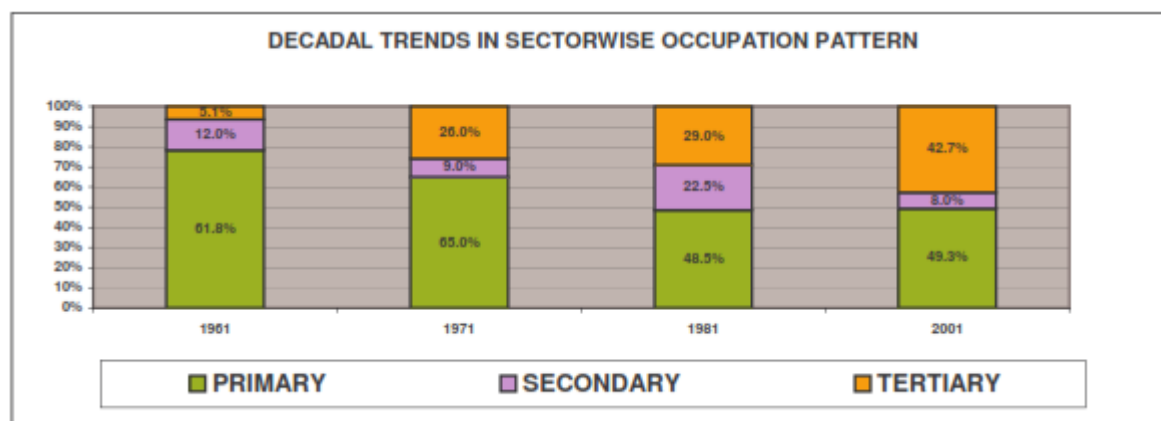
(Source: Census of India 2001)

Table 2: Decadal trends in percentage of workers in various sectors

YEAR	PRIMARY		SECONDARY		TERTIARY	
	NUMBERS	PERCENTAGE	NUMBERS	PERCENTAGE	NUMBERS	PERCENTAGE
1961	1172	61.80%	228	12.02%	97	5.11%
1971	1472	65.00%	198	9.02%	570	25.97%
1981	2427	48.45%	1127	22.50%	1455	29.05%
2001	4639	49.29%	754	8.01%	4018	42.69%

(Source: Census of India, 2001)

Table 2.1: Decadal trends in percentage of workers in various sectors



6.2 Income levels

A survey by HUDCO revealed that nearly 70% of surveyed population had income levels below INR2,500 per month (2003). However, official figures reveal that only 10% were below poverty line in 2001. The disparity in the two figures indicates that a vast percentage of population lies in the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) and the Low Income Group (LIG) category.

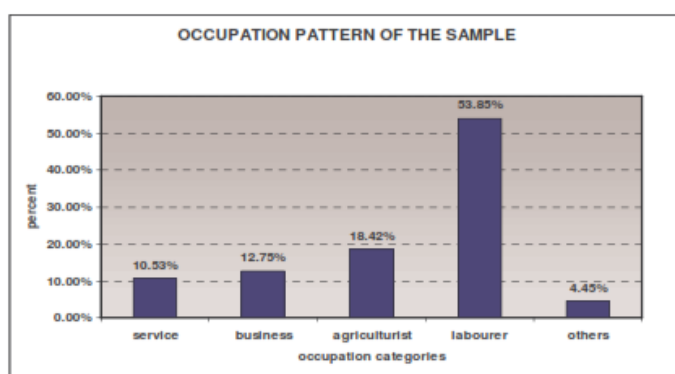
Considering the lack of diversification in job opportunities and the low income levels, the goal of economic planning policies here must be to provide opportunities in all sectors to the local people in a manner which does not harm the ambience of the area but also meets the future employment needs of the local populace.

6.3 Key economic drivers

i) Agriculture

A random sample survey of households in Bodhgayā by HUDCO in 2003 confirmed that employment is mostly in primary sector occupations with over 50% of the sample being employed in agriculture related occupations (table 3). This underlines two things, firstly the essentially rural nature of the town, secondly, the lack of job opportunities in other sectors as it is well known that agriculture labour is probably the lowest paid job, and is also seasonal in nature. Yet the benefits of development are yet to be passed down to the general population.

Table 3: Employment distribution in various sectors



Over 67% of total town area is under agricultural uses and water bodies. Most of the agricultural lands concentrated in the rural northern and southern sides of the town. A survey by HUDCO in 2003 revealed that the size of the holding is quite small and varies half acre to two acres on an average.

(Source: HUDCO – Bodhgayā Town Panchayat Survey, 2003)

Agriculture is mostly subsistence. Crops grown include wheat rice, flowers and vegetables. The produce is sold either at Bodhgayā, or at Bakraur. Method of transport includes rickshaws and carts.

ii) Industries

Bodhgayā has a few industries, which is in keeping with the heritage character of the town. There are few agro-based industries such as flourmills on the Gaya-Dhobi road and down on the riverside road. While there is no established household industrial sector, activities such as blanket making and weaving are local crafts, which are presently practiced. The information technology or other service industries are non-existent (table 4). There are only few agro-based industries currently existing.

Table 4: Registered manufacturing and service industries

ECONOMIC BASE	YEAR	
	2001	2005
Manufacturing	NIL	NIL
Employment	N/A	N/A
Production (INR in crores)	N/A	N/A
Value added (INR in crores)	N/A	N/A
Services (Information Technology, etc.)	NIL	NIL
Employment	N/A	N/A
Production or quantum of business (INR in crores)	N/A	N/A
Value added (INR in crores)	N/A	N/A

(Source: HUDCO – Bodhgayā Town Panchayat Survey, 2003)

iii) Commerce

The economic prosperity of this small town is linked with the commerce it supports. Commercial establishments form an inherent part of a pilgrim town. In case of Bodhgayā, its status as a tourist and pilgrimage centre has governed the nature of the commerce activities operating in the town. The town has a flourishing commercial activity; however, the industrial activities are virtually non-existent. It is necessary to study functions of commercial areas in order to formulate a strategy for future commercial uses.

In Bodhgayā commercial establishments are concentrated along the central town road (Domuhan road) and near the Mahābodhi Temple Complex. Considerable commercial activities, including informal and formal shops have come up all along the Mahābodhi Temple and the intersection of the central spine and the riverside road. The local Bodhgayā Bazaar located close to the Mahābodhi Temple is the makeshift Central Business District serving the commercial needs of the town and the outlying areas. There is no separate specialised wholesale market, as the entire commercial activity, retail and wholesale, sale of perishable and non-perishable goods, appears to be concentrated in this market. A vegetable market is also located in the same area, which causes considerable nuisance in the area. Most of the development is highly organic and haphazard in nature. A number of hawkers also add to the confusion and disorder in the area. There are two planned markets in the town. The first was made under the IDSMT scheme near the Maya Sarovar. The other market is the BTMC complex that contains shops related to the tourists and is located right opposite the Mahābodhi Temple.

Nature of establishments: There are three types of commercial activities presently within Bodhgayā:

1. Shopping (retail and wholesale)
2. Hotels and *dharamshalas*
3. Informal sector shopping

In absence of any data available about these activities at the local level, a sample survey was conducted in which 50-100% of shops in various wards of the town, 100% of hotels and 100% of the informal sector establishments were surveyed. These surveys have been used to build up a profile of the commercial activities. A brief profile of these activities based on the surveys is as follows:

- The shopping (retail and wholesale): Most of the shopping activity is small scale and unplanned in nature and operating out of house cum shops. Most of the shops are retail shops or services such as restaurant or STD booths etc. There is an absence of substantial wholesale trade at Bodhgayā.

Most of the commercial establishments surveyed were general merchants, or sold goods for local needs such as toys, vegetables etc. Only a very small percentage (7.8%) sold goods related to religious practices or tourist needs. This is typical of the retail commercial character of a small town, where local needs are met through commerce and great deal of specialization has not occurred.

The higher order market for sale, purchase of goods for the commercial establishment seems to be primarily Gaya. This highlights the close economic linkages between the two towns. Informal sector establishments: Bodhgayā has a substantial informal commercial sector that mainly survives on the tourist trade. There was no data available regarding the number, and type of informal sector establishments.

According to the survey of the informal sector establishments conducted by HUDCO in 2003 with the help of the footpath workers union, it was found that the informal sector establishments are of three types, namely the *chowki* or a shop on the footpath without any covering, a *gumti* or a kiosk and a *thela* or a mobile shop on handcart (table 5). It was found that majority of the informal sector workers have *chowkis*, with over 8% having *thelas*.

The impact of tourism on the growth of informal sector was clearly discerned by the type of goods sold, with over a quarter of establishments selling temple and tourist related goods. These establishments are all located around the Temple complex.

Table 5: Informal sector establishments and the type of goods sold

TYPES OF GOODS SOLD	NO. OF ESTABLISHMENTS	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
Temple related	134	25.2%
Tourist related	10	1.9%
Food related	53	10.0%
General provisions	75	14.1%
Cosmetics	56	10.5%
Paan/ cigarette	21	3.9%
Clothes	70	13.2%
Electronic goods	40	7.5%
Vegetables	7	1.3%
Others	66	12.4%
Total	532	100%

(Source: HUDCO – Bodhgayā Town Panchayat Survey, 2003)

On an average, each informal sector worker operates in about 32 sq. ft. of space, works alone or with his family for about 13 hours per day. They have little access to services or facilities and the working conditions are generally poor. An average informal sector worker earns about INR 3000 per month. There is a wide variation in income depending on the

season. During tourist season an average informal sector establishment makes INR 4300 per month, whereas during off-season he makes only about INR 2030 per month. This highlights the close economic link of the informal sector with tourism.

iv) Religious tourism/ Pilgrimage

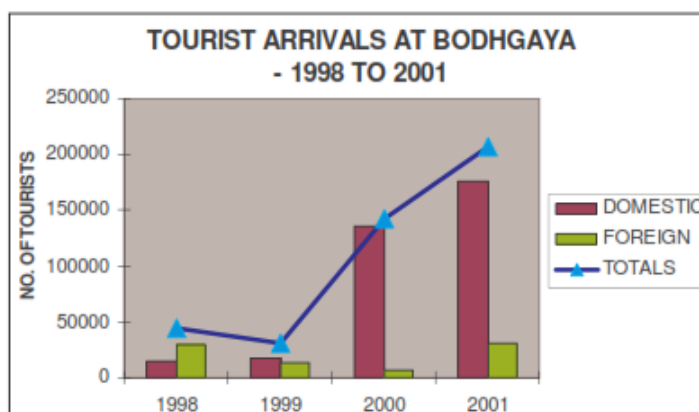


Table 6: Number of tourists visiting Bodhgaya

(Source: HUDCO – Bodhgaya Town Panchayat Survey, 2003)

Bodhgaya is an important tourist and pilgrimage destination of the Buddhist circuit (Bodhgaya – Rajgir – Nalanda – Patna – Vaishali – Lauriya Nandangarh – Lauriya Areraj –

Kesariya – Vikramsila) [table 6]. People of all religious milieu including Buddhists are drawn to the land of enlightenment. Tourism is a significant contributor to Bodhgaya's economy. It is the mainstay of the town, as the population directly or indirectly thrives on the extensive tourist influx within the town.

- Tourism development

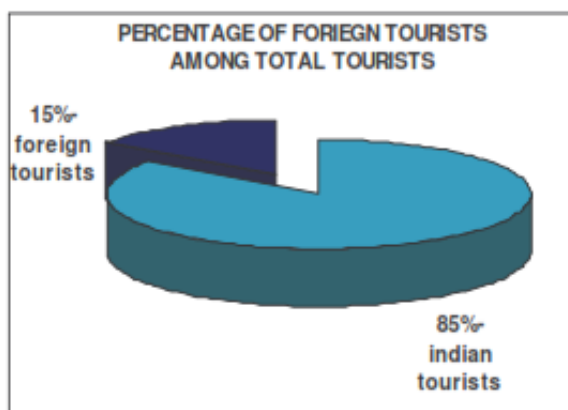


Table 7: Number of tourists visiting Bodhgaya

(Source: HUDCO – Bodhgaya Town Panchayat Survey, 2003)

In the last decade, tourist arrivals in Bodhgaya have shown an upward trend. Estimates are that in 2001 about 210,000 tourists visited Bodhgaya out of which nearly 31,000 were foreign tourists (table 7).

An analysis of tourist flow indicates that the peak season for tourist arrivals is during November to January, and from July to September. However, most tourists are short-term visitors who do not stay overnight. The daily tourist inflow is high, which demands for improved transportation facilities.

- Pilgrims' profiling

A random sample of the visitors revealed that 90% of tourists visiting Bodhgayā are pilgrims, who come here to pay homage to Lord Buddha. According to the District Administration and BTMC, out of these pilgrims, about 80% are Indians.

Majority of Indian, Tibetan or South Asian pilgrims are often on a shoestring budget (INR500-1,000 per day). Hence, they mostly stay in *dharamshalas* or monasteries, which have come up all over the town. During normal times, the town is able to absorb this influx, but during peak times, the accommodation is scarce, and many pilgrims stay as paid guests in private houses, in less than hygienic or safe conditions. Random discussions with monks and pilgrims revealed the need for low cost and hygienic accommodation. Average stay of Indian pilgrims varies from 2-3 days.

The other pilgrims from Southeast Asian countries or European countries are relatively high-end tourist with affordability varying from USD50 – USD300 per day, with US200 on an average. They stay in luxury hotels or air-conditioned guesthouses within their monasteries. A survey of hotels revealed that luxury rooms are available in plenty in Bodhgayā, but there is a severe lack of affordable accommodation (please see below).

The influx of pilgrims is the greatest during the Kalchakra festival when about one to two lakh visitors descend on Bodhgayā. From July to October there is a heavy inflow of Burmese, Thai and Sri Lankan pilgrims who come here to meditate and offer pujas. These groups stay here for a brief period of 2-3 days. Buddhists from other countries also visit Bodhgayā during the period. During the Kalchakra festival, the pilgrims stay in makeshift camping facilities put up by the district authorities. Most of the times even the administrative machinery fails to make adequate provisions and then the pilgrims stay on rent within Bodhgayā town in transit, paying guest accommodations. Pilgrims face many problems due to lack of facilities during festival times.

- Accommodation

Hotels and *dharamshalas* constitute an important component of economic activity within the town. A number of hotel, guesthouses and unauthorized retail activity have come up on the central spine and around the Temple. While the space along the central spine was reserved in the last master plan for the hotels, its scale and the architectural character is a cause of concern. Bodhgayā has a bed capacity of 500 beds with the hotels catering mostly to middle or high-income groups. A survey was carried out to study the condition of available tourist accommodation in Bodhgayā. The findings of the survey are shown in Table 5 and 6.

At the time of the survey, there were around 30 hotels (2003) in Bodhgayā, which were surveyed for the purposes of establishing their characteristics and their problems. The survey revealed that most of the hotels have been established within the past twenty years. There has been a rapid growth in the commerce in the last decade. The hotels at Bodhgayā have a total bed capacity of 1,188 beds in 615 rooms, which are distributed among 573 double bed rooms and 42 single rooms (table 8). On an average, the number of rooms per hotel is 23, with 3 single rooms and 20 double rooms. While there is substantial bed capacity at the higher end, there are only 79 beds during the peak time for the lower end visitors. The tourist season is from October to March with the peak number of tourist in December and January. During the peak season, almost all the rooms in the hotels are occupied. The hotels have 39 days (average) of full occupancy in a year. The occupancy varies from 40% to 70% during rest of the year.

Table 8: Guestroom and bed capacity at Bodhgayā

HOTELS IN BODHGAYĀ	CAPACITY					
	Double		Single		Total	
	No. of rooms	No. of beds	No. of rooms	No. of beds	Total no. of rooms	Total no. of beds
	573	1146	42	42	615	1188

(Source: HUDCO – Bodhgayā Town Panchayat Survey, 2003)

An analysis of the tariff rates showed that rates vary considerably between the off-season and the tourist season. In off-season, more cheap accommodation is available as compared to the tourist season, when lower end accommodation becomes scarce. The rates go up by 15 to 20 percent during the peak period. Capacity of the lower end accommodation is inadequate, whereas sufficient beds are available at the higher end for the time being (table 9).

Table 9: Bed capacity and guestroom tariff at Bodhgayā

TARIFF (IN INR PER DAY)	CAPACITY						
	Double		Single		Total		
	No. of rooms	No. of beds	No. of rooms	No. of beds	Total no. of rooms	Total no. of beds	Percentage of total beds
Less than 150	36	72	7	7	43	79	6.65%
150 – 499	217	434	18	18	235	452	38.05%
500 – 999	56	112	3	3	59	115	9.68%
1000 – 1499	50	100	0	0	50	100	8.42%
1500 & above	162	324	14	14	176	338	28.45%
Rates unavailable	52	104	0	0	52	104	8.75%
Total	573	1146	42	42	615	1188	100.00%

(Source: HUDCO – Bodhgayā Town Panchayat Survey, 2003)

The above data illustrate that there is urgent need to provide low cost accommodation and facilities like affordable restaurants and public toilets for visiting pilgrims. Setting up of a tourist police will also help in providing additional security to visitors.

7.0 Tourism in Bodhgayā and its multiplier effects

Religious tourism plays an important part in Bodhgayā's economy and has impacts on other sectors also. As given earlier, an average Indian or South Asian pilgrim spends INR 500 in Bodhgayā and an average foreign tourist will spend INR10,000 (approx. USD150) in Bodhgayā. Taking an average of 200,000 tourists, with 30,000 being foreign tourists, it is estimated that pilgrims are directly contributing nearly INR400,000,000 annually to Bodhgayā. This estimate does not include the donations made to the Temple and the monasteries by the tourists. This will only increase in future as Bodhgayā receives more investment and its environment improves.

According to a survey by HUDCO in 2006, hotels have generated 200 jobs, monasteries have generated 50 jobs and the informal sector has generated 200 jobs for the local people. The assessment of indirect benefits is difficult but the study of trade and commerce, and informal sector done earlier shows that a large part of the informal sector is dependent on tourism and temple/ pilgrimage related activities. It has a significant effect on the trade and

commerce too. Tourism sector is highly labour intensive. A survey by the Government of India highlight that the rate of employment generation (direct and indirect) in tourism for every INR1,000,000 invested generates employment for fifty-two persons (based on 1992-93 price indexes). Bodhgayā has received at least INR100,000,000 of investment in tourism related projects during 2001-2006. As per this multiplier, at least 5,000 jobs should have been created in Bodhgayā due to tourism during those five years. This study emphasize that in order to boost the economic scenario of Bodhgayā, urgent creation of jobs in diverse sectors is required. It has also stress the overwhelming importance of Mahābodhi Temple, tourism and pilgrimage activities as economic lifelines of the town. It has been highlighted that dependence on agriculture has been gradually decreasing as various jobs are becoming available in secondary sectors. Informed planning for jobs in service sectors, pilgrimage etc. will be also very important, as they will dominate the economic scenario of Bodhgayā in the future.

8.0 Cultural Heritage Management

Based on data collected and its evaluation, this report will further assess the quality and usefulness of the current cultural heritage management practices in Bodhgayā:

8.1 Statutory and legal framework for heritage protection

There is no comprehensive legislation defining and protecting the varied and complex heritage of Bodhgayā. Bodhgayā is replete with heritage resources, but only the selected few have legal protection.

1. The Mahābodhi Temple is protected under the Bodhgayā Temple Act of 1949. The ownership of this World Heritage Site is with the State Government of Bihar.
2. The Sujata Kuti is protected by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) under the ASI Act and its ownership also vests with the ASI. Besides the above-mentioned two sites, there are other archaeological sites where the State Archaeology department is currently working.

There are several other significant sites in the immediate vicinity of the Temple complex [figure 5(c) & 11] such as actual Muchalinda Sarovar and Dungeshwari Hill/ Pragbodhi Hill, which require further research to identify heritage resources and to protect them urgently. Most of these sites are in the private domain. Hence, their detailed listing is urgently required to have a clear picture of their current condition.

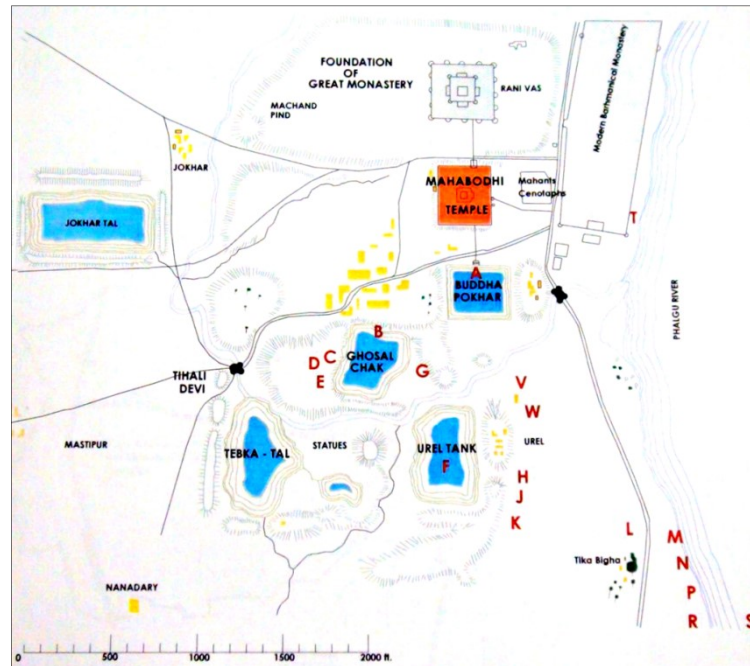


Figure 11: Historic tanks as identified as Cunningham during his visit to Bodhiyā in 1881. Most of them are currently in bad state or hidden underground. [Source: Cunningham, A. (1892) *Mahabodhi; the Great Buddhist Temple*]

LEGEND:

A: BUDDHA POKHAR.

B: GHOSAL CHAK, OR "BATHING TANK" WAS MADE BY INDRA WHEN BUDDHA AFTER ATTAINING ENLIGHTENMENT WISHED TO BATH.

C: STUPA COMMEMORATING THE PLACE WHERE BUDDHA DRIED HIS CLOTHES AFTER BATHING. STONE WAS BROUGHT FROM THE SNOWY MOUNTAINS BY INDRA.

D: STUPA COMMEMORATING THE PLACE WHERE BUDDHA RECEIVED CLOTHES FROM THE OLD WOMAN.

E: STUPA COMMEMORATING THE PLACE WHERE BUDDHA KEPT THE CLOTHES AFTER HE RECEIVED THEM FROM THE OLD WOMAN.

F: MUCHALINDA TANK.

G: SMALL VIHĀRA.

H: VIHĀRA.

J: LONG PROMENADE WHERE BUDDHA WALKED.

K: STUPA WHERE BUDDHA HAD FASTED AND ALSO WHERE AJNĀTA KAUNDINYA AND HIS FOUR COMPANIONS HAD LIVED.

L: STUPA TO MARK THE SPOT WHERE BUDDHA ENTERED THE NIRĀJANĀ RIVER TO BATH.

M: MASONRY REMAINS WHERE BUDDHA RECEIVED RICE-MILK ON THE BANK OF THE RIVER.

N: PLACE WHERE BUDDHA RECEIVED WHEAT, FLOUR, AND HONEY FROM THE TRAVELLING MERCHANTS.

P: PLACE WHERE THE FOUR KINGS OFFERED A GOLDEN BOWL TO BUDDHA.

R: STUPA COMMEMORATING THE PLACE WHERE BUDDHA PREACHED THE LAW FOR THE SAKE OF HIS MOTHER, WHO HAD COME DOWN FROM THE HEAVENS TO HEAR HIM.

S: DRY POOL AND STUPA WHERE BUDDHA HAD DISPLAYED VARIOUS SPIRITUAL CHANGES.

U: SPOT WHERE BUDDHA CONVERTED URUVILWA KĀSYAPA AND HIS TWO BROTHERS, WITH A THOUSAND OF THEIR FOLLOWERS.

(R, S, & U ACCORDING TO MR. BEGLAR SHOULD BE PLACED ABOUT 1 2/3 MILE TO THE SOUTH OF THE BODHI TREE)

V: STUPA TO MARK THE SPOT WHERE BUDDHA SUBDUED THE FIERY NĀGA, TO WHICH URUVILWA KĀSYAPA SACRIFICED.

W: SPOT WHERE FIVE HUNDRED PRATYEKA BUDDHAS ENTERED NIRVĀNA AT THE SAME TIME.

X: STUPA MARKING THE SPOT WHERE KĀSYAPA WENT TO SAVE BUDDHA DURING AN INUNDATION.

The recently prepared Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) for the Mahābodhi Temple has also specified zones for protection of heritage (creating imagined boundaries as perceived by the so called experts). In addition, it was prepared with the least local community engagement. The CMP is currently waiting for its official approval, whereas the locals are already against the major recommendations made in it. It will be interesting to see if the current CMP can be implemented or shelved like its predecessors citing reasons, which should be considered at a very early stage.

8.1.1 Key legislations for heritage protection

The key current Acts for heritage protection in Bodhgayā are as follows:

A. The Bodhgayā Temple Act, 1949

This Act was brought in to govern the affairs of the Mahābodhi Temple. **It has no jurisdiction outside the Temple complex.** It sets a committee for management of the Temple (also discussed earlier). The duties of this committee as defined by the Act include:

1. To arrange for the following:

- upkeep of the Temple;
- improvement of the Temple land;
- welfare and safety of the pilgrims; and
- performance of the worship at the Temple and its surrounding complex.

2. To prevent the desecration of the Temple or any part of it.

3. To make arrangements for receipt and disposal of offerings made at the Temple. To provide for the safe custody of statements of account and other documents related to the Temple.

4. To make arrangements for custody, deposit and investments of funds at its hand.

The Act of 1949 empowers the State Government of Bihar to constitute an Advisory Board consisting of such numbers of members as the Government may determine. The majority of

the members of the Board need to be Buddhists, who may not all be Indian citizens. The function of the Board is to work purely as an advisory body to the Bodhgayā Temple Management Committee.

B. Central government protection (The Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958)

Since Mahābodhi Temple has been declared as a World Heritage Site (WHS), the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) as a Government of India organization is answerable to UNESCO through periodic reporting. The ASI is also responsible for the protection of Sujata Kuti. The protection is under the Central protection (The Ancient Monuments & Archaeological sites and Remains Act, 1958).

C. State government protection (The Protection of Monuments and Archaeological Sites, Remains and Art Treasures Act, 1976)

The protection of some other resources is under the State protection act. The other acts applicable within the area of the WHS are the Bihar Public Land Encroachment Act and the Treasure Trove Act of 1878.

D. Site Management Plan of Mahābodhi Temple Complex World Heritage Site

The World Heritage Site (WHS) are not statutory designations and the Management Plans prepared as part of the WHS designation have no statutory status. Generally the Site Management Plan (SMP) is an advisory policy document to guide effective management of the Temple and give suggestive controls for the regulation of its setting. The current Comprehensive Management Plan of the Mahābodhi Temple complex should provide a suggestive policy framework for guiding and influencing present and planned management initiatives. The CMP should also be a continuous exercise of dialogue and discussions to sensitise and build consensus among the local stakeholders.

The Site Management Plan is mostly used as a draft plan for consultation with the State party, and other stakeholders. The preparation of the CMP should have been used as an opportunity to help in bringing out issues in open for further deliberation, consultation and to take informed management decisions.

The policy directions of the management plan and controls for the setting are to be given legal sanctity by making it part of the Development Plan of Bodhgayā.

A Comprehensive Management Plan for the Mahābodhi Temple complex has been recently prepared by the State Government of Bihar and currently awaiting final approval.

It is important to note that currently there is no mechanism to protect heritage resources in the wider settings.

8.1.2 Agencies involved for the protection of the Temple complex

I) Agency involved for management of properties in the World Heritage Site boundary Bodhgayā Temple Management Committee

The Bodhgayā Temple Management Committee (BTMC) is the executive body for the management of the site; it works under the supervision, direction and control of the State Government of Bihar. The committee has eight members, with equal representation of Buddhist and Hindus. The District Magistrate, Gaya is the Ex-officio Chairman of the Committee (he should necessarily be a Hindu). The issue of inclusion of Hindu members in equal proportions has been subject of considerable controversy, with the Buddhists asking for greater representation in the BTMC.

The Bodhgayā Temple Management Committee (BTMC) is involved in the observance of daily Temple rituals including organization of various festivals within the Temple precincts. The BTMC carries out the maintenance of the Temple including all the developmental works within the Temple precincts. It also keeps a systematic and updated inventory of all the properties of the Temple.

The Committee acts in liaison with other government institutions such as police, electricity, telecommunication, and Nagar Panchayat for effective management of the WHS.

The Secretary of the Bodhgayā Temple Management Committee (BTMC) looks after the day-to-day management of the Mahābodhi Temple while its Chairman implements the collective decisions. The Buddhist religious functions and daily rituals are looked after by the Bhikku-in-charge who is aided by few other monks. The BTMC appoints the monks on ad-hoc basis and there is no permanent staffing structure in place other than a permanent appointment of a Hindu priest.

The funds for management of the World Heritage Site (WHS) at the disposal of the Bodhgayā Temple Management Committee (BTMC) are primarily donations and contributions by devotees from all over India and from Buddhists all over the world. The BTMC also generates some fund from its properties and from the entrance fees to the certain areas of the WHS.

The Bodhgayā Temple Management Committee (BTMC) is responsible for collection of grants and to decide upon the priority for investment for the general upkeep of the Temple. It is also the in-charge of maintenance including development work inside the World Heritage Site (WHS). The Committee also takes decisions regarding priority of investment for the general upkeep of the WHS. These are important technical decisions that require awareness about the cultural heritage, UNESCO guidelines and a general sensibility towards management of a World Heritage Site (WHS). The BTMC is more of a religious body than a professional one, and many of the individuals involved lack the sensitivity and competence required for management of a WHS. The Government of India has recently made a move to bring the WHS under central protection realising the significance of the WHS and need for long-term preservation of the site. The Archaeological Survey of India in this regard has issued a letter of intent to the Bihar State Government.

II) Agencies involved for management of the local heritage of Bodhgayā

The main bodies and organizations with significant roles and responsibilities for management of the local heritage of Bodhgayā and its wider settings are the following:

- The Gaya Regional Development Authority (made defunct in 2007);
- The Bodhgayā Nagar Panchayat;
- The Gaya Municipal Corporation;
- Urban Development and Housing Department, Government of Bihar; and
- World Heritage Buffer Zone Management Authority (proposed in November 2015).

The development of the town should be governed by a systematic development plan. For the same, the Gaya Regional Development Authority (GRDA) was enlisted with the powers to prepare the master plan of Bodhgayā and it also forms a part of its regional development plan. However, the GRDA was made defunct in 2007. Since then the Urban Development and Housing Department of the Government of Bihar have produced the City Development Plan (2010-2030) Bodhgayā in 2010.

It is beyond the scope of this report to discuss all the above-mentioned organizations in detail. However, it is important to briefly highlight that the recently proposed committee for the World Heritage Buffer Zone Management Authority do not have the Head of the Bodhgayā Nagar Panchayat as its member, who is directly elected by the locals. It also has no proposal to include other local members, but only people at authoritative positions (figure 12).



Figure 12: The news about the proposed formation of Bodhgayā World Heritage Buffer Zone Management Authority. [Source: Dainik Bhaskar (Gaya Edition), 1 November 2015]

In addition to these above-mentioned agencies, there are also various other sectoral agencies such as the Archaeological Survey of India, the Public Works Department and other State and Central Government bodies who play a key role in the development of Bodhgayā. The profile of some of these players along with their profiles and relevant Acts will be discussed in the following sections:

III) Archaeological Survey of India

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is responsible for the conservation and protection of monuments under central protection. It is a prime institution in the country responsible for the protection of the country's cultural wealth.

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) as a Government of India organization also coordinates with UNESCO through periodic reporting in respect of World Heritage Sites. It has considerable experience of conservation of all types of monuments within the country. The headquarters of the ASI is in New Delhi and one of their circle offices is based in Patna headed by a Superintending Archaeologist.

At present, Sujata Kuti in Bakraur village is the only ASI protected monument within the town of Bodhgayā.

IV) Role of Non-Government Organizations in the development of Bodhgayā

Apart from the government agencies that are profiled above, there are several other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that play an important role in the development of vicinities and the wider settings of the World Heritage Site. These include thirty-eight local Buddhist monasteries, trusts and other religious organizations. They are very important players in the economy of the town and are important opinion makers. Their involvement in the affairs of Bodhgayā should be considered as significant.

At present, there are multiple agencies responsible for heritage protection in Bodhgayā and at times, there are interagency conflicts. Coordination is also sometimes lacking. The site management plan of the town has proposed a management mechanism that has been given in the proposals sections of this report.

9.0 Recommended conservation principles for the sustainable management of the historic environment of Bodhgayā

Based on the study so far, I would like to make some recommendations with regards to the management of Bodhgayā's historic environment. The primary aim of these recommendations is to support the quality of decision-making, with the ultimate objective of creating a management regime for all aspects of historic environment that is people-centric and sustainable in its application (figure 13). This would further enhance the dynamic character of Bodhgayā and help in its process of development. These principles are urgently needed because existing policies and guidance involved with the conservation of historic environment is now becoming outdated and often misunderstood. The current policies place greater emphasis on the value and potential to merely those parts of the historic environment where specific significance is recognized by official designation and protection at national and local levels, rather than placing larger significance on the value of the historic environment as a whole.

The future management of Bodhgayā's historic environment should depend on three things:

1. Sound principles;
2. Clear policies, based on these principles; and
3. The quality of the decisions that stem from these policies.

To achieve the above-mentioned aspiration it is important to critically analyse how various communities respond to their built heritage environment and immediate sacredscape. Based on the analysis a need is to develop a framework of people-centre conservation principles by using, applying, and synthesizing knowledge. Subsequently to reform the authoritative management policies and practices currently used for the management of Bodhgayā's historic environment. By people-centre, it means to inform and involve all the stakeholders who are either directly or indirectly attach with the sustainable management of Bodhgayā's historic environment. In addition, the people-centre policies should also tackle Bodhgayā's both tangible and intangible heritage in a holistic manner rather than dividing the entire town into various so called 'heritage' boundaries.

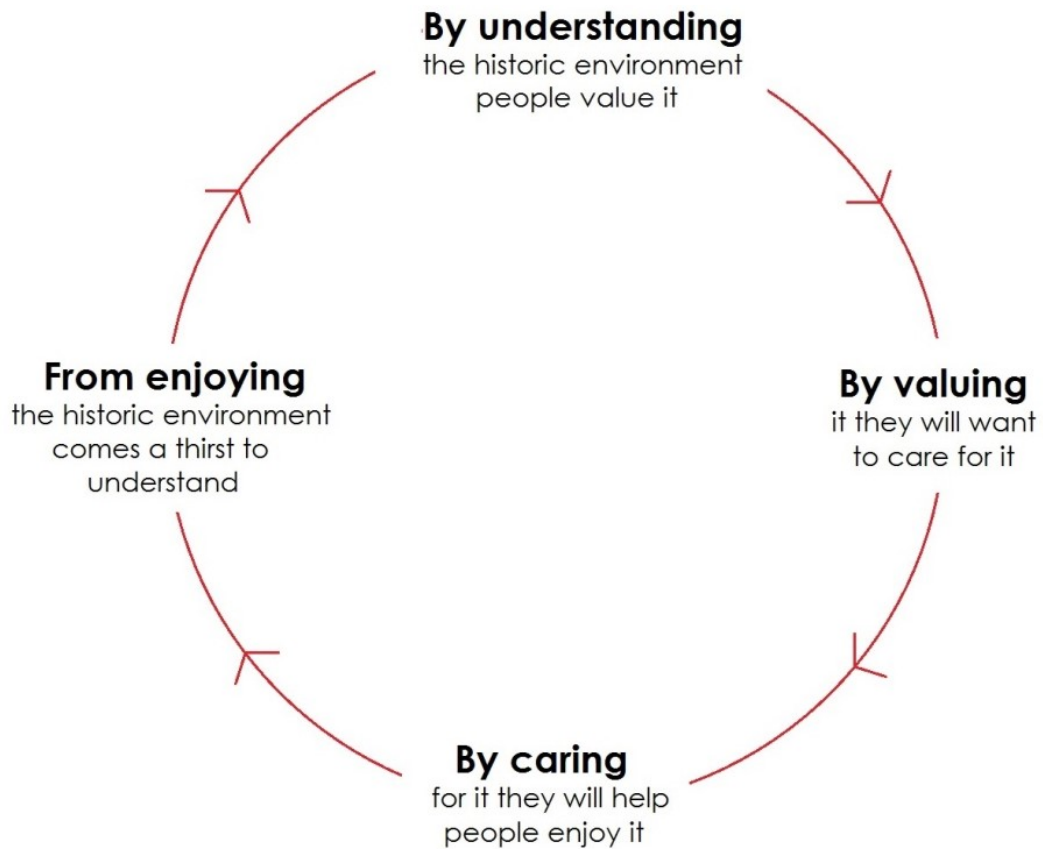


Figure 13: The 'Heritage Cycle.' [Source: English Heritage, 2007]

10.0 Historic Urban Landscape: a tool for managing change

The UNESCO's Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) could be a way forward for Bodhgayā to manage change and develop in a sustainable manner. Let me first briefly explain the HUL concept here. The concept of HUL considers "the rapid and frequently uncontrolled development" caused by proceeding urbanization on "an unprecedented scale in the history of humankind" which may affect urban heritage (UNESCO, 2011). The historic urban landscape is the urban area understood as the result of historic layering of cultural and natural values and attributes, extending beyond the notion of "historic centre" or "ensemble" to include the broader urban context and its geographical setting (UNESCO, 2011). It has been argued that the HUL integrates the goals of urban heritage conservation with the goals of social and economic development and is rooted in a balanced and sustainable relationship between the built and natural environment. The birth of the HUL was

due to the rapid and unprecedented transformation that have happened in the last few decades, which have led to the expansion of the meaning of cultural heritage and a periodic redefinition of what constitutes urban heritage. However, what remain quite significant for this study is the understanding of the heritage users and stakeholders' needs and aspirations and also the regulating authorities' competence in applying various heritage conservation concepts and approaches for the betterment of the local communities first.

It is rather interesting to highlight here the conceptual evolution of the UNESCO's key Charters and Recommendations relating to heritage conservation in which definitions of what constitute as cultural heritage and the general principles of its conservation developed as the understanding and needs of the city and its people who are in a continuous flux. Between the 1968 Recommendation Concerning the Preservation of Cultural Property Endangered by Public or Private Works until the 2005 Vienna Memorandum on World Heritage and Contemporary Architecture – Managing the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL), the notion of urban heritage developed from historic **quarters** in 1968 to historic and architectural **areas** in 1976 (Nairobi Recommendations). Later, the historic **urban areas** (1987 Washington Charter) were developed into historic **urban landscape** (2005 Vienna Memorandum). Even the conservation principles in the beginning were concentrated on **salvage or rescue** (1968), which later focused on historic areas and its **surroundings** (1976 Nairobi). It was further developed to encompass **urban patterns** and relationship between buildings and open spaces (1987 Washington), and most recently, **continuous change** is being acknowledged as part of city's tradition (2005 Vienna). These conceptual shifts clearly show the continuous socio-cultural transformations that are constantly challenging the urban heritage management and conservation throughout the world. However, in the current scenario of several already existing complex urban heritage protection definitions and authoritative heritage discourses/ legislations forced upon the communities, the utility of the recently defined notion of the HUL would be worth exploring in Bodhgayā's context.

As discussed earlier in this research that the key aspect that will make Heritage Urban Landscape (HUL) application of a landscape approach more efficient and meaningful in Bodhgayā's scenario is to formulate integrated interdisciplinary policies for a strategic holistic development of the town rather than a piecemeal approach dealing with buildings and people separately. This would be as a part of a 'responsive' approach to heritage while accommodating all its varied facets and to facilitate stakeholder participation and community empowerment.

Heritage conservation is a complex task that cannot be only achieved by formulating top-down policies and then by creating heritage boundaries to implement the same policies as in the case of Bodhgayā. It should also be the duty of the concerned authorities and also the local communities to preserve their 'own' heritage for the future generations. As discussed earlier the lack of awareness among the local communities about their rights and responsibilities has been a significant issue in Bodhgayā. The raise awareness and understanding among the locals about their rights, the author helped to form a local group in mid-April 2015 and named it as the "Citizens Awareness Group & Struggle Brigade (Bodhgaya)" [नागरिक जागरूकता संघ एवम् संघर्ष वाहिनी (बोधगया)] (figure 14). It is a small group of like-minded people from various backgrounds who would like to work for the development and empowerment of the locals of Bodhgayā. Since its formation the group has been active in raising their voice either by written petitions or social media regarding issues dealing with the built environment of Bodhgayā.

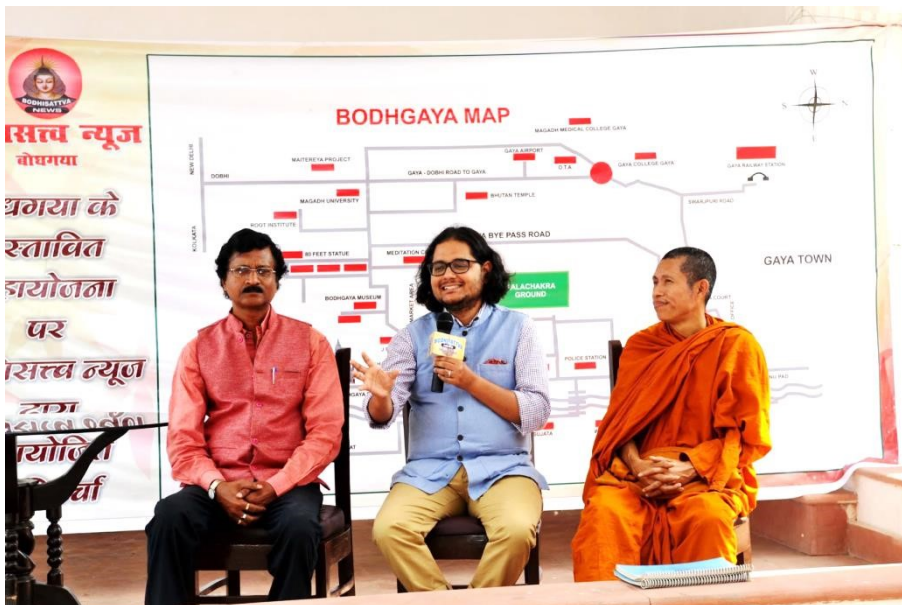


Figure 14: Various meetings at Bodhgayā by the Author together with various other locals to sensitize people about their heritage rights. (Source: By Author, 2015)



In the light of the present situation of Bodhgayā in particular and the immediate surroundings of the Mahābodhi Temple complex in general, the following recommendations (table 10) are proposed on the use of the HUL tools to manage change effectively and sustainably:

Civic engagement tools	Community Mapping.
	Skills development workshops.
	Communities should have a greater say through public forums, online media, etc.
Knowledge and planning tools	Documentation and inventory of cultural heritage – basis for planning strategies.
	Mandatory Heritage Impact Assessment for new planning applications.
	Planning holistically for the entire city rather than just the heritage zones.
	Raising peoples' awareness about their cultural rights through various media and forums.
Regulatory systems	Realistic and balanced keeping in mind the continuous development of the city and its various historic layers.
	All concerned parties to be consulted including the locals and developers before formulating regulations. Accessible and transparent planning process.
	Importance should be given to preserving significant views.
	Legislation specifically addressing traditional ways of urban heritage conservation by the communities.
Financial tools	Grants for conservation/ communities projects.
	Incentives in the form of tax rebates for conservation/ communities projects.
	Transfer of Developmental Rights.
	Public-Private Partnership projects.

Table 10: Proposed recommendations to effectively managing the change for the communities and also conserving their 'own' heritage. (Source: By Author, 2014)

11.0 The Participation – Empowerment Index

It has been highlight that a conscious attempt to address the core issues of various communities and heritage conservation should be the main aim of any project dealing with change in Bodhgayā. This should be done by discussing the needs and aspirations of communities from the start of the project. After thorough understanding of the same, ideas and proposals should be discussed and agreed upon collectively between authorities and communities. This people-centre participation development process would make the community feel invested in the final outcome, and thus they would be more likely to feel a sense of belonging with the place.

A recommended way to actually measure the community participation is to use the Participation–Empowerment Index that combines quantitative measures of three factors of community participation (table 11):

1. Extent (who participates);
2. Function (in what do they participate); and
3. Intensity (how do they participate).

Each of these factors is measured by selecting the appropriate item on a cumulative scale. No weighting has been given to the three scales shown below, and therefore the numerical values corresponding to the item selected in each scale is simply multiplied by the number of the items in the other scales to obtain the overall index. For example, providing or gathering information from community leaders on the use of a service would have a rank of 1 (1 x 1 x 1). On the other hand, involving women in making significant decisions in the planning of the project would be given a rank of 48 (4 x 4 x 3).

PARTICIPATION – EMPOWERMENT INDEX		
Extent (Who)	Function (In What)	Intensity (How)
5. Children/ Youth	5. Management	5. Total Control
4. Women	4. Planning	4. Initiate Action
3. All households	3. Implementation	3. Decision Making
2. Interest Groups	2. Maintenance	2. Consultation
1. Leaders only	1. Distribution/ Use	1. Informing

Table 11: The Participation–Empowerment Index as a tool to measure community participation. [Source: Shubert, Clarence (ed.) *Building Partnerships for Urban Poverty Alleviation: Community-Based Programmes in Asia*. United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat): Nairobi, Kenya (1996)]

12.0 Conclusion: Managing change through creative enhancement Index

The UNESCO's decision to put the Mahābodhi Temple complex on its World Heritage List thirteen years ago was a moment of victory for heritage brokers who had been pushing to attain that status for years. Over the time, this so called prestigious designation did far more damage to heritage of the locals and divided them into various perceived boundaries. The authorities would claim that heritage conservation has been under control and as per the UNESCO's guidelines, but the real picture on ground is significantly different as illustrated in the study above.

Since the Mahābodhi Temple complex got into the listing in 2002, the historic environment is increasingly seen as a commodity that could be used to make profit for the benefit of only few people who could afford to pay a huge price to enjoy the luxuries of religious heritage. The concept of heritage seems to be limited mainly to the World Heritage Site boundary that emphasize only on 'monument' rather than the varied religious activities that happen around the immediate surroundings of the monument and contribution of the local people to historic environment. Furthermore, the present concept of conservation is still very much limited to mere 'preservation' rather than to embrace 'enhancement.' Looking at the current state of heritage in and around the Mahābodhi Temple complex, conservation must be seen as the management of change and public engagement should be of fundamental importance in the process of understanding the values and places for the present and future generations.

The question to ask is where do we go from here?

The answer is certainly complex, but what is important to start a transparent dialogue. To begin by critically exploring the role of different heritage brokers, development and funding agencies, advocacy organizations, public participation in heritage development, and map the diverse 'actors' in such operational networks. This should be done mainly to explore the complex relationships of heritage to the field of development in Bodhgayā. Open and reasoned argument is fundamental for informed decision regarding conservation and development, hence, public engagement must be a part of the entire conservation process. The historic environment should not be treated as an economic commodity only, but as an contributor towards growth of sustainable communities by creating a flourishing local economy to provide jobs for the locals; a safe and healthy local environment where people have a choice of well-designated public and green space; buildings that can meet different user needs over time; a diverse, vibrant and creative local culture, encouraging pride in the community and cohesion within it; and 'sense of place.'

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