

# Preserving the past, Enriching the present: A Comprehensive study on the city image & Preservation of Historic core of Indian Cities: A case of Amber the Princely terrain of Rajasthan

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**Abstract**— India's historic core is rapidly transforming due to modernization, causing a risk of loss of identity and character. High vehicle traffic, more foot traffic, and commercial activity all of which are not intended to manage or strain the area's infrastructure are what cause this shift. This research paper investigates the intricate interplay between preserving the historic core of Indian cities and enhancing their future image. As India undergoes rapid urbanization and modernization, the preservation of historical elements within urban landscapes becomes increasingly crucial. Focusing on cities with rich cultural and architectural heritage such as Amber, Jaipur this study examines the challenges and opportunities associated with striking a harmonious balance between conserving the past and envisioning a dynamic future. The historic core of Amber city in Rajasthan that faces challenges such as neglected heritage structures and increased tourist pressure, threatening its unique identity. This research paper explores a strategic framework for preserving and enriching Amber Town's tourist circuit, emphasizing the importance of incorporating neglected heritage and heritage tourism for cultural and economic development. The aim is to explore the dynamic relationship between a city's image and the preservation of its historic core. Focusing on the interplay of the past and future, we investigate how the preservation of historic cores contributes to shaping the overall image of a city and influencing its future trajectory. By examining the past & preserving the future, the study offers insights for Indian urban planners, policymakers, and communities on preserving historic cores for sustainable development, preserving cultural identity, and fostering resilience.

**Index Terms**—City image, conservation, deterioration, heritage assets, regeneration, transformation

## I. INTRODUCTION

India has experienced rapid urbanization since its independence, leading to unplanned and chaotic growth in cities. These assets include tangible structures (such as historic buildings and monuments) and intangible elements (like traditional crafts and practices). However, the expansion of cities has often neglected the importance of preserving these heritage areas.

Historic Indian cities have unique built and cultural heritage which has always attracted millions of tourists and has also been one of the prime sources of economic activities. (Sumana Jayaprakash, 2023) Due to rapid urbanization and changing lifestyles of the people in the recent years, the historic core of Indian cities is transforming rapidly. Historic cities face the risk of losing their cultural identity, inherent character, and diversity due to the deteriorating state of not just their heritage structures but also their core areas' infrastructure and quality of living conditions.

High traffic volume, a rise in business activity, a strengthening of the economy, more people walking around the core, more people visiting the monuments, etc. are all factors that cause these changes. The infrastructure and local identity of these city cores are being pressured by these changes, which were not intended to endure such pressure. The protection status of monuments in our country is only protecting limited monuments although cities have significant urban heritage which are neither listed nor protected & is getting lost with increasing demolitions, as the city is getting expanded. (Utpal sharma, 2019)

A. *Urban Issue*

Issues are:

- Historic structure in the site in deteriorating condition due to negligence & encroachments
- No well-defined pathways or linkages of the heritage structure with each other that connects the whole tourist circuit.
- Loss of cultural identity due to urbanization



Figure 1 Problems with historic cities due to urbanization (Source: Author)

B. *Solution to the urban issue*

- Urban Regeneration: It can be defined as the solution to the urban decay by improvement of the area.
- It means to revitalize or revive those areas which are showing signs of decay by reproducing the part of the area in use.

Urban regeneration is commonly understood as the process of revitalizing or developing spaces and places. However, there is a need to examine tourism and urban regeneration with a particular focus on cultural heritage. Investments in tourism, particularly in post-industrial cities and wider regions, are part of emerging regeneration strategies linked to transitioning economic bases.

Principles of Urban Regeneration

- Change & alteration of social & built structures
- Environmental quality with sustainable development
- Focus on cultural assets

- Protection of historic environment
- Maintain open spaces
- Comprehensive strategy & actions

PRINCIPLES OF URBAN REGENERATION



Figure 2 Types of Urban Regeneration (Source: Author)

- Physical urban regeneration: Leads to improvement of urban fabric
- Social urban regeneration: leads to improvement of community & community

Economic urban regeneration: seeks to use tourism to boost the number of firms and employment opportunities in a region

- Environmental urban regeneration: aims to minimize the ecological imbalances in an urban environment.
- Cultural urban regeneration: Promotes enhancement of culture & traditions.

II. ROLE OF HISTORIC CORE IN CITY IMAGE

The historic core of a city plays a crucial role in shaping its overall image and identity. There are several key aspects of how the historic core contributes to the city's image- Cultural identity & heritage, landmarks, tourism

The historic core of a city serves as a cornerstone of its image, embodying its cultural identity, heritage, and

authenticity. By preserving and promoting the historic core, cities can enhance their overall image, attract visitors and investment, and foster a sense of pride and belonging among residents.

### III. CHALLENGES IN PRESERVING HISTORIC CORE

Preserving the historic core of a city presents several challenges, often stemming from the tension between the need for development and the imperative to protect cultural heritage. Here are some of the key challenges involved in preserving the historic core:

**Urbanization & development pressure:** Rapid urbanization and population growth exert pressure on the historic core as demand for land and infrastructure increases. Development projects may threaten historic buildings, public spaces, and streetscapes, leading to the loss of cultural heritage.

**Neglect & deterioration:** Historic buildings and infrastructure may suffer from neglect, lack of maintenance, and natural decay over time. Without adequate resources for preservation and restoration, historic structures may deteriorate beyond repair, risking the loss of valuable cultural assets.

**Lack of legal protection or guidelines:** Weak or inadequate heritage conservation laws, zoning regulations, and building codes may fail to safeguard the historic core from inappropriate development and demolition. Inconsistent enforcement of preservation guidelines further undermines efforts to protect cultural heritage.

**Rejuvenation of Shahjahanabad:** The goal of the case study is to change Shahjahanabad into a welcoming, bustling environment that encourages "Public Interactions." The initiative aims to enhance tourists' experience in Shahjahanabad while revitalizing the city for its citizens by harnessing its potential for heritage tourism. (Redevelopment, n.d.)

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Infuse life into the walled city
2. To use the heritage, crafts and culinary experiences of Shahjahanabad to make it a global tourist destination
3. Improve the quality of public spaces

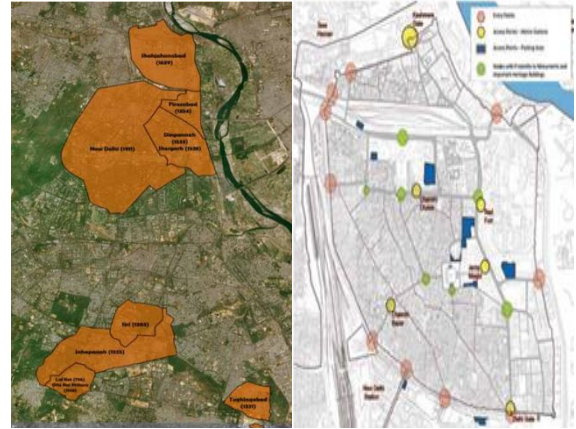


Figure 1 Cities of Delhi (Source: DUAC)

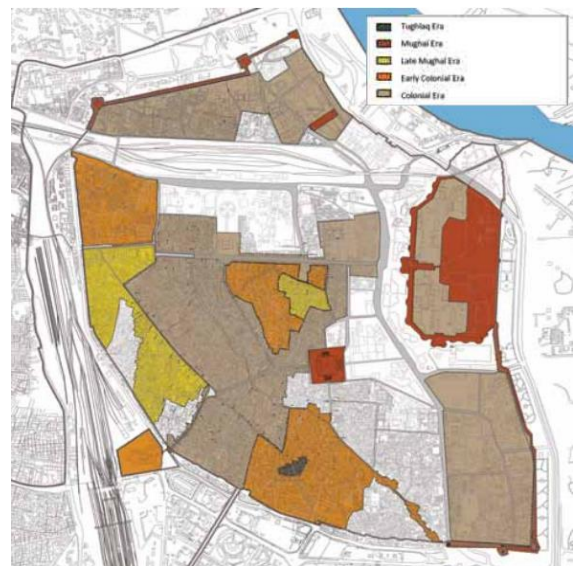


Figure 2 Heritage precinct around different Architectural styles (Source: DUAC)

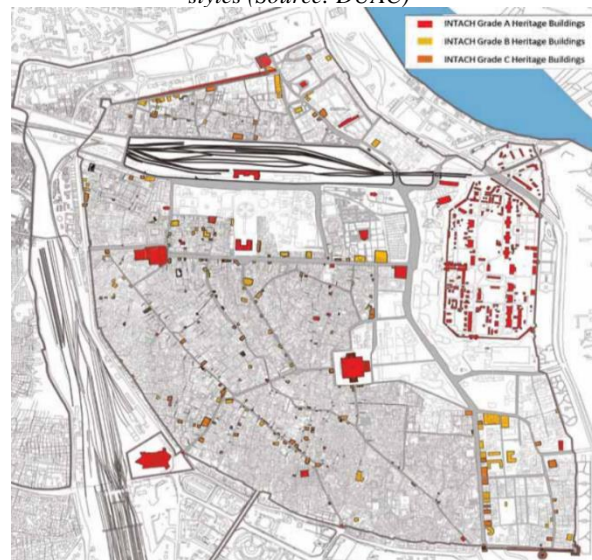


Figure 3 Different Heritage buildings & monuments (Source: DUAC)

Development strategies

Our goal would be to create an urban form that would support the current intangible heritage while also maximizing its potential. The following components of heritage need to be examined: The following are examples of oral traditions and expressions: language; performing arts; social customs, rituals, and celebratory occasions • Customized handiwork • Trade and commerce Thus, heritage, tourism, and development are the three elements that must be connected to construct development strategies.

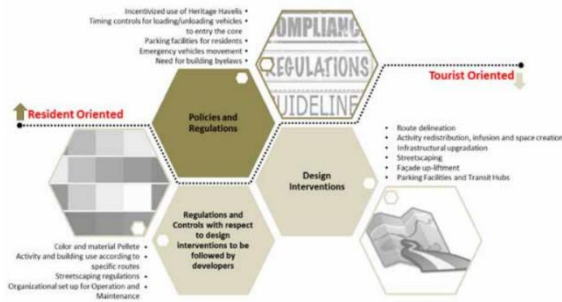


Figure 4 Development strategies (Source: DUAC)

IV. STRATEGIES FOR PRESERVATION & ENRICHMENT

Strategies for effective preservation of historic cores in Indian cities require a multi-faceted approach that addresses the unique challenges faced by each urban area.

Adaptive use of historical structures- Encourage the adaptive reuse of historic buildings for contemporary purposes such as cultural centers, boutique hotels, art galleries, or offices.

Heritage conservation guidelines- By Establishing heritage conservation zones with clear guidelines and regulations to protect historic buildings and streetscapes from inappropriate development.

Tourism development & management: Develop sustainable tourism strategies that leverage the cultural heritage of historic cores to attract visitors while minimizing negative impacts on local communities and heritage sites.

Community engagement: To ensure their ownership and participation, include local communities in the decision-making process for historical conservation programs.

Education & awareness campaign: To increase public knowledge of the worth of cultural heritage and the

necessity of its preservation, organize educational workshops, heritage walks, and outreach initiatives.

Case: Amber the princely terrain of Rajasthan

Amber exemplifies the intricate balance between preserving architectural heritage and enriching the contemporary urban environment. By analyzing the preservation efforts, challenges faced, and strategies employed in Amber, this study sheds light on broader implications for urban planning and heritage conservation in Indian cities

Amber's historic core, renowned for its cultural heritage and architectural marvels, is facing decay & neglect due to disproportionate concentration of visitors around the fort, threatening not only the integrity of these sites but also the overall tourist experience & the well-being of the surrounding community.

Urban regeneration projects aim to create a better quality of life for residents. This includes improvements to housing, infrastructure, public spaces, and economic opportunities. Addressing economic inequalities is a key aspect. These projects aim to revitalize areas struggling with joblessness and poverty. Preventing housing shortages is another crucial goal. Redevelopment can create new housing units or improve existing ones to meet growing demand.

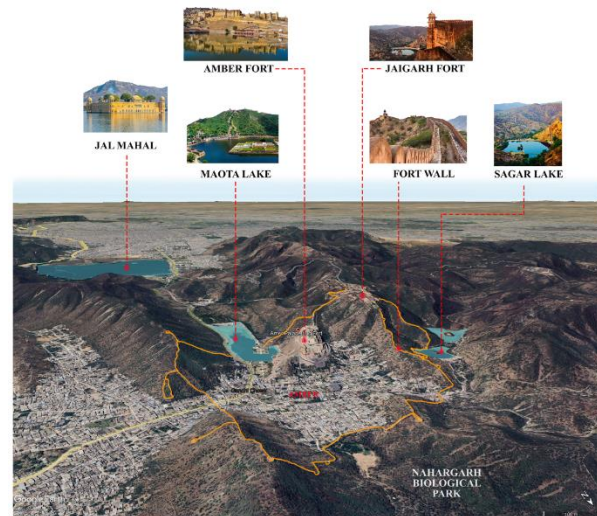


Figure 5 Natural, Built & Cultural heritage (Source: Author)



Planning & Architecture, Bhopal (2024). She is working on her thesis titled as: Preserving the past, Enriching the present: Tourism Led urban Regeneration of Amber the Princely terrain of Rajasthan.

She has also worked for various Redevelopment Heritage projects in walled city of Jaipur with EGIS when deputed in Jaipur Smart City Limited (1 year). She did her internship from Sincere Architects in Jaipur, Urban design Intern where she worked on the Chambal Riverfront development, Kota, Her bachelor's internship was in Design Forum International (DFI) Delhi.

She has published a research paper- 'Urban design & Health of the city' in an International Research Journal TIJER.