

CHAPTER – I

Introduction

Our heritage is an indispensable part of our identity. World over, heritage conservation is viewed as a subject of utmost importance for national identity and also for preserving the knowledge and arts of the past. According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), culture and development cannot be separated, either in terms of economic growth or as a means of access to a satisfactory intellectual, moral and spiritual existence. Development involves the capabilities that allow groups, communities and nations to plan their future in an integral and integrated way. Thus, heritage conservation can be seen as a cross-cutting factor in economic, social and environmental development.

The Ministry of Culture (Ministry) is responsible for preservation, conservation, promotion and dissemination of all forms of art and culture in the country. The Ministry, through the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is engaged in protection of all the centrally protected monuments of national importance and excavations of historical sites. Through various museums it is ensuring collection, preservation and display of antiquities.

The ASI, an attached office of the Ministry, was established in 1861 with the primary objective of conservation, preservation and maintenance of the centrally protected monuments. The ASI's jurisdiction includes 3678 centrally protected monuments and archeological sites as varied as megalithic sites, burials, rock cut caves, stupas, temples, mosques, churches, forts, water systems, pillars, inscriptions, relics, monolithic statues, sculptures. Conservation of a monument or a site is a continuous process and yearly programs for this are drawn by the Circles and Branches of the ASI.

The ASI has undertaken works for structural conservation, chemical preservation and horticultural operations based on the priorities, commitments and available manpower and financial resources. The ASI has 19 World Heritage Sites under its protection.

In 2011, the ASI celebrated 150 years of its existence. The work on heritage identification and preservation in India started in mid nineteenth century. However, there has been no comprehensive independent scrutiny of Government's efforts and performance of the organisations engaged in the work of heritage conservation.

Approximately 33 *per cent*¹ of the total budget of the Ministry was utilised for the functioning of the ASI. Another six *per cent* was given to the seven major museums of the country. Together, these institutions are repository of our country’s invaluable heritage and treasures.

1.1 Organisations Covered in this Audit

The Ministry of Culture functions with a set up of various attached offices, sub-ordinates offices and autonomous bodies under its administrative and financial control. The Chart 1.1 shows the organisational structure of the Ministry depicting the organisations/ bodies covered under audit.



Chart 1.1: Entities Covered in this Performance Audit

The Archaeological Survey of India is the apex organisation engaged in the work of preservation of monuments and protected sites. For the maintenance of ancient monuments and archaeological sites and remains of national importance, the entire country is divided into 24 Circles and one mini Circle (Leh). The Circles represent the structural conservation Divisions. In addition, there are 10² Directorates for specialised activities.

¹ As per Budget Estimates for the year 2011-12

² Directorate of Horticulture, Science, Epigraphy, Excavation, Museum, Publication, Monument, World Heritage Sites, Conservation and Antiquity

The ASI is headed by a Director General who is supported by Additional and Joint Directors General. Each Branch is headed by Directors. The Circles responsible for the maintenance of the monuments and structural conservation are headed by Superintending Archaeologists supported by Engineers and Conservators. The Circles are further divided into the Sub Circles headed by Conservation Assistants who are directly responsible for the activities carried out at the monuments.

Besides the Circles, there are six Excavation Branches, two Temple survey projects, a Building survey project and a Pre history Branch. Directorate of Epigraphy has branch offices at Nagpur, Lucknow and Mysore. Directorate of Horticulture has four Divisional offices at Agra, Delhi, Mysore and Bhubaneswar. Directorate of Science has three divisional offices and 11 zonal offices. From April 2010, the ASI also established regional offices of Museum branch at Delhi, Sarnath, Goa and Chennai. We noted that in October 2012 a decision was taken to merge these with the Circles.

The Ministry also functioned through other organisations under its control, constituting various central Museums, National Culture Fund (NCF) and National Monument Authority (NMA). The details of these organisations are given in Annex-1.1.

1.2 Legal Framework

1.2.1 Constitutional Mandate

As per Article 51 A (f) of the Constitution of India, **‘It shall be the duty of every citizen of India to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture.’**

In Independent India, the Constitution divided the jurisdiction over these monuments and archaeological sites as follows:

- **Union :** ancient and historical monuments and archaeological sites and remains, declared by Parliament by law to be of national importance;
- **State:** ancient and historical monuments other than those declared by Parliament to be of national importance.
- **Besides these, both the Union and the States would have concurrent jurisdiction over archaeological sites and remains other than those declared by Parliament by law to be of national importance.**

The important enactments promulgated to protect and preserve archaeological sites are as follows:

- **The Indian Treasure Trove Act, 1878**-First legislation post-establishment of the ASI enacted to protect and preserve treasure found accidentally but having archaeological and historical value.

- **The Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904** -Enacted to provide effective preservation and authority to the ASI over the monument particularly those, which were under the custody of individual or private ownership.
- **The Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Declaration of National Importance) Act, 1951.**
- **The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act, 1958**-Enacted on 28 August 1958, the Act provides for the preservation of ancient and historical monuments and archaeological sites and remains of national importance, for the regulation of archaeological excavations and for the protection of sculptures, carvings and other like objects. The Act was followed by AMASR Rules 1959.
- **The Antiquities and Art Treasures (AAT) Act 1972** -Enacted in September 1972 for effective control over the moveable cultural property, consisting of antiquities and art treasures. **The AAT Act was followed by AAT Rules 1973** which were enforceable with effect from 5 April 1976.
- **The AMASR (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2010** -The Act prescribes the limits of regulated and prohibited area around a monument by amending section 20 of AMASR Act 1958. It also provided for creation of National Monument Authority.

The important provisions of the AMASR Act and the AAT Act are given in **Annex-1.2**.

1.3 Audit Approach

1.3.1 Audit Objectives

The Performance Audit was conducted with the objectives to ascertain:

- Adequacy of efforts to identify, document, protect, preserve and showcase monuments of national importance.
- Proper management of excavation projects with due documentation, preservation and protection of antiquities and excavated sites.
- Existence of proper institutional and monitoring mechanism to ensure heritage conservation and for exploring new avenues in this field.
- Effective and efficient functioning of the major Museums of the country and the Site Museums of the ASI with due acquisition, preservation, conservation and security of art objects being collected by them.

- Performance of the Museum movement with respect to its stated objectives of displaying the collection of antiquities and educating the people through it.
- Proper financial management including adequacy of funds for conservation projects, utilisation of funds, revenue generation, remittance of revenue in Government account and accounting thereof.

1.3.2 Sources of Audit Criteria

The performance of the ASI was evaluated with reference to the criteria derived from the following sources of documents:

- Acts, Rules and Regulations for Monuments and Antiquities;
- Various guidelines in respect of maintenance and upkeep of Antiquities;
- Manuals related to the conservation of Monuments and Antiquities like Archaeological Works Manual and John Marshalls Conservation Manual;
- Archaeological Works Code and Central Public Works Department (CPWD) Manual;
- International Charters, e.g., International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and International Centre for the study of Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM); and
- Rules and regulations of the Central Government, as applicable.

1.3.3 Scope of Audit

The Performance Audit was restricted to the centrally protected monuments of national importance protected and preserved by the ASI³. For antiquities, we covered seven Museums⁴ under the control of the Ministry and 44 Site Museums under the control of the ASI. Functioning of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai a private organisation⁵ was also looked into to draw comparisons with other museums managed by the Ministry. The period covered under audit was from 2007-08 to 2011-12. The records of earlier period and till the date of audit were also scrutinised wherever required to draw conclusions.

The performance audit also covered audit of National Culture Fund and National Monument Authority.

³ This audit did not cover the state protected monuments and the unprotected monuments.

⁴ National Museum, Delhi, Indian Museum, Kolkata, Victoria Memorial Hall, Kolkata, Allahabad Museum, Allahabad, Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad, Asiatic Society, Kolkata and Asiatic Society Mumbai

⁵ The Museum received grants from the Ministry for its modernisation project

1.3.4 Audit Methodology

The entry conference with the Secretary to the Government of India (Ministry of Culture) was held on 16 May 2012 wherein the audit objectives, scope and methodology were explained. Separate entry conferences were held with the DG ASI and Heads of all the seven Museums.

The audit teams scrutinised the records of different sections/branches of the ASI as well as of the seven Museums. The performance audit also encompassed joint physical inspection of the monuments and antiquities carried out by the audit teams along with the officials of the concerned departments.

After completion of audit an Exit conference was held on 3 June 2013 with the Ministry of Culture, ASI and heads of other museums to discuss the audit findings. Responses received from the audited entities have been considered while preparing this Report and these have been included to the extent feasible.

1.3.5 Audit Sampling

A sample of monuments and sites for joint physical inspection with the ASI officials was selected in view of their historical importance and geographic spread. Out of the 3678 monuments notified by the ASI, joint physical inspections of 1655 monuments (45 per cent) were carried out. The circle wise details are given in **Annex-1.3**.

1.3.6 Audit Constraints

Despite our repeated requests, the following information and records were not provided to us:

Name of the organisation	Details of records/information not provided
Archaeological Survey of India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records related to details of the monuments along with notification numbers etc. for the Bengaluru, Bhopal, Chennai, Dharwad, Hyderabad, Lucknow, Patna and Srinagar Circles. • Files and records related to preparation of World Heritage Site: nomination dossier⁶ for Rani-ki-vav, Gujarat and Qutb Shahi, Hyderabad.

⁶ A document containing information required by UNESCO for inscribing any monument/site as a WHS

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Files and records related to preparation of Integrated Management Plan for Champaner Pavagarh, Gujarat. Records related to selection of Consultants in 2002 and 2006 for World Heritage Site nomination for Majuli, Assam. Report submitted by Shri Prakash Chand, Consultant for restructuring and reorganisation of the ASI in 2012 and action taken thereon. Recommendations of Wheeler committee of 1965 and action taken thereon by the ASI. Report submitted by the committee constituted in 2012 to review the security arrangement and assess the performance of private security guards at ASI. Information with regard to Kos Minars of Agra Circle. Details of full time security guards deployed at monuments.
National Monument Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Files and records related to the appointment and selection of consultants for technical and administrative works. Files and records in respect of the cases where NMA recommended for rejection of NOCs. Files and records in respect of the cases where the applications were returned seeking more information.
National Museum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on the 'AA' category objects

In the absence of these records, we were unable to provide assurance that due processes were followed and the applicable rules and regulations adhered to by the concerned departments in these cases. Further, this constituted a limitation on the scope of audit.

1.4 Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the co-operation and assistance of the Ministry of Culture, Archaeological Survey of India and their field staff, National Monument Authority, National Culture Fund, National Museum, Indian Museum, Salarjung Museum, Allahabad Museum, Victoria Memorial Hall, Asiatic Society Kolkata, Asiatic Society Mumbai and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sanghralaya (CSMVS) for the completion of this audit. The inputs provided by field level staff during joint physical inspection were specially found very useful in gaining an understanding of the conservation process.

