

CONSERVATION OF HERITAGE AREAS

Sujata Bajracharya^{*1}

ABSTRACT

Conservation and heritage areas both are very sensible and important for any nation. For our country, Nepal, it is more important as it has lots of national and international heritage areas and have to conserve as much as possible in a suitable and best way. As one should know the typical type of process which can be followed as required by any heritage area. To conserve the heritage area, one may follow one or more than one process for same project. According to international conservation pattern or rules, here comes few types of conservation ways which may be fitted for our context too.

INTRODUCTION

The term conservation itself is very sensitive and thus conservation of heritage areas is a very critical subject. That's why before doing conservation of heritage areas, one should know the perfect process and procedure of Conservation according to national and international rules. Conservation may be of tradition, culture, belief, art and architecture of the typical site or country. But the meaning, pattern and status of conservation can be changed and modified over the period of time.

Conservation means all the process of looking after a place so as to retain its meaning to people. Its maintenance and its future are based on respect for the existing material of the place and for its meaning to communities. Heritage areas explain who we are and what our past was. Heritage should be handed to new generation in a way that retains the values. For conservation of heritage areas, one should be clear on what to be conserved, how conservation can be done and who are responsible for it.

These days, the term conservation is a talk all over the world with or without getting the exact meaning. Similarly, in Nepal, there are many more people who know the value of traditional architecture and are very concerned on this subject which is very good, acceptable and necessary too. But without having proper knowledge of conservation, just raising voice for conservation may misguide the process and even can destruct the heritage areas. The responsibility lies with people who are property owners and managers, professionals on heritage conservation, government and every people concerned about caring for heritage places.

Method and Material

The process of conservation is guided by ethical standards, and one should know the rules and regulations of conservation which are followed by different charters. For

¹ *Institute of engineering, Thapathali campus*

^{*} *Corresponding author*

E-mail:

example, The Burra Charter, which has been adopted as the standard for best practice in the conservation of heritage places in Australia. There are many more charters which are followed by different conservation in different county. Knowing the charter in detail also helps to know the legal rules for conservation of heritage areas. But generally, conservation can be done by following different ways.



- **Protection**

It is the process to keep the heritage places and elements protected from further deterioration and external additional dust and dirt. It can be done by removal of adherent surface deposits by chemical means which does not react with the conserved heredity or can be covered for certain time period of protection from harsh climate. This process is mostly used for historical paintings, books, manuscripts, testimony, statues etc. E.g. Sucevita Monastery, burial chamber in Romania.

- **Reconstruction**



It is the process to reconstruct all the structures using traditional technology and materials with original looks, art and architecture. It means it is not the original one but a replica as per the remembrance of history. This can be done if any structure is very important and poses risk when exposed open in public. These can be preserved by keeping in museum and in spite of original structure replica can be kept in particular place or if some sculptures are lost. E.g. Horses of Saint Mark at Venice, Italy.

- **Rehabilitation**

Rehabilitation is defined as bringing back to a positive condition. In this process, the heritage place can be protected or conserved by using the places for new purposes without making any changes in its original structure. E.g. old residences changed into heritage hotels/cafes in heritage areas, old palaces into museums etc.



• **Intervention**

In this process, heritage places and temples or buildings can be protected from more deterioration by intervention of new technologies and materials. This process may apply due to variety reasons like aesthetic choices, stabilization for structural integrity or cultural requirement for intangible requirement. In this category, partial uses of R.C.C. in spite of traditional materials, for strengthening, patching of new carving with old one, re-gluing the broken pieces, application of wax to a sculpture, etc. can be done. But applying intervention ethical justification is must require and must carry out documentation during and after the treatment.



• **Restoration**

It can be said that it is most essential but incomplete stage of conservation. Restoration of heritage is done in cases where the originality is still in shade and needs further investigation in future. It is the stage of preservation of today's appearances, maintaining today's design with minimum interventions of material. Reversibility is emphasized so as to reduce problems with future treatment, investigation and use. E.g. The birth place of Buddha, Lumbini, Nepal.

to reduce problems with future treatment, investigation and use. E.g. The birth place of Buddha, Lumbini, Nepal.



• **Revitalization**

Revitalization is the process of conservation in which the heritage place or building can be reused and reconstructed as per today's requirements without affecting its original façade or architecture whatever is more important. E.g. Hearst magazine building of New York.



• **Consolidation**

In this process, according to importance and to protect and strengthen the main historical elements among many more, the material and technology of secondary or supporting elements can be modified or changed from previous period. The new structure or technology can be involved to protect ancient monuments. E.g. The

Tattershall Castle, Britain, in which exterior materials and interior uses, both are changed from original structure.

Result and Discussion

All of above-mentioned processes are the types process of conservation. These types can be chosen to conserve the heritage places according to its tangible and intangible importance and uses. One or more than one process can be applied for one heritage area. In our context, manuscript, books, arts can be conserved through protection or reconstruction. While most of the important monuments, temples those lie on world heritage sites can be conserved through rehabilitation and reconstruction, less important temples and buildings can be conserved through intervention. The historical buildings or parks which have less importance of use but have interesting history can be conserved through consolidation and revitalization.

The secondary importance for conservation is not directly linked but peripherally affected logic. That is the circumference of heritage area; which must be controlled strictly by national government while construction. The circumference or approach way to heritage area directly affect the development of the heritage areas.

Conclusion

Before jump on conservation of heritage area, one should have better idea of conservation and have to decide for suitable process according to its importance and social values. Even partial new construction and modern technology may include in conservation according to its requirement or needs. Especially for internationally known heritage areas, international charter should follow. And even only for national heritage, better to follow international rules, and if not possible, then only may follow nation rules and regulation of conservation.²

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conservation-restoration_of_cultural_heritage
The Athens Charter for the Restoration of Historic Monuments – 1931, 2011 NOV 11, ICOMOS
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Monuments_Consolidation_and_Amendment_Act_1913