

INDIA - INDE

The Indian National Committee of ICOMOS have fully participated in the various forums and conferences held over the last two decades, and are fully committed to its task. The role and objectives of ICOMOS has been an important one i.e. to create an International understanding for exchange of ideas, dissemination of information and to support the cause of conservation for the benefit of mankind. However, the organisation can only support in principle and encourage the efforts of National Committees in their respective countries in their task. There may be differences in opinion about the nature of participation among member states about their effective role in this respect. ICOMOS members as well as several organisations engaged in this task have realized the success of ICOMOS in the west but the activities of ICOMOS have not been very significant in relation to the problems in the developing countries as a whole, although this is the task of National Committees in their respective countries to strengthen their role by their efforts and to be more effective through some bilateral collaboration in the field of conservation, education, research and field work.

The role of ICOMOS therefore is an important one to help member states to be more effective and to bridge this gap. There are several such institutions and universities in the west, who train students and professionals from the developing countries in the Art and Science of Conservation based on curriculum developed in their Schools. However, most of the courses do not relate to the problems in the context conservation in their home country. The nature of tasks vary from country to country, such as socio economic conditions, climatic factors, and conditions lead to several factors for the neglect and degradation of historic structures in the absence of any comprehensive investigations undertaken, technical knowhow or ineffective legal tools available in their countries. ICCROM & YORK School too have curricula based on their own experiences, but they too have very little aspect to cover issues pertaining to conservation problems in Asia, Africa and South East Asia.

It is important therefore that the role of ICOMOS could be redefined and made more effective to look forward to strengthen other regions, where systematic work is yet to be documented, synthesised and to be attended to. One of the platform for such an exchange has been set up in South East Asia such as SAARC with its headquarters in Nepal. It will be appropriate if ICOMOS could set up one of its

regional offices in South East Asia (Delhi), Africa and Latin America for such a collaboration. These efforts will be able to bring together member states from the regions for effective collaboration in the field of conservation and to strengthen the role of ICOMOS at International Level.

ICOMOS (India) is working in close cooperation in association with INTACH, Archaeological Survey of India and other Science Lab and is just building its image through its humble efforts. However, because of no financial backing either from ICOMOS or any other organisation, we could not contribute effectively to the cause for which we stand together. Whatever money we raise from our members is remitted to ICOMOS at Paris. Raising fund for our own activities and participation in this respect had been a set back and concern for the Indian National Committee of ICOMOS. Setting up a Regional Centre of ICOMOS in India will help to improve our financial aspect and encourage our efforts. This will help to raise and use our own funds judiciously for conservation endeavour.

Future Prospects

The School of Planning and Architecture is proposing to organise an Educational Workshop entitled «*Conservation Education*» South East Asia (December 17-20, 1990).

The aim of this Joint Workshop (ICCROM/SPA) is to bring together professionals, teachers and experts involved in Conservation Training Programmes as well as to review the current works in the country to discuss the nature of problems arising due to technical deficiency, shortage of skilled craftsmen or experts in the country, recognition and upgradation of academic curricula to be on par with other institutions in the country as well as abroad, raising resources by work programmes and fund raising campaigns to undertake conservation projects and their management through following actions.

National workshop (17-20 December, 1990)

Participation:

Joint Participation with ICCROM/UNESCO/ICOMOS/Ministry of Culture/SAARC (HQ)

- * Education Session
4 Sessions — Two days

** Participation & Discussion with Professional Bodies — INTACH/IGNCA/ASI/Cultural Resources Centre, I.I.A., and I.T.P.I., Ministry of Urban Development, and Ministry of Environment

2 Sessions — One Day

** Professional Group/Institute/Technical Session
UNESCO/ICOMOS (India)

2 Sessions — One day

2. The Venice Charter

The Conservation Movement in India have come of age and have accepted in principle the guidelines laid in the Venice Charter. The Conservation of Historic Towns in India is primarily covered through the state Town and Country Planning Act. These acts are largely administered through legislative powers to prepare urban development plans. However, the acts are limited in their scope to cover Conservation of Historic Towns. However, conservation works have been limited generally for maintenance and improvement of the monuments. Ancient Monument and Archaeological Site and Remains Act of 1958 is at present the only such a legal act in India, which is limited in its scope for any comprehensive works for conservation to be undertaken. The act is confined to the monuments only, and do not take into consideration the settings of monument and its immediate environment. Restoration and Renewal has not been a part of Archaeological Act and no adaptation and reuse of historical structures have been undertaken. Our «ICOMOS» National Committee is discussing and proposing an amendment to the Archaeological Act of 1958 in order to make the present act more comprehensive in nature.

The Venice Charter still stands comprehensive in nature and is an important document where detailed guidelines are given in explicit manner which should be binding on all member states for its acceptance. The Indian National Committee of ICOMOS is working together to achieve these objectives.

3. Experience in Education

Conservation and Protection of Built and Natural Heritage had been a matter of concern and interest among the Philanthropists, Educationists, Archaeologists, Historians and other allied professionals way back in 19th century, when the Archaeological Survey of India was set up. However, during the last two decades professionals and educational institutions have taken a leading role in the conservation movement in the country.

The School of Planning and Architecture being one of the premier institutions in the country in the field of Architecture and Planning Education has established Master of Architecture (Conservation) course in 1986. This course is being run with the help of several experts who are also members of ICOMOS and have contributed a great deal for establishing this course. The faculty of the School is also supported by the experts from allied disciplines. The School of Planning and Architecture had organised several workshops on Architecture and Urban Conservation during the last three years and have greatly benefitted from such experts. A list of several themes identified during these seminars are given below.

- * Overview of Conservation Movement Concepts and Statements. The Role of Conservation in India.
- * Conservation Education.
- * Methodology and Techniques of Conservation of Historical Sites, Archaeological and Architectural Buildings.
- * Conservation Aspects of Towns, Historic Centres, Gardens and Forts.
- * Planning and Development, Legal Aspects of Conservation.
- * Strategies for Urban Conservation. Rehabilitation and Renewal.
- * Reviews of Conservation Works and Case Studies.

ICOMOS (India) is bringing together the efforts of various allied institutions such as National Museum, Archaeological Survey of India, INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage) and several professional bodies in the country to provide a valuable input to our efforts through technical as well as field studies for conservation.

The School of Planning and Architecture is also exploring to set up a Regional Centre in India for South East Asia to promote Education and Research under the SAARC umbrella for developing joint programmes of action as appropriate to the specific needs of the SAARC countries in the areas of Conservation.

ICOMOS members and the School of Planning and Architecture are working in collaboration for such a task.

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The Indian National Committee stresses the importance of bi-lateral co-operation for the preservation of the architectural heritage, particularly in developing countries. While acknowledging the courses attended in the West by students from developing countries, it deplores the fact that curricula are often not adapted to the particular needs of heritage conservation in those countries. In order to meet this problem, the Indian Committee proposes the creation of regional ICOMOS organisations in Africa, Latin America and East Asia, the latter being based in Delhi. A regional organisation might also help National Committees financially. Indeed, at the moment the limited means of developing countries' committees hardly allows them to undertake proper national preservation programmes especially when the little monies they have at their command have to be remitted to ICOMOS in Paris!

Future prospects: organisation of a joint workshop on «Conservation Education» in South East Asia with ICCROM and UNESCO in December 1990.

The Venice Charter: the legal basis for monument preservation is still rather limited in India. The Charter is therefore the only document providing comprehensive guidelines and objectives which the Indian National Committee aims at achieving.

Experience and Education: the Indian Committee emphasises the importance of education. It reports on various courses and seminars held in Indian universities covering a wide spectrum of topics related to conservation. The Indian Committee also coordinates the efforts of all other institutions involved in the preservation of the cultural heritage.