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Heritage Management for Sustainable Development: Transformative pedagogy for the Masters Degree Programme in Heritage Management at Ahmedabad University

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Abstract (150 words, Font 12):

Sustainable Development (SD) discourse has recognized 'culture' as one of the three pillars – the other two being economics and environment. While the latter two have been significantly explored and integrated into the SD framework, the understanding of culture has mostly been superficial, and its integration has not been adequately achieved. One of the effective ways of integrating 'culture' into SD discourse is the emphasis on cultural heritage in overall educational paradigm. This can be done both through integration into early education as well as professional level higher education.

This paper introduces the programme design philosophy and pedagogic approach adopted in the recently launched Masters degree programme in Heritage Management at the Ahmedabad University as an example of potential strategic contribution to the ESD (Education for Sustainable Development) initiative of the United Nations.

Keywords:

**Heritage Management
Sustainable Development
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**Heritage Management for Sustainable Development:
Transformative pedagogy for the Masters Degree Programme in
Heritage Management at Ahmedabad University**

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1. Introduction

Sustainable Development (SD) discourse has recognized ‘culture’ as one of the three pillars – the other two being economics and environment. While the latter two have been significantly explored and integrated into the SD framework, the understanding of culture has mostly been superficial, and its integration has not been adequately achieved. Cultural heritage – as one of the manifestations of culture, can effectively facilitate the understanding of importance of ‘culture’ and its integration into the SD discourse. One of the effective ways of integrating ‘culture’ into SD discourse is the emphasis on cultural heritage in overall educational paradigm. It is in this regard, that this paper argues that there is also a need for higher degree education on cultural heritage so that a dedicated group of professionals and researchers can continuously engaged in exploring the intertwined relationship between the SD discourse and cultural heritage discourse, as well as practicing the same.

This paper discusses the programme design philosophy and pedagogic approach adopted in the recently launched Masters degree programme in Heritage Management at the Ahmedabad University, India. The discussion responds to the following two observations on ongoing ESD (Education for Sustainable Development) Initiative under the United Nations through its GAP (Global Action Partners) initiative. Examining the intended goals of ESD, and the curriculum design strategies of the Masters degree programme in Heritage Management at Ahmedabad University; this paper will suggest that such academic initiatives are of strategic importance in achieving the goals of ESD.

2. Sustainable development as a culminating point in both heritage discourses and development discourses

Development' discourses and 'heritage' discourses in modern time began primarily after the industrial revolution. However, unlike the heritage discourses, the development discourses have penetrated the common mindset so deep that in general it is assumed that there is no question about, or alternative of development for today's human societies. However, the scholars and practitioners have debated the consequences and accordingly the development discourses have evolved to accommodate multiple views and needs. The emergence of sustainable development paradigm can be understood as a response to evident problems arising out of previous development discourses. Heritage discourses too have gone through the similar transformative stages whereby the initial focus of material and tangible has now been shifted to the intangibles and cultural practices. Furthermore there are emerging arguments for an integrated notion of heritage as opposed to the compartmentalized piece-meal concepts of heritage, i.e. cultural vs natural or tangible vs intangible.

Earlier, heritage discourse mostly began as one major discourse based on the aesthetics and archaeological importance of heritage. In the last few decades, the single discourse has evolved into multiple discourses to include the various manifestations of heritage and diverse contexts. In the beginning, these were either important works of art or building, whereas later on the sites and settings were integral part of it. Along with the sites and setting, the landscape and people became the focus of heritage discourse, which then led to the connection to the economic as well as environmental sustainability. It is in this way that heritage discourses and development discourses have found a common ground through the discourses of sustainable development.

A quick overview of the chronological emergence of various conventions and international documents around the themes of heritage or sustainable development reveals that the two perceivably different tracks of global policy domain, have actually evolved in parallel to each other.

For example – The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment was held in Stockholm, Sweden from June 5–16 in 1972, which led to the famous Brundlandt

Commission a decade later along with a few other follow up events. The same year (1972), UNESCO hosted the World Heritage Convention – in collaboration with the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature), which provided a major impetus towards recognition and conservation of cultural and natural heritage sites, that are of ‘outstanding universal values’. This convention was an outcome of efforts from both UNESCO and IUCN since the 1950s. As the UN General Secretary commissioned what is popularly known as the Brundlandt commission which officially defined the sustainable development concept and suggested global mechanisms to operationalize it, UNESCO’s World Heritage Convention and its Committee also formulated the World Heritage Operational Guidelines and began listing the World Heritage Sites towards the end of the same decade.

When the concept from the human environment conference and that of Brundlandt commission was taken further through a series of other conferences and discussions, the Earth Summit of 1992 held at the Rio de Janeiro of Brazil, led to the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development 1992 – popularly known as Agenda 21. It gave the concept and policy implications a holistic shape, similar to the introduction of the idea of cultural landscapes in the World Heritage discourse in 1992. The world heritage concept in the beginning has simply divided the heritage sector into the cultural and natural, which was resisted, debated and finally in 1992, the concept of cultural landscapes was incorporated, which led to integrating cultural practices into the landscape. In this thought process, the heritage sustainability also became a key concern, and accordingly the diversity of cultural expressions and practices became the foci of heritage discourses in the last decade. This all led into another major convention in 2003, the convention on the intangible cultural heritage.

In the 1990s, the foci on both set of institutions were on the recognition of cultural diversity, diversity of contexts, and the acknowledgement of local in the global systems of knowledge production and development initiatives. In the decade of 2000s, as the UNDP and UNEP focused more on the sustainable development agenda particularly in the areas of better livelihood and environment for all, the heritage related agencies such as UNESCO focused on the livelihood of community and sustainability of cultural practices. While the latest of the UNESCO conventions on culture has been on the intangible cultural heritage and the cultural diversity as well as under water cultural heritage, the

sustainable development goals also emphasize increasingly on the people and diverse contexts. Since then, it has been recognized that the culture and sustainable development are inter-related, which are evidenced in the recent global frameworks like the UN Millenium Declaration (2000), UN Millenium development goals (2010), Sustainable Development Goals (2015), and so on. From UNESCO, there have been explicit references to sustainable development in both its world heritage discourse and intangible cultural heritage discourse.

Though we can see some common themes running across the parallel progression of discourses and policy frameworks in both the cultural heritage and sustainable development, there has not been effective cross-referencing and mutual acknowledgement by these two distinct frameworks – particularly from the sustainable development initiatives. This is the key concern that this paper explores, and puts forward an argument that one of the major reasons for this lack of mutual recognition is a poor understanding and integration of cultural heritage resources in the sustainable development agenda.

3. Critique on the perceived relationship between culture and sustainable development

Following my general observations that the notion of culture has not been properly positioned in the sustainable development discourse, I quickly look into some representative texts discussing sustainable development, to make my point. I have yet to pursue a comprehensive literature review in this regard, hence any counter arguments (pointing relevant literature and documents) would be appreciated.

3.1 The reference to culture (hence cultural heritage) and education in SD

A recent book titled ‘the age of sustainable development’ (Sachs 2015) with a foreword by the secretary general of the United Nations Mr. Ban Ki Moon, has a chapter on ‘why some countries developed while others stayed poor’. This chapter looks at various parameters for this analysis, culture being one of them. In the discussion of the culture as background to this, in the pagers 121 – 129, the book discusses culture with reference to demography, education and gender. The author connects demography and gender as being influenced by cultural beliefs and attitudes etc. He suggests that culture is not a wholesale reason for under development, but certain cultural beliefs may have triggered some unsustainable practices that could have hindered the development of these communities. He further

argues that culture is dynamic and evolving; and hence, an evolving culture could be a very good support to the idea of sustainable development. However, in such arguments of defending culture as not being a hindrance to SD but a potential supporter, what we are missing is the other side of the picture. I argue that despite its own timely issues and constraints, many a times culture offers knowledge resources that holds the very tenets of sustainable development. For example – agricultural practices, forestry management practices, medicinal practices etc. contained within cultural belief systems of many communities are much more sustainable than a modern knowledge that is created and disseminated to the same communities. What bothers me is the pursuance of sustainable development agenda as a ‘new’ idea to these communities whose lifestyle and cultural practices have had respect to nature and resources, and strategies to manage them for current generation and future generations. This is where the process of education could have played an instrumental role – not merely for sharing SD agenda to any local context, but also incorporating local know-how in SD agenda, hence education as multi-directional process and NOT unidirectional process.

Often, the idea and content of education is taken for granted – for what type of education and the content of educational programmes. It is generally understood that ‘education’ contributes to sustainable development – which is true. However, I would like to question this assumption. Without critically examining and reforming the concept and processes of education, we cannot be sure that education can contribute to sustainable development. The prevalent education system across the world – but particularly in the so called developing countries, I have observed that the modern education mostly detaches the young students from their very context – with very less or no reference to their own ecological, cultural and economic contexts. This results in massive ‘unemployed’ but educated mass which struggles to figure out their individual survival in an economy where they don’t seem to realize the potential that their own communities may be holding for. Misguided systematically by the prevalent education system, they aspire to find jobs somewhere else while completely ignoring the needs of their own contexts – thus missing an important opportunity of sustainable development of them as individuals but also of their own society.

In the larger agenda of sustainable development, if one refers to culture in a stereotypical way – only as a source of explanation for ‘why some countries stayed poor’, I would argue that there is a serious misunderstanding of culture and its own premise of development. Cultural heritage in this regard, needs to be understood as the tools and means from any

cultural context, which could be the backbone of a locally driven sustainable development agenda. Here also, the misconception of education (both at giver's end and the receiver's end) need to be examined thoroughly.

3.2 Sustainable development and environmental issues

Rogers et.al. (2012) (An Introduction to Sustainable Development) point out that the term 'sustainability' was introduced to bridge the gap between 'development' and 'environment' (p.22). However, they also recognize that '(t)he problem is, we experience difficulties in defining sustainable development precisely or even defining it operationally' (p.22). Here, it will be relevant to recall the largely adopted definition as given by the Brundlandt commission, that "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". The commission report also points out that,

“(t)raditional social systems recognized some aspects of this (ecological) interdependence and enforced community control over agricultural practices and traditional rights relating to water, forests and land. This enforcement of the 'common interest' did not necessarily impede growth and expansion though it may have limited the acceptance and diffusion of technical innovations.”

We may elaborate this point to explore the opportunities and knowledge contained in traditional social systems – which are products of the inherited cultural values and practices. This is where, I would argue, that the sustainable development goals could seek to extract the lessons contained in cultural heritage. Thus, rather than seeing cultural heritage as a passive recipient of social justice aimed by SDG or as a token of including diversity in a global initiative, we should actually pursue cultural heritage resources as an active contributor to the knowledge and practices of for sustainable development.

3.3 Incomplete Reference to Culture in Sustainable Development Discourse

In this regard, it is relevant to recollect here a proposition by Mohan Munasinghe, which is referred by Rogers et. al (2012). Though Rogers et.al are not sure, or they seem skeptical about Munasinghe's proposition about 'Socio-cultural approach to sustainable development', this paper would like to pick up the thread from there.

“In 1993, Mohan Munasinghe discussed (Rogers et.al. (1997) p. 44) three approaches to sustainable development:

- economic – maximizing income while maintaining a constant or increasing stock of capital;

- ecological – maintaining resilience and robustness of biological and physical systems; and
- socio-cultural – maintaining stability of social and cultural systems.

Munasinghe, an economist from the World Bank offers a somewhat precise definition for his economic approach to sustainable development. However, his discussion of ecological approaches that maintain resilience and robustness of biological and physical systems does not tell us what resilience and robustness mean in biological systems. We have some notions of that, but we do not have good operational definitions. And then in the social cultural domain, he calls for maintaining stability of social and cultural systems. While this is desirable, he is not clear; besides, how can one actually calculate such stability? We are left to wonder.” (Rogers et.al, 2012; p 23)

Thus, while culture is acknowledged as being an important part of the SD discourse lately, unfortunately this reference has not been in-depth, but just as a superficial explanation for possible cause of under development in some parts of the world. Instead, I would like to suggest that culture (particularly those aspects that are considered as cultural heritage) can play a major role in the sustainable development agenda, not necessarily as a ‘welfare recipients’ but as an active resource to ensure the sustainability of the efforts of sustainable development.

On the other hand, discourses dedicated to culture and cultural heritage also have not connected so efficiently with the sustainable development discourse. It is only recently that the global agencies like UNESCO have begun to connect culture and education to the broader discussions of sustainable development. After the 2003 Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention, UNESCO has been instrumental in voicing the cultural connection to the sustainable development agenda. In one of its promotional material on intangible cultural heritage, UNESCO highlights:

“The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage recognizes the ‘importance of the intangible cultural heritage as a mainspring of cultural diversity and a guarantee of sustainable development’.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development constitutes a plan of action addressing the three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – of

sustainable development through 17 Sustainable Development Goals as highly interdependent spheres of action that inform development pathways at all levels, and respecting the three fundamental principles of human rights, equality, and sustainability. Intangible cultural heritage can effectively contribute to sustainable development along each of its three dimensions, as well as to the requirement of peace and security as fundamental prerequisites for sustainable development.” (UNESCO, n.d.; Intangible Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development)

In the same line of thought, the programme design for Heritage Management at Ahmedabad University initially had not envisioned the programme to be of that much relevance to the global sustainable development discourse, particularly the ESD. However, the programme does have an explicit emphasis that (cultural) heritage management is an integral part of a sensitive development process of any community. There are courses and project works that project heritage management approach as part of a larger sustainable development agenda, but honestly we have not referred to the SDGs in our programme document as of now. This is where, I personally think that we all are still missing out important and strategic opportunities to move towards common goals which we are working independent of each other. It is in this context that I would like to now shift the focus to ‘way forward’, explicitly focusing on the education for both heritage as well as sustainable development. In this process, I will also refer to some details on the programme design of the Heritage Management Masters programme, and articulate direct connections with the ESD strategies as well as SDGs by re-capturing the common threads.

4. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD): Some Observations

Before I begin elaborating the cross-connections between ESD and Heritage Management Programme, I would like to discuss the following two primary observations on ESD:

4.1 Notion and role of Education :

The emphasis on education for achieving the sustainable development goals must be appreciated. However, it seems that the notion and role of education has not been discussed much. Instead, I argue that the ESD cannot be effective unless the goals and roles of education is critically established. Hence, this paper posits that there is a growing need for rethinking education as a process, in two major aspects:

- a. knowledge creation and knowledge sharing as opposed to blanket ‘knowledge transfer’ to all groups:

In most of the educational frameworks today – particularly in South Asian contexts, there is a overwhelming tendency of blanket adoption of foreign content than a content that could be based in the context where education is being offered. This leads to a two-fold problem: first, the students hardly relate themselves or their own contexts to the concepts being explained, and the educational institution perceive students’ performance solely on the given knowledge framework but not on the local knowledge systems.

For example – when our text books on any discipline discuss concepts of mathematics or science or history, it is rarely seen that the lessons begin from the locally available scenarios. In lack of such local grounding, the students learn ‘something’ but they may not relate to their own contexts. This leads to a severe sociological problem where the ‘newly’ educated masses are completely detached from their contexts, but may perform well in non-local contexts. In such circumstances, many goals of ESD may not be effectively achieved. Hence, there is a serious need of creating knowledge based on specific local contexts so that the learners relate to their knowledge to where they come from, and eventually contribute back in sustainable ways.

- b. education as a tool of achieving transformation:

In connection to above critique, it is also equally imperative that we envision the role of education as a tool for transformation, and NOT as giving or receiving education as the transformation itself. Merely going through an educational process does not transform one, but the education could be a tool to trigger transformation in the communities. A horrible scenario of this is the massive unemployment that we see in developing world, even after people achieve relatively higher education, where as those achieving higher education could have been the force driving transformation. This is a fundamental problem of current frameworks on education. Accessing higher ladders of education are seen as goals rather than means of unraveling the ways of addressing societal needs. This

change in the process and underlying perception of education is of utmost importance before we embark on the ideals of ESD.

4.2 Positioning of culture:

Though the sustainable development agenda appreciates culture as a key pillar, the reference to culture has still been as a token only and often within the stereotypical positioning of culture, failing in treating culture as a resource. Instead, cultural resources including traditional knowledges contain various locally adapted sustainable practices that are continuously being forgotten in the rush of development. Education in many cases becomes just another vehicle to alienate people from their traditional practices and knowledge systems, since modern education hardly refer to any traditional knowledges. A balanced approach to education and development could be achieved by integrating cultural resources as source of knowledge.

If culture is perceived as an object of gaze rather than a resource for knowledge, it will hardly be a supporting pillar of sustainable development. With such a positioning of culture, we are bound to promote the reference to culture as an exotic collection of things and behavior, which may perceived of deserving some welfare in the development process. Instead, the positioning of culture should be as a complex resource from which the sustainable development process can extract relevant community-based, time-tested and locally evolved knowledges and practices. When we adopt this position, a few outdated or misconceived knowledges and practices within any local culture, may also be effectively addressed. Otherwise, there is always a likelihood of a conflict between the development agenda and cultural contexts. Though it is largely seen that even tribal people may have begun to give way for development agenda, such mis-perceived notions do not last long. Hence, the responsibility of concerned community is to treat culture as resource, and boldly position culture as a contributor of knowledge and education, than a passive recipient of knowledge from a new culture of development or sustainable development.

5. Implications of Education for Sustainable Development

Arguing that there is a need for a transformative pedagogy integrating critical reflection with experiential learning, the paper shares the key programme design concepts and initial implementation experience of a new Masters degree programme in Heritage Management at Ahmedabad University. The premises of pedagogical design in this programme begins with a course on heritage discourses to critically examine the notion of heritage, the notion of heritage education, and its everyday connection to society and human being. Incidentally this seems to be in the similar line of thought as put forward by UNESCO recently. UNESCO has recently begun to realize the need to revisit the prevalent notion of education. A recent working paper sponsored by UNESCO concludes with the following:

“These changes in the educational landscape, along with the emergence of challenging realities, in social, political, economic, environmental and intellectual areas, call for a humanistic and holistic approach to education that goes “beyond narrow utilitarianism and economism to integrate the multiple dimensions of human existence”¹⁸ Globalization is a major issue with regard to education. However, this issue, as well as that of international governance of education, is not discussed as such in this paper, as it focuses on national matters.¹⁹ Lingard and Rawolle define this evolution as a “rescaling of educational policy and politics”. They include as one of its explanatory factors the impact of new public management on the state’s operating methods at national level in education. New public management has been accompanied by new forms of outcome accountability (Wiseman, 2010).²⁰ Adapting Albin’s (1999) typology of NGO activities, Nasiritousi et al. (2014) propose nine key dimensions of non-state actor governance activities: influence the agenda, propose solutions, provide information and expertise, influence decisions and policy makers, raise awareness, implement action, evaluate consequences of policies and measures, represent public opinion and represent marginalized voices. Nasiritousi et al. (2014) also build a typology of power sources used by non-state actors to gain authority in governance: symbolic (legitimacy to invoke moral claims), cognitive (knowledge, expertise), social (access to networks), leverage (access to key agents and decision-making processes), and material (access to resources and position in the economy) powers. These new realities also require the humanistic approach

to allow for rethinking the purpose of education and the role of the state as well as for achieving a new development model.” (Daviet, 2016)

6. Post-2015 Development Agenda, ESD and Heritage Management Education

Around the same time when the Post-2015 development agenda was launched by the United Nations - following the conclusion of the decade for ESD, Ahmedabad University in India humbly launched a new Masters degree programme on Heritage Management. In principle, the two events were not connected to each other, but one can easily see the common goals across the global initiative under the leadership of UN, and an experimental academic initiative attempted by a private university in India. On the one hand, ESD recognizes that culture (I am reading as the backbone of cultural heritage) and development are interdependent. Similarly on the other hand, the Masters programme in Heritage Management at Ahmedabad University perceived heritage management as integral part of sustainable development agenda.

6.1 Overview of the Masters Programme at Ahmedabad University

Though the Ahmedabad University's establishment of a Centre for Heritage Management was primarily conceived as a centre promoting cultural heritage policy and management initiatives, it has significantly broadened its concern while designing the Masters degree programme. The programme design emphasizes on heritage as a broad field including natural, cultural and most importantly as a holistic concept; and as an ecology consisting of nature, culture and human beings (along with wildlife). The programme emphasizes on field-based learning, experiential learning and entrepreneurial pursuit of a career in any sector of heritage management. The first semester consists of the FOUNDANTIONAL COURSES, which includes modules on Heritage discourses, practices and development contexts; basics of management principles and approaches. The last week of the semester or the week during the semester break is generally used for a short field-immersion experience to allow the participants to connect the first semester's coursework into the real contexts, and also to make them realize the need of integrated approach and necessary managerial acumen that are also equally emphasized through both the first and second semesters.

The second semester is geared towards enhancing the professional expertise through heritage management modules based on the existing fields of practices, i.e. urban heritage

management, archaeological heritage management, natural heritage management, arts and crafts management and so on. However, all perceivably distinct fields of practices come together in the integrated heritage management studio where students look into a local problem but exploring intertwined issues of certain identified heritage resources with the environment, community and their sustainable livelihoods.

The summer break following the second semester is spent for practicum – an internship type experience where the students are encouraged to learn heritage management in holistic way including the everyday operations of an organization or project, to conceptualizing a project, delivering it, connecting with community and other stakeholders and so on. The very idea of internship is broadened to emphasize on the contextual learning and decision making along with a research project where critical thinking of an perceived issues is encouraged. Along with the practical exposure to real life scenario and professional work, the students are also required to continue doing a small research project to keep their critical thinking process running.

The third semester takes them further deeper exploration of the heritage management as a holistic practice field, while also developing essential research and management acumen so that they could spend the entire final semester developing a thesis on a topic of their choice. Upon completion of the thesis and all other requirements, the graduating students are required to present their thesis research and findings at an international conference. This international conference serves as a capstone event for the graduating class as well as a welcoming event for the incoming class. Thus, the key idea is that the production of knowledge and dissemination needs to take place within and beyond a class room setting, in a much larger ecological setting, and eventually ensuring that the knowledge production process also contributes back to the same context from where the knowledge is derived.

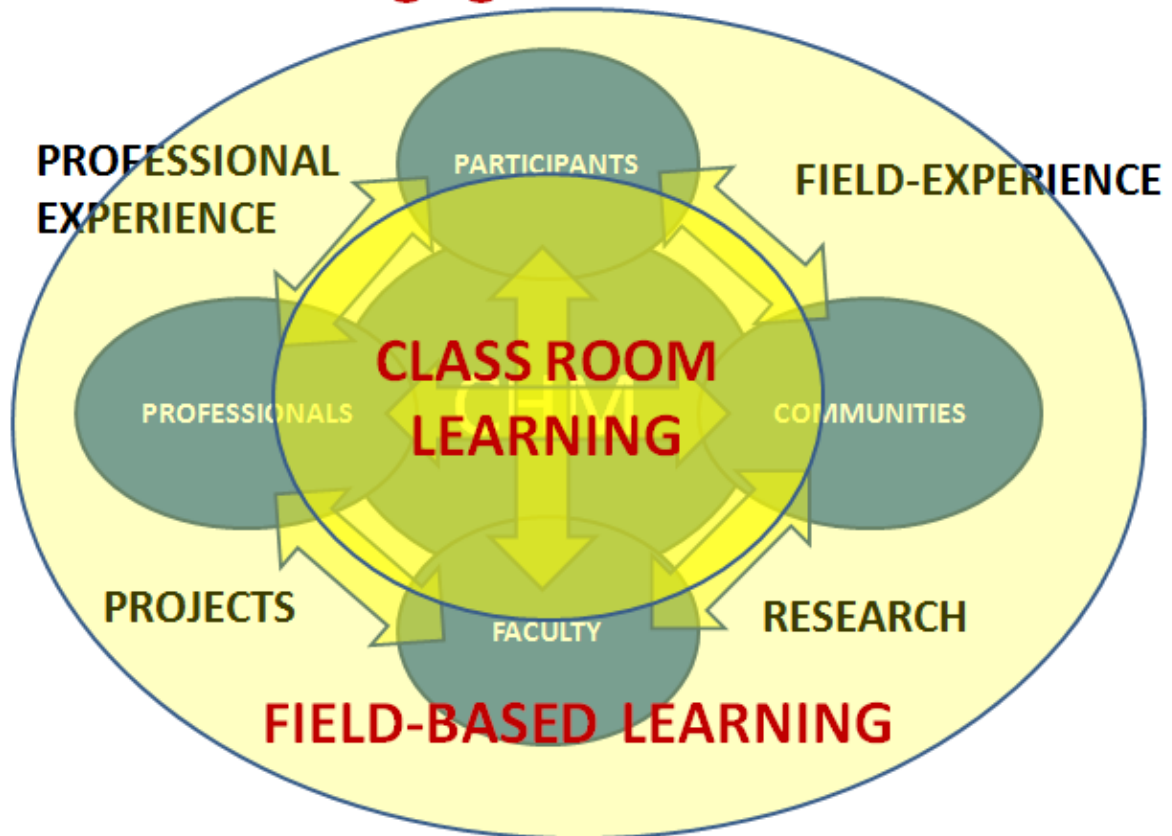
The key philosophy of the programme is to create a balance in today's heritage profession scenario which is heavily dominated by professionals with core knowledge about heritage and technical interventions on heritage issues, but heavily lacking managerial and social skills – thus raising questions on the sustainability of the heritage related efforts. Moreover, it is also strongly felt that heritage shall not be treated as a narrow field of practice, but it shall be pursued as an anchoring field of practice which has the potential of bridging the aspirations of community with the environmental contexts, of utilizing their cultural resources to enhance the natural surroundings as well as the built environment, and for promoting a diverse but mutually respectful society. In such a scenario, the programme attempts to create a balance by emphasizing on critical studies of heritage

(within the heritage domain) while also bringing in necessary management and 'soft' skills so that together the graduates are able to provide holistic management services in the existing unbalanced approach in heritage management. This philosophy is translated into a pedagogical strategy which seeks to progress the learning from the fundamental question of how we understand heritage, to create management strategies and plan that envisions heritage management as a multi-disciplinary, sensitive and collaborative field of practice. Also, the programme philosophy assumes that in order to create such a scenario, future heritage managers (our graduates) must also be an effective, enthusiastic and proactive heritage entrepreneurs who can act as leaders, managers, activists and workers in their own specialized domains.

Another key pedagogical philosophy adopted in the programme is the 'real life scenario' or experiential learning for which the various heritage sites, organizations, communities and issues will be the prime anchor for delivering many of its courses. For that matter, field visits, field work and immersion programmes as well as internship and research are given adequate emphasis. Hence, as compared to a conventional masters degree programme, this programme will have a significant part of learning process occurring in the field (in addition to the class room learning). Similarly, peer-learning is given due consideration, and it is expected that the each incoming group of participants will have sufficient professional and regional/cultural diversity to allow them to learn from each other's specific backgrounds as they move through various activities planned for each semester. Same strategy will apply to the selection of visiting faculty and guest lecturers, as well as other collaborative programmes with other institutions.

The following diagram tries to capture the pedagogy of the programme:

Pedagogical Framework



6.2 Parallels between the ESD and Masters in Heritage Management programme at Ahmedabad University

In the context of ESD and the Post-2015 agenda, I have observed a few common emphases between the ESD and the approach in Masters in Heritage Management at Ahmedabad University. I will briefly highlight them here.

At the concluding conference of the UN decade for Sustainable Development, held at Aichi-Nagoya in Japan, a declaration was issued highlighting the strategies for the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. In connection to the preceding critique of the position of culture perceived in sustainable development, and the role of education, I would like to recall here the following key recommendations from the Aichi-Nagoya declaration. Though almost all the recommendations are relevant, I have highlighted the following sections to indicate a shared emphasis as that of the Masters Degree programme (my highlights are represented by the bold font):

- EMPHASISE the potential of ESD to **empower learners to transform themselves** and the society they live in by developing knowledge, skills,

attitudes, competences and values required for addressing global citizenship and local contextual challenges of the present and the future, such as **critical and systemic thinking, analytical problem-solving**, creativity, working collaboratively and making decisions in the face of uncertainty, and understanding of the interconnectedness of global challenges and responsibilities emanating from such awareness,

- UNDERSCORE that the implementation of ESD should fully take into consideration local, national, regional and global contexts, as well as the **contribution of culture to sustainable development** and the need for respecting peace, non-violence, **cultural diversity, local and traditional knowledge and indigenous wisdom and practices**, and universal principles such as human rights, gender equality, democracy, and social justice,

- URGE all concerned stakeholders, in particular Ministries of Education and all ministries involved with ESD, higher education institutions and the scientific and other knowledge communities **to engage in collaborative and transformative knowledge production, dissemination and utilization**, and promotion of innovation across sectoral and disciplinary boundaries at the science-policy-ESD practice interface to enrich decision-making and capacity building for sustainable development with emphasis on involving and respecting youth as key stakeholders,

More importantly, I would like to recollect here some of the key dimensions of ESD – as articulated in a roadmap document, that are evident in the Masters programme at Ahmedabad University.

1. Learning content: Integrating critical issues, such as climate change, biodiversity, disaster risk reduction (DRR), and sustainable consumption and production (SCP) into the curriculum,
2. Pedagogy and learning environments: Designing teaching and learning in an interactive, learner-centred way that enables exploratory, action-oriented and transformative learning. Rethinking learning environments – physical as well as virtual and online – to inspire learners to act for sustainability,
3. Learning outcomes: Stimulating learning and promoting core competences, such as critical and systemic thinking, collaborative decision-making, and taking responsibility for present and future generations.

4. Societal transformation: Empowering learners of any age, in education setting, to transform themselves and the society they live in,
 - a. Enabling a transition to greater economies and societies,
 - b. Equipping learners with skills for ‘green jobs’,
 - c. Motivating people to adopt sustainable lifestyles,
 - d. Empowering people to be ‘global citizens’ who engage and assume active roles, both locally and globally, to face and to resolve challenges and ultimately to become proactive contributors to creating a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable world.

(UNESCO, 2014, Roadmap for implementation of the Global Action Programme for Education for Sustainable Development)

The design of the Masters programme very well responds to all the above points, except that the emphasis in our programme has not directly been on the point 4(a) on ‘green jobs’.

Among various strategic areas and partners, I may connect to the “[United Nations Global Compact's Principles for Responsible Management Education \(PRME\) initiative](#)” and the UNESCO CHAIR "HIGHER EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT". As the programme at Ahmedabad University completes its first cycle, after which a review is planned to ensure necessary revisions to stabilize the programme in the university’s academic system, we may as well be aligned very well to the ‘Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) initiative’.

The draft plan of action, out of the last ESD conference at CEE (January 2016) primarily the following two points are pertinent to the programme at Ahmedabad University:

- integration of systems thinking, complexity thinking, and the adoption of an **integrated, critical, transformative and reflexive approach to learning** and the SDGs is needed. Emphasis on an integrated approach to the SDGs should continue to foreground the interrelated nature of environment, society and economy.
- **Transformative learning that is dialogical, holistic, humanistic, creative and critical should be foregrounded.** Such learning should also be inclusive of a variety of forms of knowledge, and should help to create vibrant and rich ecologies of knowledge for transformative praxis. A transformative learning model should engender inclusivity in the true sense

of the word, consciousness raising, critical reflection, conviction, desire to change and contribute to the well being of all. (<http://ceeindia.org/esdg/PDF/Conference%20Final%20Action%20January%202013,%202016.pdf> accessed July 14, 2016)

7. Conclusion

Above critique of SD and ESD – particularly with regards to the reference to ‘culture’ (interpreted here in the context of cultural heritage) points out that there is almost a missed opportunity of drawing many locally tested and applicable knowledges and practices on sustainable development. This is where the critique of the general uncritical reference to education for sustainable development becomes important. The paper highlighted a need to review the educational approaches – particularly where to look for appropriate and contextual lessons and knowledge on sustainable development. This leads to realize that the old school thinking of ‘cultural heritage’ vs. development is a false debate, and it need not be so. A good strategy of grounding the sustainable development idea is to look deeper into local cultural practices which may offer important but critically ignored knowledges about ecological sustainability. This approach also facilitate overall social and economic development, and more importantly rooting the sustainable development agenda into specific local contexts. This is an important thread that is yet to be fully grasped by the educational sector. It is in such contexts that a formal educational programme related to cultural heritage may contribute to connect the cultural resources with sustainable development agenda. This is an area that is mostly overlooked.

The post-2015 sustainable development agenda – particularly the ESD initiative, and a unique Masters degree programme in Heritage Management at Ahmedabad University (India) are two independently occurred events. However, upon examining the discourses and aims, it appears that there are many shared strategies and goals. In this context, the paper briefly explored that the idea and tenets of sustainable development as well as ESD strategies, and the strategies adopted in the Masters degree programme at Ahmedabad University, have many shared concepts and goals. Using the Ahmedabad University’s new programme on Heritage Management as a case to elaborate the process and scope, this paper has argued that the ESD may strategically connect to the cultural heritage sector, particularly by integrating ESD and SDGs with a few Heritage Studies and Heritage Management degree programmes that exist around the world. A coalition of such holistic

programmes and institutions may be considered as an important ally for the promotion and enrichment of ESD.

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