

Challenges of Planning for Heritage Areas in Panaji City

Shaikh Ali Ahmed¹ and Dr. B. Shankar²

¹(Planning Assistant, North Goa Planning Authority) Goa

²(Associate Professor in Urban and Regional Planning, Institute of Development Studies, University of Mysore) Mysore

ABSTRACT

Panaji is well known for its heritage and rich culture. Panaji was formally a Portuguese colony and now it is one of the important tourist destinations in India having one of the biggest coastlines. Panaji has been declared as Heritage city under redevelopment scheme covered by JNNURM by State and Central Government. The Outline Development Plan 2011 of Panaji has identified as many as 40 sites, monuments, buildings and houses which are of historical and architectural significance and listed in "The Goa Land Development and Building Construction Regulation 2010". There are many more heritage structures which needs identification and conservation. These structures have come under tremendous threat of new development and getting demolished due to non comprehensive approach by the agencies involved in conserving including the people at large. The paper focuses on the issues and challenges that are faced by heritage areas and planning measures for harmonious development of heritage areas in the City of Panaji.

Key Words: Heritage Areas, Conservation Areas, Challenges, Measures.

I. INTRODUCTION

Panaji is the capital city of the state of Goa, and headquarters of the North Goa district. Also, a historical city known for its rich culture, architecture and built heritage situated on the bank of Mandovi estuary. Panaji is the important centre in terms of Indo-Portuguese cultural heritage, having a number of natural, built, tangible and intangible sites and monuments. The City of Panaji has been declared as heritage city by the state and central Govt. It is spotted as one of the most attractive tourist destination and heritage centres in India, and also attracts a number of national and international tourist every.

Panaji is located in 15.25° North Latitude, 73.5° to East Latitude and about 60 Meter above the Mean Sea Level. Most of the important heritage churches are located in Old Goa, on the east of Panaji, about a distance of 10 kms. The unique cultural atmosphere is the result of the long absorbed 450 years of Portuguese rule. The influence has left a deep impact on the local traditions in all spheres and has formed a distinct cultural identity of the people. St. Francis Xavier was an instrument to carry with him the gospel of Jesus but more than that he also carried a way of life of people, their ethos and a rich culture in which

perhaps dance, music, arts, crafts, architecture, festivals, fun and frolic were all entwined with each other. Goa, therefore, has become "A symbol of religious co-existence, tolerance, and a unique example of cross fertilization of cultures in our vast, multi-racial, multi-lingual, multi-dimensional complex society". It developed a strong identity of its own for which the people are really proud of.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PANAJI

Panaji had humble beginnings as a part of Taleigao village. At that time it was little more than a large coconut grove bordered by paddy fields, with a few backwater ponds, canals and creeks. The original name of the town was Pahajani Khali, the land of backwaters. The official name is Panaji, though in the local language (Konkani) the Panaji gets pronounced as Ponnji, Ponnje, or Ponnje. The Portuguese renamed Panajim as Panaji or Ponji. Panaji is a tiny city that packs in a large punch, built around a church facing a prominent square. The river Mandovi and the hillock of Altinho have historically been the determining factors for the city. During the 3rd century BC, Panaji and the rest of Goa were part of the Mauryan Empire. Panaji was the capital and principle city of Portuguese in 1843 after the collapse of Old Goa. It was thus a Eastern Empire, internationally renowned for its rich heritage, culture, famous monuments viz. churches, convents, temples, and beaches visited by hundreds of thousands of foreign and domestic tourists each year and one of the most popular holiday destinations, was also known as the Rome of the East. Panaji means "the land that never floods," was now renamed as Panjim by the Portuguese and it was also referred to as New Goa.

The city is bound by the Rua de Ourem creek on the north that has been paddy fields, with a few backwater ponds, canals and creeks. The original name of the town was Pahajani Khali, the land of backwaters artificially trained to flow along its eastern side, the Mandovi estuary on the north, the hillock of Altinho on the south east and the St. Inez nallah and Taleigao on the west.

III. HERITAGE BUILDINGS AND AREAS IN PANAJI

Panaji is the capital city of the state of Goa having beautiful residential, Institutional buildings and houses of rich architectural and historical significance. The Outline Development Plan 2011 of Panaji has identified as many as 40 sites, monuments, buildings and houses which are of historical and architectural significance and listed in "The

Goa Land Development and Building Construction Regulation 2010”.

The areas of historical significance in the city have been designated as Conservation / Preservation areas by the Authority and notified in the O.D.P. 2011 and Goa Land Development and Building Construction Regulation 2010. These areas can be easily identified due to their unique character, existence of monuments and structures having rich architectural significance. The Outline Development Plan 2011 of Panaji has declared five areas as “Conservation Zone”, and marked as “F” in the plan. They are: (1) Campal, (2) Mandovi river fronts (3) Fontainhas, (4) Portais, (5) Fonduvem-Ribandar. The total area comprises of 62.00 hectares and works out to be 15% of the settlement area approximately of Panaji Municipal limit excluding the unbuildable slope. These Conservation areas have diverse and unique characteristics.

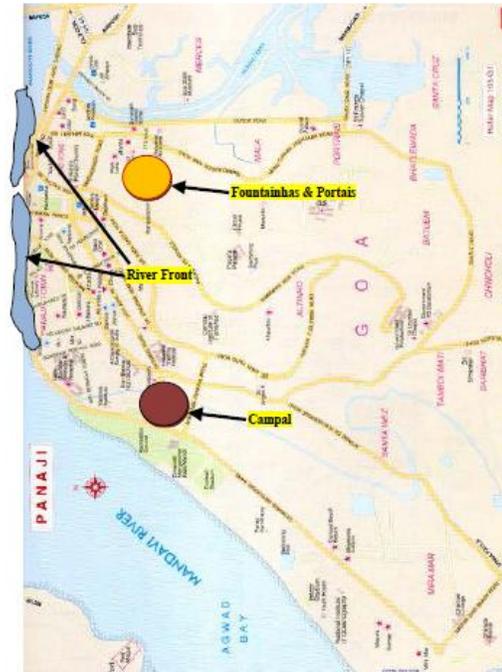


Fig. 1 Heritage Areas in Panaji

1. Fontainhas and Portais: Organic growth with Informal layout with streets and stepped accesses, high density mixed land use, interactive built-up and open spaces responding to human scale, although not of distinctive architectural style, the buildings together forms a cohesive group. In the absence of tree cover, buildings over looking narrow street/lanes provide shaded walkways and create an interesting play of lights and shadow.
2. Altinho: Predominantly institutional and residential use, individual large bungalows on undulating terrain framed by compound walls, ideally located facing the river front, devoid of through traffic and hence peaceful, low density of built up space.
3. Campal: Formal layout with Campal garden, facing the river front as focal point, individual low stung bungalows oriented towards riverfront, compound walls from strong visual element and provide distinctive character, green setting for built up areas adds to general ambience.
4. Mandovi River Front (Central Panaji): Orthogonal layout of streets creating well defined blocks with buildings facing the streets, internal open space within blocks correspond to larger city-spaces in the city, large number of state's historic public buildings with imposing facades that reinforce the city's identity. Low rise (G+1), Mangalore typed roof with repetitive elements. Predominantly commercial and institutional use with scattered residential buildings and extensive use of road space for social and cultural purposes (Ganesh festivals, Narkasur festivals, Church feasts, Carnivals etc.)



Fig.2 Modavi River Front

5. Fonduvem Ribandar: Predominantly residential and consists of old houses with fine architectural quality, having stepped and narrow accesses. The houses facing on either side of the road are fenced with solid compound walls. The rear strips of houses that are facing the river front are compounded with walls. There is slope for the area from kadamba hill to the old road leading to Old-Goa.

There is a great pressure of commercial development on the city's built heritage. High rise buildings have over shadowed heritage structures leading to aesthetic devaluation of the city. Natural heritage in terms of open spaces, trees lined avenues, historic precincts, and the river front are losing their functional and aesthetic identity.

IV. NEED FOR CONSERVATION

The city of Panaji is on the verge of getting developed from being part of fishing village of Taleigao in 1510 to a developed city in Goa. The evolution of the city has marked the achievement with the rise of many high rise buildings as a benchmark. The rapid growth in the economy especially during the 1990's, the city of Panaji could not resist from getting developed. It was during this period where all kinds of building activities emerged, colouring the city skyline, etc. Panaji is one of the cities that have its own history. The evolution of this city can be seen from the neoclassic architectural elements built during 1832. The culture and lifestyles are portrayed through the creation of built forms. This has made the old buildings significant in reflecting the culture and history that has formed the heritage of the city. The conservation of old buildings is a must in retaining the characters of the city. The density of new building designs seems not to be reflecting the true historical and unique character of the Panaji. The newly constructed buildings are modern in nature and don't reflect any aesthetics or architectural features. In contrast, the existence of old buildings, with their uniqueness, enhances the colourful urban form of the city of Panaji.

The city of Panaji is a fast growing city that the old heritage buildings are affected. The trend to develop the properties by the owners of the building has increased in which the economic factor play as the driven force. The prospective of getting big rewards by developing the land has resulted with the old buildings of significance and importance are getting demolished for new developments. The trends are irresistible since they could redevelop the city in par with the other developing cities without proper plans. The risk of losing the prospective incomes has put the owners not to retain the old buildings of high significance in its original forms. The purpose of the owners to develop the original heritage buildings, areas or houses in particular, is somehow in line with the motivated cost-effective factors as well as the desire to get rid of the old, decaying piece of architecture in absence of proper policy for maintenance of old heritage structures. Owners unknowingly the significance and importance of the heritage properties desires to develop the piece of land. It is the owner's right to develop the properties but could have been used as a mean to conserve the heritage properties.

Therefore the conservation areas need to be re-designated as "HERITAGE CONSERVATION" in the Outline Development Plan 2011 and for an effective integration or assimilation of the experience in the local context. The Government of Karnataka, Ahmadabad and Gujarat has been successful in bringing out the amendments for Heritage Conservation in their regulations. Educating the public at large and bringing the awareness of heritage monuments and areas should be put on top of the agenda. The high significance built heritage of Panaji needs to be conserved and calls for people's

participation to protect the heritage areas from disorganised and unplanned development for retention of historical character and image of the city of Panaji.

V. ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Panaji city has witnessed a tremendous change for the last two decades. Tall and disproportionate high rise buildings have over shadowed the heritage buildings. The heritage areas have almost lost their value and identity. This is due to the non availability of proper tools to control the heritage areas from disorganized development. The buildings of fine architectural features and aesthetic importance are demolished for the new development. Due to non availability of effective legislations and development control for the heritage areas, these areas needs to be re addressed in the context of conservation planning and development. The issues and challenges faced by the areas are as follows:

A) Campal Area:

- There is a great pressure for the new development in the Campal area due to its river front location.
- The new development lacks the aesthetics features, taller in height compared to the existing heritage structures, bulk in size and without any architectural features to suit the area.
- Private old heritage buildings that are of fine architectural features are being demolished giving way for the modern types of buildings due to lack of incentive programs and proper policy for maintenance and management of old houses of importance.
- Proper listing of the heritage resources is the need of the hour in the Panaji city.
- The Govt. owned buildings and Institutional buildings are maintained and managed.
- The new development seems to be not reflecting the true character of the heritage of Panaji city.
- The new development is not in harmony with the surrounding structures, aesthetics and in contravention to the height and number of floors.
- The new tall buildings will block the aesthetics vision of the heritage structures, there by losing the characteristics of the heritage area.

B) The Mandovi River front (Central area):

- The Central Mandovi River front area has developed rapidly due to its potential and being centrally located.
- High rise commercial buildings have changed the entire vision of the area.
- The buildings of aesthetic importance were sacrificed for the new development.
- High rise and high density buildings of stereo type have spoiled the beauty of Historical look of the city.

C) Altinho:

- The Development in the area so far has remained under control which is due to the area having undulating slope and extensively used by the elite and official residences of ministers and Govt. officials.
- The area towards the right side of Altinho slope has an organic form of settlement.

D) Fonduem Ribandar:

- The very character of the area has remained unchanged, few new houses of double storey has been added to the area. Although the aesthetic is not in conformity with the surrounding houses the height and bulk of the new development is in par with the surrounding houses.
- Tall, high rise and high density buildings in the adjoining areas have over shadowed the heritage areas.

E) Fontainhas:

- The new development in the name of repairs and renovation cropping up in the area doesn't conform to the regulations in force and has spoiled the aesthetics of the area.
- Since there is no much scope for wider scale of development due to area being organic in nature, narrow width of road and on slope, it has remained undeveloped.

The Fontainhas area continues to be a focal point for Heritage tourists and travellers with a taste of past glories. Interest in Panaji's heritage buildings is worldwide. There are still clusters of quaint old houses in particular on one street in Portais and around St. Sebastian Chapel, which should be maintained. A sound policy towards the conservation is required and managed successfully.

Progress is inevitable and in generally a desired process but should be sustainable. The changes seen in the areas of heritage over the years are due to ineffective legislation and development control. The conservation Regulations 1989 has remained ineffective in controlling the heritage areas from disorganized developments. The present revised development control i.e., The Goa Land Development and Building Construction Regulation 2010 has also remained quiet in bringing out the strong and effective regulations for planned development of these areas. In view of the present revised regulations that allows more coverage and high FAR for smaller plots, the heritage areas will grow haphazardly like slums and without proper space in between the buildings and no areas will be left for parking purpose. Therefore, the need has aroused to readdress the issues and stop the areas from getting developed into an unplanned and disorganised manner.

VI. SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
1. Strategic location and well connection with other State capitals and other towns in the State. 2. An important Destination from heritage tourism point of view 3. A heritage town with a number of historical monuments, churches, Institutional buildings, houses and other places of interest. 4. Scope for expansion of major road networks 5. Availability of land for future expansion and development of the area. 6. Centre of attraction for nearby states, cities and villages.	1. Non availability of parking space in the city centre during the peak hours of the day. 2. Movement of vehicles and pedestrian in the main area is difficult due to traffic congestion. 3. Lack of frequent Public transport system in the city. 4. Limited civic, social and physical amenities 5. Disorganized development in the vicinity of the heritage area.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
1. Connectivity is an important opportunity. 2. Riverfront development is in the city. 3. Tourism as a heritage tourism industry. 4. Enhancement of city's landscape and recreational spaces. 5. Area focuses on cultural and religious events at state and national levels. 6. Efforts to upgrade gardens and open spaces in the city and at neighbourhood level.	1. Uncontrolled building activities in the vicinity of heritage areas 2. Increase of migration forces due to availability of employment. 3. Changing socio-cultural ethos due to migration. 4. Construction on environmentally fragile area. 5. Chaotic development in the vicinity of heritage areas.

VII. PROPOSED MEASURES

The heritage resources of Panaji that are of high significant value should be properly protected, managed and transferred to the future generation in the context of sustainable development. Therefore these areas require conservative measures in protecting the rich heritage resources. These measures are identified and listed below:

- There are many heritage resources which are not identified and it requires identification in each of the heritage areas for protection from getting demolished.
- Proper listing and inventory of the heritage resources are required to be done on war footings.
- The heritage areas need to be classified into different categories of conservation as per their historical development and uniqueness in characteristics.
- Diverse development control in each of the heritage areas is to be implemented for regulating these areas.
- An incentive programme for protection and maintenance of the old heritage buildings/ houses should be carried out so that the burden of maintenance shouldn't be on the owner's shoulders.
- An heritage zones to be identified and a city specific heritage regulations are to be framed within the ambit of Town and Country Act of Goa State

- vii) An awareness programme and importance of heritage structures and areas to be brought among the public at large.
- viii) Insertion of transfer of development rights (TDR) in the development control for the heritage areas for those owners who lose their floor area (FAR) in conserving their properties in conservation zones.
- ix) Effective and strong guidelines are required for regulating these areas from disorganised development.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The city of Panaji is a fast growing city that the old heritage buildings are affected. The trend to develop the properties by the owners of the building has increased in which the economic factor play as the driven force. It has rich in heritage resources, buildings, precincts and areas. The heritage areas are to be addressed in a comprehensive approach for harmonised development of heritage areas and reviving the traditional culture.

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BIOGRAPHIES



Shaikh Ali Ahmed received M.Tech in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Mysore, Mysore. Presently, he is working as Planning Assistant in North Goa Planning Authority, Panaji. He is Associate Member of the Institute of Town Planners, India, He is presently pursuing his Ph.D in Urban and Regional Planning at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Mysore. His research interests to include heritage conservation, heritage legislation.



Dr. B. Shankar received the B.E. degree in Civil Engineering in 1984, M.U.R.P degree in Urban and Regional Planning in 1989 and Ph.D degree in Urban and Regional Planning in 1997 from the University of Mysore, Mysore. He is working as Associate Professor in Urban and Regional Planning at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Mysore, Mysore. He was a Senior Faculty Member in the Administrative Training Institute and State Institute of Urban Development, Mysore, Government of Karnataka. He co-ordinated capacity building and training Programmes of Urban Poverty Alleviation Programmes of Karnataka State. His research interests to include Urban Planning, Urban Poverty, Community Development, Heritage Conservation, and Planning Legislation.