AN EVALUATION OF ICCROM'S GUIDELINES FOR WORLD CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES WITH REFERENCE TO PAKISTAN

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Received: 31.1.1995

Keywords: Conservation, Culture, Cultural Heritage, 'learned Societies'

1. ICCROM stands for, 'International Center for Study of the Preservation and the Restoration of Cultural Property'. I am using the term 'West' and 'Western' to refer to the industrialized countries of Europe and North America.

The aim of this article is to review the document 'Management Guidelines for the World Cultural Heritage Sites' with regard to its relevance and effectiveness for Pakistan.

The purported objective of the 'Management Guidelines', published by ICCROM, is to 'provide advice and suggestions for implementing the intentions of the World Heritage Conventions'. It 'contains information which will be useful to all state parties to the UNESCO Convention for the Protection of the Cultural and Natural Heritage' (Feliden and Jokilehto, 1993, 1). The hundred and twenty-two page publication is supposed to be a bible of sorts for all conservation activities around the World.

For anyone interested in conservation, the Manual is a useful document. It provides 'guidelines' on most of the issues related to conservation. Based primarily on the Venice Charter, the Manual gives guidance on: (a) the degrees of interventions; (b) the management of cultural heritage sites; (c) staffing and personnel services; (d) maintenance programmes; (e) management of resource projects and town-planning of world heritage sites, etc. The issues of tourism and visitors to the sites have also been considered important enough to be dealt with separately, at chapter-length.

Professionally sound, the Manual would have been of even greater value had it been culturally neutral as well. Unfortunately, it is not. Its prescriptions correspond generally to the conditions prevailing in the countries of its authors and publishers, i.e. the West (1).
It makes assumptions which become invalid when applied to countries in the non-Western world, South Asia, for instance. It prescribes action that has no relevance to the reality in the developing countries. Consider, for example, the following; for raising money to finance conservation projects, the Manual suggests:

Although depending in a large part on a state grant whose aim should be to preserve the site and finance research studies, the Commission should be allowed to raise money from tourists in order to develop the site. (Feilden and Jokilehto, 1993, 4);

and on page 97:

Mass tourism now part of our culture and international economy, second only to the oil industry.

While mass tourism may be a part of the Western culture and may have become 'second only to the oil industry', enabling the generation of important revenues for conservation purposes, it is definitely not so in countries like Pakistan, India, Nepal or Bangladesh. In these countries, let alone tourism revenues, state grants...
2. The term ‘learned society’ is used by the Western scholars with the assumption that knowledge is produced in the ‘advanced’ industrialized world and flows to the so-called ‘Developing Countries’. It was used by Sir John Marshall, Director General of The Department of Archaeological Survey India in context to the sub-continent in 1902-3, while explaining his intentions in the publication of the Annual Reports of the department. He explained that his intentions were ‘to show that the Department, so far from looking to monopolise the field of research, desires and facilitates the cooperation of every earnest student and learned society’, and ‘...its duty will be therefore to place before European scholars material for elucidation rather than to attempt elucidation on its own account’ (Chakrabarti, 1988, 127). Further by Leonardi Waley a foreign expert invited by the British government of India in 1938 to advise on the current working of The Department of Archaeological Survey of India, who remarked the best methods and agencies for achieving the speedy and fruitful development of exploration activities in general, consideration in this regard being not only to Government but non-official agencies such as universities, learned societies, etc (Chakrabarti, 1988, 174). The attitude of the then ruling Western countries towards the countries they had conquered prevails today. Moreover it is obvious that countries like Turkey, which have several reputed Departments of Conservation of Monuments and Sites are not included in the list of ‘learned societies’. As there are no professional institutions of conservation in South Asia, countries belonging to it would hence have to depend on the experts of the ‘learned Societies’ for guidance or advice on such issues.

The fee of the contractor is difficult to determine because salary levels in different countries vary greatly ... least all his expenses should be paid, and he should not be asked at a short notice to drop everything to go on an ill-prepared (mission), a trained person, ideally a past participant of ICCROM or a member of IIC, ICOM or ICOMOS for the purpose of conservation are not forthcoming. As a consequence, with or without this Manual, the sites keep deteriorating with little or no hope of any remedial measures.

But this excessively Western perspective of the Manual is the least exceptionable part of it. More disturbing is its cultural condescension and its blatant promotion of Western expertise for conservation activities around the world. In a tone bordering almost on arrogance, the Manual suggests as ‘the selection of experts can be difficult’, that ‘learned societies (!) and/or professional institutions are one source of names’ (Feilden and Jokilehto, 1993, 48). It goes without saying that ‘learned societies’ in this context mean the ‘Western countries’. Once the ‘experts’ from ‘learned societies’ have been found, the authors suggest they should work for 7-12 years (Feilden and Jokilehto, 1993, 48). As for their salaries, they remind us:

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3. 'Mission', could only mean, that of a Western expert to a developing country, where a resource project has not been prepared well. Almost 90% of the teaching staff of the architectural course at ICCROM are from the Western countries, and conservation techniques they introduce are appropriate only for the Western countries. This leaves the students of the developing countries frustrated, as such technological advancement has not yet taken place in their countries. All members of IIC are again from the western countries. ICOMOS and Cultural Heritage Division are a part to the intentions and content of the document under review. All these organizations are located in western countries. Most members and past participants mentioned as well as the experts, are from the same countries, a convenient arrangement. The advantages western countries take from these organizations have been pointed out in the 'Guidelines' itself: 'A large number of training programmes were established during which most of them are in Europe, many have been initiated in other continents' (Feilden and Jokilehto, 1993). However the more objective situation was pointed out by Feilden in his earlier draft of the Guidelines, 'ICCROM activities have so far been limited to Europe and North America' (Feilden, 1990, 28).

By thus setting out the origin of the expert, the approximate time-frame of his assignment, the level of his salary, and the scope of his work, the manual seeks to assign the task of conservation and preservation of the cultural heritage exclusively to the Western experts (though with a few exceptions) the world over. This it does by making unspoken assumptions that none of the developing countries has any expertise in the field and that it cannot do worthwhile conservation work without proper guidance from the West. If anything, it smacks of cultural imperialism. It also promotes the myth that the Western experts are qualified to handle any problem, no matter of what nature and however complex.

Can the western experts, however knowledgeable of modern scientific methods concerning causes and remedies of material deterioration, understand the cultural complexities of all countries around the world? The answer in an emphatic no! An example of their lack of understanding is the attitude of the British towards the Indian monuments and...
archaeological remains. During their rule in India they listed, surveyed and documented monuments in a very haphazard manner owing both to their lack of understanding of the cultural heritage of India, as well as to their political motives. Furthermore, with their background of western classical architectural traditions, their main thrust was excavation and preservation of the Buddhist remains, particularly those of the Gandhara period (Chakrabarti, 1988, 44). What is more distressing is that on top of this lack of understanding, they apply over-venturesome solutions to the problems of conservation and preservation. It is hard to imagine if they would ever dare suggest the material and stylistic interventions in any sites in West which they recklessly execute in the non-Western world (4).

It is interesting that the 'guidelines' referred to above, were published by the ICCROM 'to advise on and make suggestions for implementation of the intentions of the World Heritage Convention' (Feilden and Jokilehto, 1993, 1), where an Inter-governmental Committee for the protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage of Outstanding Universal Values, called the World Heritage Committee, was established for the Protection of The World Cultural and Natural Heritage
The World Heritage Committee, as an intergovernmental organization and an international body, maintains and publishes up-to-date lists of properties of 'outstanding universal values'. It has also established 'The World Heritage in Danger', a list of the properties included in the earlier list, which are threatened by 'serious and specific dangers, such as the threat of disappearance caused by accelerated deterioration etc.' (World Heritage Convention, 1983: 13). The committee invites proposals from member states for sites to be enlisted on the World Heritage list. Six cultural heritage sites of Pakistan have been included in the World Heritage list:

1. The Lahore Fort
2. The Shalimar Gardens
3. The Buddhist remains at Takht Bhai and Neighbouring City Remains at Sahr-i Bahrol
4. The remains at Thatta
5. The archaeological site of Mohenjorada
6. The archaeological sites at Taxila
5. The colonialists thoroughly surveyed their colonies in order to attain a better understanding of their politics and sociology. This gave them strategic information on the basis of which they could formulate their political/colonial policies. This point is elucidated well in Said (1988, 44).

6. The British by the end of their rule were still learning to understand the rich and diverse cultural history of the country. Along with this, they did not bother to understand how and why the wealth of cultural heritage sites which exist in India had managed to survive up to the time when they took over. While one may commend their interest in the scholarship of Indian language and history, it is clear that they did not care to investigate the methods of conservation being used in India prior to their rule (Chakhrabarti, 1988).

All these sites are under the protection of the Department of Archeology, which is part of the Ministry of Culture, Federal Government of Pakistan. Before we evaluate the usefulness and relevance of the 'guidelines' in the context of the sites listed, we will briefly discuss the state of conservation activity as it evolved under British rule and as it exists in Pakistan today.

The Department of Archaeology of Pakistan inherited its administrative structure from the British who ruled India for a hundred years. It consists in part of two regional circles of The Archaeological Survey of India established in 1861 by the British rulers of India. Among others, through the establishment of this department, the British aimed to strengthen their rule in India (5). They conducted surveys, undertook documentation and preservation according to their perspective and lacked adequate knowledge of the cultural heritage of India and its conservation problems (6). Starting in 1861, the progenitor of the department, the Archaeological Survey of India, carried out extensive surveys and documentation while plundering and destroying many monuments and sites of significance (Chakhrabarti, 1988).
Descriptive historical surveys were an outcome of these surveys and documentation, and show an apparent lack of understanding of Indian culture (Fergusson, 1876; Havel, 193; Brown, 1942). In the earlier periods the excavations and surveys were carried out by the British army officers and not by trained conservationists (7). It was only in 1900, that the issue of conservation was taken up more seriously by Lord Curzon. As a result John Marshall was appointed Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India on approval of the British Museum. Even during his tenure the British were at a loss as to what to conserve and how, because of the lack of understanding of local cultures (8).

The problem was further complicated by declaring many monuments ‘antiquarian objects’ and thus breaking them from their life-line of cultural continuity. Furthermore, most sites, not falling in the realm of British academic or political interests were ignored during the last leg of British rule, Sir Mortimer Wheeler set up a training school in Taxila to train university students, members of the Archaeological Survey and other allied government organizations in excavation methods based on Wheeler’s principle of stratigraphy. This resulted in the Survey being headed by an Archaeologist and probably started the tradition of archaeological educational institutes in South Asia. At the time of the British from India, the personnel of the Survey of India consisted mainly of Indology scholars, some of whom were trained on site by Wheeler as archaeologists. Few conservation laboratories had been established (9). Pakistan inherited one of them. An insignificant number of draftsmen and an architect were also recruited, while some lay personnel were trained in photography (10).

The present Department of Archaeology, Government of Pakistan is a continuation of this administrative setup of the Archaeological Survey of India. To complicate matters further, historic monuments are now split up under several departments: firstly, the Department of Archaeology; secondly, the Department of Auqaf (provincial governments); thirdly, the Evacuee Trust Properties Board (Federal government); and lastly, the three provincial archaeology departments in the Punjab, the Sindh and the Frontier Province (11). The Muslim religious monuments are under the care of the department of Auqaf, while the Hindu monuments are looked after by the Evacuee Trust Property Board. There is no general policy of conservation under which these departments work, moreover there is no co-ordination between them. The Department of Archaeology personnel include archaeologists, historians, Persian scholars, etc., while the personnel of the other departments, with a few notable exceptions, consist mainly of bureaucrats and engineers. The three trained conservationists in Pakistan are not employed by any of these organizations.

In this chaotic situation there are no inventories worth mentioning, no documentation of cultural heritage sites and consequently no scientific method of conserving this valuable cultural heritage. Moreover no educational institution has a programme of conservation. Hence all types of conservation measures are carried out in situ.

The six cultural heritage sites included in The World Cultural Heritage List are being looked after by the Department of Archaeology. There are no special commissions or personnel designated to administer the World Heritage sites. The interventions carried out by the Department are in the preview of a new version of the 1904 Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, that is, The Antiquities Ordinance 1975 was formulated by Sir John Marshall. Furthermore till date the World Heritage Sites have not been properly documented except for Mohenjodaro (this was done by a German team). Moreover with the lack of inventories of all sites of cultural significance in Pakistan, it remains questionable...
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The architecture of these cities is rooted in the local tradition of carved, moulded brickwork (Edwards, 1992, 259-261), while most brick constructed tombs of Makli are influenced by the Timurid architectural traditions, and those of stone show Gujrati influence (Dani, 1982, 177).

whether the sites selected for inclusion in the world heritage list are appropriate or not. There may be other sites which are smaller, undiscovered, undocumented, or not studied, but which may be of greater cultural significance to the world community. The six sites from Pakistan that exist currently on the World Heritage List have either dramatically visible artistic qualities (Lahore Forth, Shalimar Gardens) or were excavated in the early twentieth century during explorations by the Archaeological Survey of India (e.g. Mohenjodaro, 1st excavation 1921-22; Taxila, started 1913-1950; Takht Bai, 1911-12; etc.) The tombs and the surviving cities of Uch, Multan, Sitpur etc. are of far greater cultural significance than those of Makli (Thatta), since they represent a period of an architectural history and an architectural style quite unique in the entire Persian/Trans-Oxus/Indian Muslim tradition (12).

The problems are further increased due to the present state of the six World Heritage List sites. All the sites are threatened by serious dangers of a diverse nature, such as: accelerated deterioration, heavy local visits, vandalism, alterations carried out in a haphazard way, etc. The threats concerning Mohenjodaro are well known. However, what is happening to the rest of the sites is ignored by the experts of various international agencies who have visited these sites often. This state of affairs is explained by the state of the prevailing legal, educational and administrative framework at both local and international levels.

Taking into account these problems of the field of conservation in Pakistan, it is reasonable to question the usefulness of the 'Guidelines' as a manual. It seems like a capsule of knowledge prescribed, which can over-ride the need of a thorough knowledge of the subject. As such its guidelines could be mis-interpreted, hence mis-used, unless, of course, an expert of a 'learned society' is invited to head the Commission for all the sites.

The crisis in Pakistan is not only that there is a lack of State grants to conserve heritage and that the administrative frame of concerned departments is disorganized, but the greater crisis is the lack of awareness of the State as well as 'architects and planners' on issues concerning conservation. In any case, the use of the terms of 'architect and planner' is dangerous for countries like Pakistan where architects are taking conservation projects with no educational background or knowledge of the subject, and are doing more harm to the sites than natural deterioration would do. All this cannot be rectified by any summarized 'guidelines' for conservation. Therefore, if the concerned inter-governmental agencies of conservation of cultural property really feel that it '... is the duty of the international community as a whole to co-operate', in the protection of the world heritage and that 'the Committee shall determine an order of priorities for its operations', it should recognize the lack of educational institutions concerning conservation in certain countries, and not wait for the member country to ask for assistance for less important problems. It should instead insist on filling in this educational gap as its first priority, rather than providing missions and other financial aid for hiring experts from 'learned societies'.

At this stage it would be more appropriate for Pakistan that departments of conservation be established in the existing schools of architecture. These departments must offer proper three-year post-graduate programs for the training of various types of conservators listed in the 'Guidelines' (Feilden and Jokilehto, 1990, chapter 7). This can be accomplished in line with the following provision of Article 22 of the World Heritage Convention for international assistance to be granted by the World Heritage Committee: 'Training of staff and specialists at all levels in the field of identification, protection, conservation and rehabilitation of the cultural and natural heritage' (World Heritage Convention, 1983, 17).
Such international action is already recognized as a conceptual framework by UNESCO

'... that it will maintain, increase and diffuse knowledge... in the field of heritage conservation,'... that '... protection of this heritage at the national level often remains incomplete because of the scale of the resources which it requires and of the insufficient economic, scientific and technical resources of the country where the property to be protected is situated',

also

'... parts of the cultural or natural heritage are of outstanding interest and therefore need to be preserved as part of the world heritage are of outstanding interest and therefore need to be preserved as part of the world heritage of mankind as a whole'.

Further,

'... it is incumbent on the international community as a whole to participate in the protection of the cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value, by granting of collective assistance ...'

(World Heritage Convention, 1983: 10, II).

To sum up, despite its various shortcomings, the Manual does provide a useful framework for conservation and preservation works. It would, however, be worthwhile for ICCROM, ICOMOS, and The Cultural Heritage Division of UNESCO to consider ridding it of its cultural biases and also take note of the good work being done in the non-Western world, by non-Western experts.

Finally, simultaneously with proposing the enhancement of conservation education, the Manual should emphasize the need on the part of trained conservators to shoulder the responsibility of conservation in their respective societies and, if possible, become crusaders for this cause. The conservators should be trained, and selected according to the nature of the work, as proposed in the fourth chapter of the 'Guidelines'.

DÜNYA KÜLTÜR MİRASı'NA İLİŞKİN ICCROM İLKELERİ:
PAKİSTAN AÇISINDAN BİR DEĞERLENDİRME

ÖZET

Bu makalenin amacı, ICCROM tarafından 1993'te yayınlanan 'Dünya Kültürel Miras Alanlarının Yönetimi İlkeleri'ni, Pakistan için geçerliliği ve etkinliği çerçevesinde tartışmaktadır. 'Yönetim İlkeleri'nin hedefi, 1983'de Ottowa, Kanada'da hazırlanan 'Dünya Mirası' Sözleşmesi'nde ortaya konan niyetleri uygulamak için öneriler geliştirmektir. 'Yönetim İlkeleri'ni kaleme alanlar, önerdikleri çözümlerin UNESCO Kültürel ve Doğal Mirasın Korunması Sözleşmesi'ni imzalayan tüm ilkelerdeki koruma sorunlarına uygulanabilir olduğunu varsaymaktadır.

Bu çalışmada, 'Yönetim İlkeleri'ni'nin profesyonel anlamda geçerliliği yadsınmadan, içeriğinin ileri batı ülkeleri için daha uygun olduğu ve üçüncü Dünya ülkelerinde kast kültürel himayeciliği ve Pakistan gibi ülkelerde 'bilgili toplumların uzmanlarının çalıştırılması' açığa çıkmaktadır.


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