

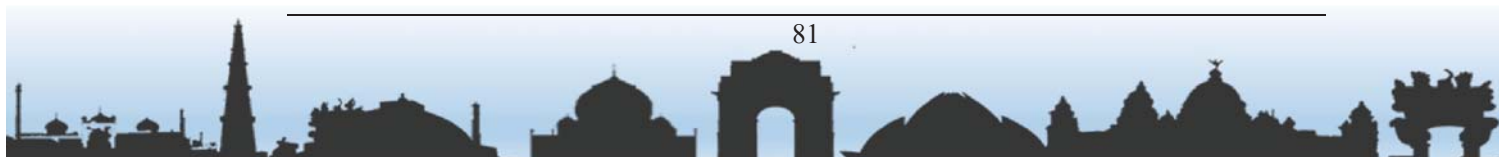
Chapter 11: Conclusions and Recommendations

The Public Account Committee (PAC), after thorough study, review and discussions of CAG's Performance Audit Report on Preservation and Conservation of Monuments and Antiquities (No. 18 of 2013), had made several recommendations vide reports No. 39 (April 2016) and 118 (December 2018)) for better management of Monuments and Antiquities. The Ministry was expected to initiate appropriate action on these instructions for effective heritage management. The follow-up audit was undertaken to assess the extent of action taken on PAC's recommendations and concern areas reported by Audit.

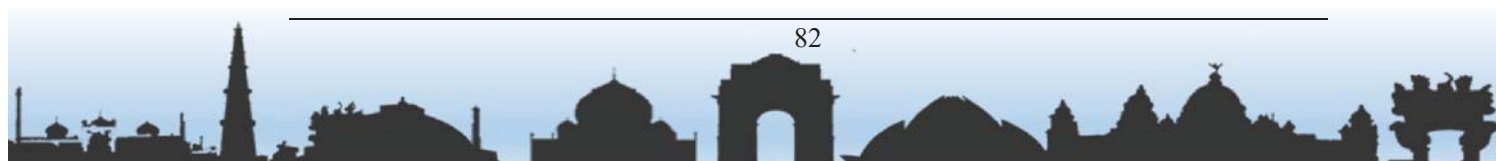
Since the previous audit, Ministry/ASI had undertaken various new initiatives for heritage management viz. use of software for digitising antiquity collections in museums, launching of e-ticketing facility for visitors, launch of *Adarsh Smarak* initiative to provide necessary amenities at monuments, etc. The follow-up audit, however revealed that most of the recommendations of PAC viz. updation of relevant Act/Rules, preparation of Heritage Bye-Laws, requirement of an efficient governance system, digitisation of data of monuments and antiquities, financial management, etc. were yet to be complied by the Ministry/ASI. Further, specific recommendations of PAC viz. constitution of a co-ordination mechanism with the local government/agencies, need for comprehensive survey of monuments, were not even conveyed to Circle offices for action. An analysis of recommendations made by PAC and compliance thereon by the Ministry/ASI is presented at **Annexe-11.1**.

A summary of focus areas discussed in this report and further recommendations made thereon are as under:

Chapter	Conclusions	Recommendations
	<p>The first report of the PAC contained recommendations on 25 specific issues, of which 20 were accepted by the Ministry. Out of five remaining recommendations, PAC, in its second report, made further recommendations on four issues and decided not to pursue the remaining one. However, action on most of these recommendations are yet to be completed even after six years of its recommendation.</p>	<p>Ministry/ASI is urged to ensure compliance of the recommendations of PAC with utmost urgency and priority.</p>



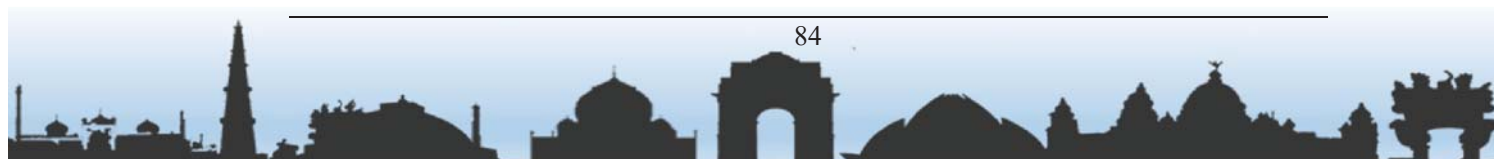
3: Policy and Regulations	<p>The recommendations made by PAC in 2016 were essential for effective heritage management. However, it was noticed that in most cases, despite the passage of time, the exercise to carry out necessary amendment/notification on policy related areas of concern discussed by the PAC was still in process.</p>	<p>The Ministry/ASI needs to immediately evolve a comprehensive strategy to ensure time-bound amendment in the relevant Acts/Rules. It may also expedite preparation of Heritage Bye-Law for all protected monuments to minimise and prevent encroachment.</p>
	<p>There was substantial delay in preparation of Heritage Bye-Laws to regulate construction related activities in prohibited/regulated areas of the monument despite constitution of National Monument Authority (NMA) in 2011. The significant delay in timely preparation of Bye-Laws is indicative of gross laxity on the part of Ministry/ASI with resultant growth in incidents of encroachment.</p>	
4: Governance and Infrastructure	<p>Certain areas of urgent concern viz. requirement of strategy/road-map for heritage conservation, reconstitution of Central Advisory Board of Archaeology, filling up of vacancies on priority, existence of a monitoring and grievance redressal system etc. needs to be addressed by the Ministry/ASI for improved working environment for heritage management.</p>	<p>Ministry/ASI must take immediate steps to address the PAC recommendations on issues related to Governance and Infrastructure to ensure effective heritage management. The Central Advisory Board of Archaeology and Coordination Committees for dealing with cases of encroachment should be constituted forthwith without delay.</p>
	<p>Severe constraints related to governance, human resources and working of various subordinate offices of ASI, which has also been pointed out by PAC, hinder its operation.</p>	
5: Financial Management	<p>Despite assurance to PAC, ASI's expenditure on excavation and exploration activities was still below one per cent. This was in sharp contrast to Ministry's stated position in its Action Taken Report to PAC earlier.</p>	<p>ASI needs a robust and transparent financial management system. It must increase expenditure on excavation and exploration activities and</p>



6: Identification and Notification of Monuments and Antiquities	Funds available with National Culture Fund have been accumulating over the years and not being utilised for its objectives. Time bound finalisation of Heritage Bye-Laws for all monuments was also important in efficient execution of PPP mechanism in heritage management.	make efforts to rope in more Corporates and high net-worth individuals into funding conservation and visitor's amenities as recommended by the PAC and in convergence with Tourism Policy. Specific guidelines also need to be framed for categorization of monuments as ticketed/non-ticketed as the absence thereof may adversely impact revenue.
	Despite recommendation of PAC for categorisation of a monument as ticketed/non-ticketed, amount of fees to be levied/shared, issue of notification, etc., there was lack of clear guidelines on these aspects.	
	Work regarding preparation of centralised and digitised database of monuments and antiquities was lagging even after 14 years of establishment of National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities.	Issues related to documentation & digitisation of monuments and antiquities, categorisation and notification of monuments must be immediately addressed by the Ministry as a part of a comprehensive strategy for heritage management. It should review the process of identifying a certain monument as of national importance and revisit their notifications and other documents for ASI's ownership. Antiquities identified as monuments need to be declared as movable or immovable through notification.
7: Monument management	Joint physical inspection of selected monuments, revealed that in most of the monuments, concerns regarding management of monuments including provision of visitors' facilities,	Increase in encroached monuments noticed during the present audit compared to findings of previous audit indicated poor and



	<p>conservation works, security etc. remained unaddressed despite specific recommendations on maintenance of Baolis, Living and other monuments by PAC.</p>	<p>unenthusiastic response mechanism of Ministry/ASI towards neglect, damage, loss/theft, encroachment etc. of monuments and antiquities.</p> <p>Concerns related to Monument management need to be urgently addressed by the Ministry.</p>
<p>8: Antiquities Management</p>	<p>In the national level museums and site-museums under the Ministry/ASI, issues related to management of antiquities viz. shortage of staff, lack of digitisation and accession of artefacts, their display, verification, conservation, storage and security were still existing. These concerns already pointed out in the previous Audit Report and PAC report were affecting the effective working of these museums.</p>	<p>A secure centralised storage facility needs to be created for safe custody, upkeep and maintenance of artefacts with computerised database system for their proper management. Concerns in the functioning of national level museums and site-museums under the Ministry/ASI reported in the present Audit Report have not been addressed despite having been pointed out in the previous Audit Report should be taken on priority basis.</p>
<p>9: Exploration and Excavation</p>	<p>Issues connected with exploration and excavation activities viz. non-existence of action plan, absence of centralized information and monitoring mechanism for excavation activities, delay in report writing work, sufficient budget allocation etc. as pointed out in previous Audit Report and also discussed by PAC have not been resolved.</p>	<p>The approach of the Ministry/ASI to ensure an effective system to resolve issues related with exploration and excavation has been found grossly wanting. Ministry/ASI is recommended to deploy its resources and funds expeditiously for exploration and excavation activities.</p>



PAC in its second report (December 2018), had shown concern over delay on the part of the Ministry in responding to suggestions made in its first report (April 2016). Further, PAC was appalled to note the tepid response of the Ministry in furnishing Action Taken Notes and that even after two and a half years, action on its recommendations was stated by the Ministry as under process. During the follow-up audit, Ministry/ASI had assured (January 2022) timely action on most of these still delayed issues. In order to bring about a holistic change in heritage management, it would be important that the Ministry/ASI take stock of its performance on all the previous/present recommendations, and ensure accountability of individuals/units responsible for previous failures and ensure time-bound action to avoid such lapses.

New Delhi
Dated: 31-03-2022



(PRAVIR PANDEY)
Director General of Audit
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Countersigned



New Delhi
Dated: 31-03-2022

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