

Chapter – III
Identification and Assessment
of Monuments

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Any historical monument can be conserved effectively upon recognition and notification as a “protected monument”. This chapter brings out issues in exploration, excavation and notification of monuments and points out deficiencies in the existing institutional systems. Audit noticed that prior to introduction of the Samrakshana scheme¹⁰ in 2020, the Department did not have any action plan for carrying out exploration activities. The excavation activities were also not prioritised based on historical value of monuments and remained incomplete. Though Department had notified 844 monuments in the State, some of them were untraceable during joint physical verification. Further, accurate details such as location, antiquities attached, etc. were not captured. This resulted in further deterioration and neglect of the historical monuments.

Process

3.1 Section 4 of Karnataka Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1961 (Act) empowers the Government to declare ancient monuments to be protected monuments, where it is of the opinion that such monument should be declared as a protected monument. The identification and assessment of monuments is the first step in conservation and preservation.

Chart No. 3.1: Process of exploration till conservation



Exploration/Survey

3.2 An Archaeological exploration is usually conducted to acquire maximum retrievable information from the field within the given schema based on the well-designed program of research.

The Government of Karnataka (GoK) introduced (March 2020) the Samrakshane Scheme to conserve and restore more than 25,000 historically significant temples, ancient places and memorials in the State. This scheme was to be implemented phase wise covering all divisions. During 2019-22 under this scheme, the Department took up survey of monuments in villages

¹⁰ The scheme was announced in the Budget Speech of 2020-21 for Protection of 25,000 ancient historical monuments in the State of Karnataka.

coming under 19¹¹ out of 240 taluks in the State incurring an expenditure of ₹ 54.90 lakh¹² (against the budget allocation of ₹ 60.00 lakh). Village wise final reports in respect of all the 19 taluks were prepared and the Department identified 9,552 monuments in 2,596 villages during the survey.

Prior to the implementation of the scheme, the Department neither planned nor carried out any survey works to identify monuments in the State for conservation and preservation. The reasons for not carrying out survey works prior to 2019 were not on record.

Further, Audit noticed that the Department had not fixed any timeframe to complete the survey in all the taluks of the State in a phased manner. There was no prioritisation of taluks based on historical importance or archaeological value too.

Further, on submission of survey reports identifying 9,552 unprotected monuments in 19 taluks, the GoK/Department did not notify the monuments identified during village survey. The condition of such few unprotected monuments are depicted below:



Picture No. 3.1: Dilapidated condition of an unprotected monument identified during survey at T Narsipura Taluk, Mysuru District.

¹¹ 2019-20: Mysuru taluk; 2020-21: Hassan taluk, Kittur Taluk, Shikaripura Taluk, Chikkaballapura Taluk, Kalaburagi Taluk; 2021-22: Savanur Taluk (Haveri), Mangaluru (Dakshina Kannada), Bengaluru taluk, Madikeri taluk, Alur taluk (Hassan), Hiriyuru (Chitradurga), Kamalapura (Kalaburagi), Kottur taluk (Vijayanagar), Bailahonga taluk, Raichur taluk, Nanjunagudu taluk, Srirangapatna taluk and T. Narasipura taluk.

¹² Includes an amount of ₹ 0.40 lakh spent on pilot project at Mysore Taluk during 2020.



Picture No. 3.2: Damaged monument identified during survey at T Narsipura Taluk, Mysuru District.

Thus, the delay in identification of unprotected monuments and lack of notification resulted in further deterioration of their dilapidated condition. This also indicated lack of any follow-up system in the Department.

The Government replied (August 2023) that based on the budgetary allocation, the antiquities and unprotected monuments identified under Samrakshane Scheme would be prioritised and taken up for protection, preservation and conservation before being declared as protected monuments. The fact remains that the Department had not taken any action on the already notified monuments for preservation, conservation and protection.

Excavation

3.3 Archaeological excavation means any research aimed at the discovery of objects of archaeological character, involving digging of the ground or systematic exploration of its surface or carried out on the bed or in the sub soil of inland or territorial waters. As per *Sections 21 to 24* of The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 (Central Act), previous approval of the Central Government (ASI) is required before carrying out any archaeological excavation by State Government.

The Department generally carries out excavation works at locations as stated in the annual action plans, which are prepared after budget allocation. Audit observed the following:

- The Department of Archaeology, Museums and Heritage did not have any laid down procedure or guidelines for selection of sites for excavation in the annual action plans;
- There was no priority list or plan for completion of excavation works within a stipulated time.

The details of budget and expenditure incurred for excavation works undertaken by the Department during the period 2017-18 to 2021-22 are as follows:

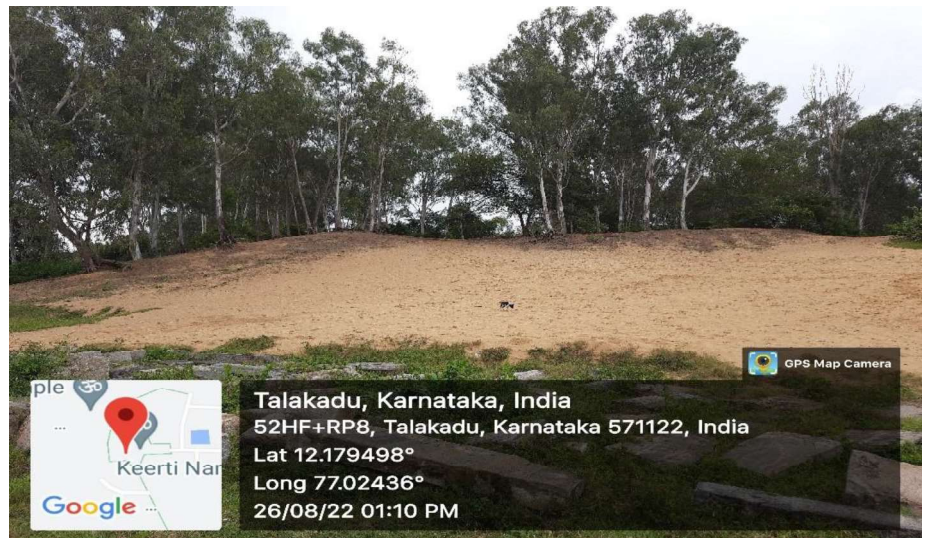
Table No. 3.1: Details of budget and expenditure for excavation works

Sl. No.	Year	Name of the Excavation Work	Budget (₹ In lakh)	Expenditure (₹ In lakh)	Percentage
1	2017-18	Nil	5.00	0.00	0
2	2018-19	Talakadu (Sand Dunes), Mysuru District	5.00	7.82	156
		NMQ Area – Hampi, Vijayanagar District			
3	2019-20	Talakadu (Sand Dunes), Talakadu, Mysuru District	15.00	5.78	39
4	2020-21	NMQ Area – Hampi, Vijayanagar District	5.00	0.30	6
5	2021-22	Nil	5.00	0.00	0
Total			35.00	13.9	39.71

Source: Information provided by Department

- A Budget provision of ₹ 35.00 lakh was made during 2017-18 to 2021-22 to carryout excavation works at Hampi, Talakadu, Kalya, Manni, Ikkeri and Rajghatta sites, which were included in the annual action plans. Out of ₹ 35.00 lakh, an expenditure of ₹ 13.90 lakh was incurred (39.71 per cent). Though there was sufficient budget, the Department failed to identify the places and carryout excavation in the years 2017-18 and 2021-22. The reasons for non-utilisation of the available funds fully were not on record.

The Talakadu is famous for Sand Dunes, which are a rarity in south India. Talakadu was the capital of Gangas who ruled during 8th century. Raja Raja Chola Ist had conquered Talakadu and named it as Rajarajapura. The famous Hoysala king Vishnuvardhana conquered it from Cholas and renamed it as Talakadugonda. Talakadu was ruled by Vijayanagra Empire and Wadeyars of Mysuru. During 17th Century due to mysterious natural disaster, the entire ancient town was submerged in the sand blown by winds.



Picture No. 3.3: Sand Dunes of Talakadu.

- The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), while giving approval in October 2018 on a proposal submitted (July 2018) by the Department had stipulated certain conditions, as per which the Department had to submit the Annual Interim Report of the work done comprising relevant section drawings, stratigraphy¹³ and important findings. The Department had not prepared/submitted the same till November 2022.

Thus, the Department did not have any laid down procedure for prioritisation of excavation sites and completion of tasks within a timeframe.

Recommendation 4:

Government may formulate a specific policy for excavation in the State. Further, a suitable mechanism may be devised to prioritize the excavation works *etc.* and periodically report the findings.

Absence of accurate list of protected monuments

3.4 Section 2 (1)¹⁴ and 2(3)¹⁵ of The Karnataka Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1961 (Act) defines the scope of “ancient monument” and “archaeological site and remains.” Section 3 of the Act declares that all ancient and historical monuments and all archaeological sites and remains which have been declared by erstwhile Acts to be protected monuments, but which have not been declared by or under law made by Parliament to be of national importance, shall be deemed to be protected monuments or protected areas as the case may be. Section 4 of the Act empowers the State Government to declare ancient monuments to be protected monuments, where the Government is of opinion that any ancient monument should be declared as a protected monument.

As on 31st March 2022, the Department has 844 Monuments protected by the State which are located at 30 Districts¹⁶. The conservation and preservation activities of these monuments can be effectively undertaken only if an accurate list/directory of monuments enumerating details of location of site, description of the site, significance of the site, demarcation of site of the monument, heritage management recommendation such as restoration, stabilisation and conservation works undertaken from time to time are maintained.

¹³ the analysis of the order and position of layers of archaeological remains.

¹⁴ “Ancient Monument” means any structure, erection or monument, or any tumulus or place of interment, or any cave, rock-sculpture, inscription or monolith, which is of historical, archaeological or artistic interest and which has been in existence for not less than one hundred years, and includes,— (i) the remains of an ancient monument, (ii) the site of an ancient monument, (iii) such portion of land adjoining the site of an ancient monument as may be required for fencing or covering in or otherwise preserving such monument, and (iv) the means of access to, and convenient inspection of, an ancient monument.

¹⁵ “Archaeological site and remains” means any area which contains or is reasonably believed to contain ruins or relics of historical or archaeological importance which have been in existence for not less than one hundred years, and includes,- (i) such portion of land adjoining the area as may be required for fencing or covering in or otherwise preserving it, and (ii) the means of access to, and convenient inspection of, the area.

¹⁶ The Vijayanagar District declared on 02 October 2021 was not included.

Audit observed following inaccuracies in maintenance of the directory:

- Though the Department is showing 844 Monuments protected by the State as on March 2022, there were 848 monuments in the directory as counted by Audit. The difference is due to counting errors in respect of Ballari (+1), Dharwad (+1) Hassan (+2) Mandya (+1) and Tumkur (-1).
- The directory of monuments does not contain the details regarding notifications issued by the Government for 561 State protected monuments.
- There were 113 monuments notified prior to 1947. In the post-Independence period the Government had notified 178 monuments. The decade wise notifications issued by Government are as below:

Table No. 3.2: Details of decade wise notifications issued by the Government.

Sl. No.	Period	Number of notifications issued
1	1947 to 1949	0
2	1950 to 1959	1
3	1960 to 1969	26
4	1970 to 1979	2
5	1980 to 1989	8
6	1990 to 1999	47
7	2000 to 2009	2
8	2010 to 2019	86
9	2020 to 2022	6
	Total	178

Source: Data compiled from information provided by Department

The fact that only 178 monuments were notified in nine decades *i.e.*, from 1947 to 2022 reveals that the Government/Department has not prioritized the identification and notification of monuments for their protection. Further, 9,552 monuments identified in 19 taluks under Samrakshane Scheme were yet to be notified (as discussed in *Paragraph 3.2*).

- The directory of monuments maintained by the Department does not contain four monuments of Chamarajnagar District which were notified during 2021-22.

Some of the pictures of the monuments which were not included in the directory are given below:



Picture No. 3.4: Sri Lakshmi Narasimhaswamy Temple, Agara Village, Yelandur Taluk, Chamarajnar District belonging to Chola period.



Picture No. 3.5: Sri Triyambakeshwara Temple, Triyambakapura Gundlupete Taluk., Chamarajnar District belonging to Chola period.

- Audit sampled 94 monuments in eight sampled districts for joint physical verification. However, the locations of 13 listed monuments/ inscriptions (14 *per cent*) relating to pre-historic/Neo-lithic sites could not be traced. The department officials were unable to lead Audit to the location of these sites. The details of these monuments are listed in the table below:

Table No. 3.3: List of monuments whose location was not found

Sl. No.	Name of the Monument	Village	Taluk	District
1	Pre-historic site	Taivathivi	Jewargi	Kalaburagi
2	Pre-historic site	Halmardi	Jewargi	Kalaburagi
3	Pre-historic site	Agalgi	Jewargi	Kalaburagi
4	Pre-historic site	Kottur	Jewargi	Kalaburagi
5	Pre-historic site	Guddaru	Lingsugur	Raichur
6	Pre-historic site.	Machnur	Lingsugur	Raichur

Sl. No.	Name of the Monument	Village	Taluk	District
7	Neolithic sites	Lingsugur	Lingsugur	Raichur
8	Hindu Temple.	Bodnur	Manvi	Raichur
9	Pre-historic site	Halapur	Manvi	Raichur
10	Pre-historic Sites	Homballi	Sindhanuru	Raichur
11	Fort	Gandharvagadh	Khanapur	Belagavi
12	Kalappa Temple with Inscriptions	Heggeri	Hirekerur	Haveri
13	Ishwara Temple	Sabalur	Shiggaon	Haveri

- During the joint inspection of the six locations mentioned below, the listed monuments/ inscriptions were not found/ available in their sites.

Table No. 3.4: List of monuments where monuments/ inscriptions were not found

Sl. No	Name of the Monument	Village	Taluk	District
1	Pre-historic Site	Sirwar	Devadurga -Sirwar	Raichur
2	Pre-historic Site	Manvi	Manvi	Raichur
3	Natural Cavern and Pre-historic Site	Navalkal	Manvi	Raichur
4	Temples of Ravalnatha with Persian Inscription	Chandgad	Belgaum	Belagavi
5	Vaishnava Temple of Govindaraj.	Nippani	Chickodi	Belagavi
6	Narayanadeva Temple; 5 Inscribed stones.	Nidagundi	Shiggaon	Haveri

- Four listed monuments in Haveri district which were notified and listed in the directory of monuments were actually under the control of ASI. The Department had failed to de-notify these monuments and remove from its directory of monuments.

Table No. 3.5: List of monuments under the control of Archaeological Survey of India

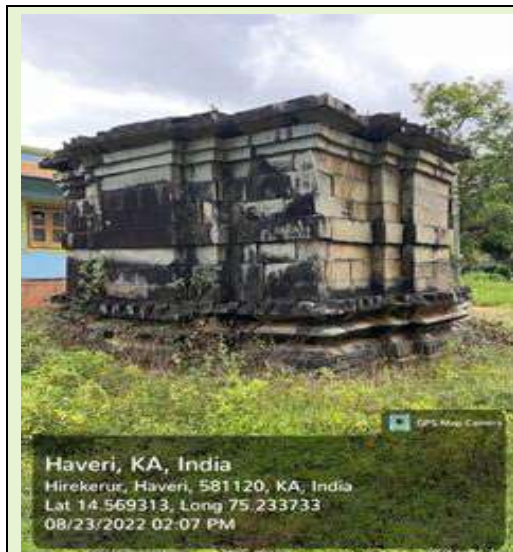
Sl. No.	Name of the monument	Village	Taluk	District
1	Temples of Someshwara, Kaleshwara and Udachamma; Inscriptions, Copper plate.	Haralhalli	Haveri	Haveri
2	Temple of Siddeshwara, Halevur Basavanna, Kalappa.	Haveri	Haveri	Haveri
3	Temples of Gargeshwara, Hanumanta with Inscriptions.	Galaganath	Haveri	Haveri
4	Harihar Temple with numerous Inscriptions.	Harihar	Ranibennur	Haveri

- One monument listed as Fort at Gandharvagad, Khanapur Taluk, Belgaum District is actually situated in Maharashtra. This indicated Department's lackadaisical approach in maintaining accurate locations of the monuments in the directory.

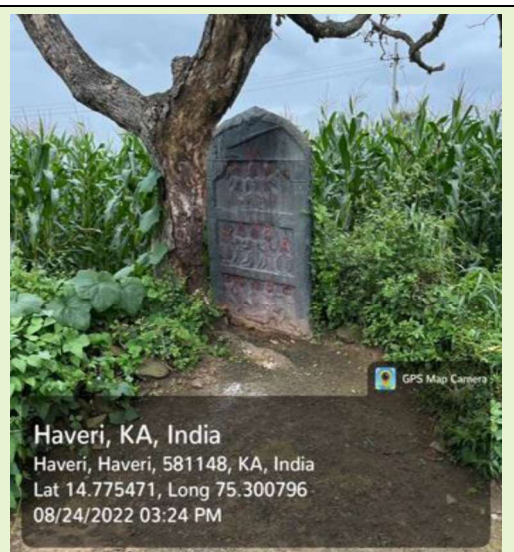


Picture No. 3.6: Map showing Gandarvagadh Fort in Maharashtra

- During joint inspection, Audit also found additional inscriptions/monuments having historical value that were not specified in the list of monuments maintained by the Department. The pictorial representation of some such inscriptions/monuments are given below:



Picture No. 3.7: Additional monument (Old Temple) at Yammiganur.



Picture No. 3.8: Additional monument (Viragallu) at Sangur. (Viragallu is a tribute to the war heros).

The Government replied (August 2023) that the Department has collaborated with Karnataka State Council for Science and Technology for digital documentation (with information such as 3D modelling, GPS coordinates, etc.) of all 844 monuments in collaboration and so far, work on 530 monuments had been completed. After completion of this project by the end of December 2023, the list of monuments would be revised based on the

digital information. Audit acknowledges this initiative taken by the Department and it needs to be ensured that the exercise is completed in a timely manner for all monuments and the directory updated accordingly and also extended to the 9,552 monuments yet to be notified.



Picture No. 3.9: Additional monument next to Choudi Gate, Gabbur, Raichur.

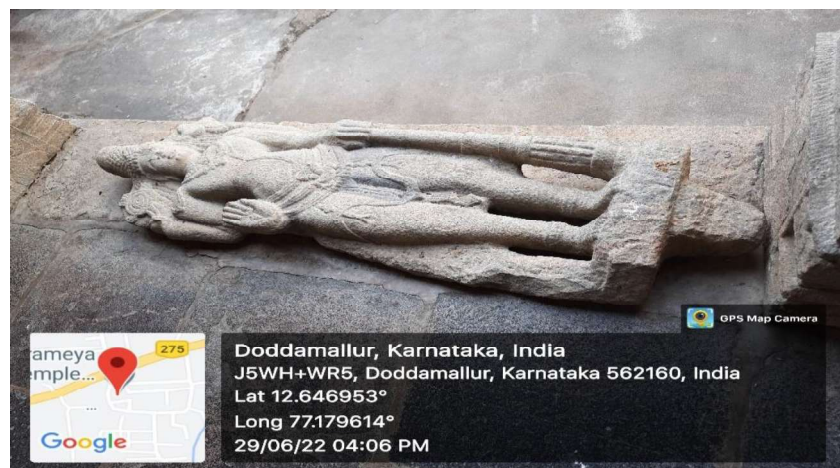


Picture No. 3.10 Additional inscription observed at Talaikhan village, Lingasugur Raichur.

Non segregation of antiquities from monuments

3.5 As per Section 2 (2) of the Act, “antiquity” includes (i) any coin, sculpture, manuscript, epigraph, or other work of art or craftsmanship, (ii) any article, object or thing detached from a building or cave, (iii) any article, object or thing illustrative of science, art, crafts, literature, religion, customs or morals in bygone ages, (iv) any article, object or thing of historical interest, and (v) any article, object or thing declared by the Government by notification in the official Gazette, to be an antiquity for the purposes of this Act.

The Department had not segregated antiquities from the main monuments or recorded their existence. During joint inspection, Audit found many detached antiquities lying scattered without being protected. Such unprotected antiquities will be prone to theft and lost to the public. Pictures of antiquities detached and lying scattered in three such instances are given below:



Picture No. 3.11: Artifact lying in the premises of Sri. Aprameya Swamy Temple, Channapatna Taluk.



Picture No. 3.12: Inscription found during joint inspection at Karadi Village, Lingasugur Taluk.

Picture No. 3.13: Artifact lying outside Sri Ramadevaru Sitadevi Temple, Channapatna Taluk.

The Government replied (August 2023) that Audit observations were noted for compliance.

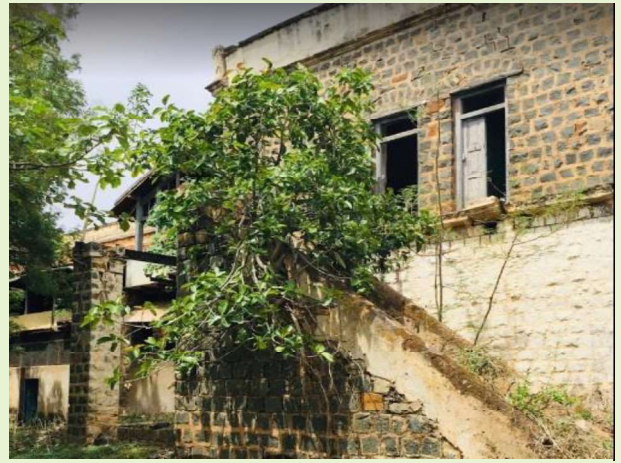
Recommendation 5:
Immediate action needs to be taken for updating directory of protected monuments indicating present status and for notifying unprotected monuments. The Government should also record and protect the antiquities.

Conservation of non-notified monuments

3.6 Section 4 of the Act empowers the Government to declare any ancient monument as a protected monument by notifying in the official Gazette by giving two months’ notice and considering objections, if any. Such notifications, unless and until withdrawn, shall be conclusive evidence of the fact that the ancient monument to which it relates to, is a protected monument for the purposes of this Act.

The Department did not maintain the list of monuments yet to be notified as “protected monuments” for which proposals were already sent to Government. Further, reference is also invited to **Paragraph No. 3.2** wherein Audit pointed out that the GoK/Department’s inaction in notifying 9,552 unprotected monuments in 19 taluks identified during village survey.

During 2017-2022, Audit also observed that the Department incurred an expenditure of ₹ 2.70 crore (out of funds released under capital outlay) for conservation and development of two monuments which were not notified *i.e.*, heritage building being the palace of Nawab at Savanur (₹ 2.49 crore during 2017-2020) and Kalleshwar/ Kalmeshwar temple at Hirehanaji (₹ 0.21crore during 2021-22) of Haveri District.



Picture No. 3.14: Palace of Nawab at Savanur before conservation by Department.



Picture No. 3.15: Palace of Nawab at Savanur after conservation by Department

The reason for not notifying these unprotected monuments before incurring expenditure on their conservation was not forthcoming from the records.

The Government replied (August 2023) even though some monuments are unprotected or unnotified, they have been taken up for conservation as they fulfill the definition of the ancient monument under *section 2* of KAHMASR Act, 1961 and as one-time measure. Further, it was intimated that administrative approval has been obtained to convert the Savanur Nawab Palace into a Government Museum at a cost of ₹ 8.41 crore.

The reply is not tenable as the Department had not taken up the conservation of majority of notified monuments which were in dilapidated condition and the administrative approval for the detailed project report was obtained (January 2023) only after being pointed out by audit. This indicates that the

Department diverted ₹ 2.49 crore towards conservation of a non-notified monument without the approval of the Government.

Non-constitution of Heritage Conservation Committee

3.7 With a view to conserve ancient monuments, the Government of Karnataka notified (21 April 2020) Zonal Regulations (Amendment) 2020 under the Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act, 1961 (Karnataka Act 11 of 1963). These regulations are applicable to all heritage sites, buildings, precincts and natural features declared under *Section 2 (1ea) and 2 (1eb)* of the Karnataka Town and Country Planning Act, 1961.

These regulations stipulated that every District (except Bengaluru District) shall establish a Heritage Conservation Committee (Committee) under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner and with other Development Authorities as Members. The main functions of the Committee are to prepare a list of heritage sites, buildings, advice to Local Authority regarding issue of permissions, to provide technical advice, *etc.*

Audit observed that the Heritage Conservation Committees were not set up in districts other than Mysuru, Chamarajanagar and Kolar. Even in the Districts where Committees were formed, meetings were not held regularly for identification of heritage sites and buildings. For instance, during the period 2020-2022, the Mysuru District Committee met thrice, Kolar District Committee met once and Chamarajanagar District Committee (formed in November 2020) did not meet even once.



Picture No. 3.16: Crumbling Lansdown Building identified as a heritage monument at Mysuru.

Thus, non-formation/delay in formation of Heritage Conservation Committee has resulted in non-identification of Heritage sites, buildings, artifacts, *etc.* It has also resulted in lack of monitoring of conservation efforts.

The Government replied (August 2023) that the letters have been addressed by the Department to Principal Secretary, Urban Development Department to address Deputy Commissioners to conduct the meeting regularly and for Deputy Commissioners to take necessary action for identification and declaration of heritage buildings.

Recommendation 6:

Heritage Conservation Committees need to be formed in all districts immediately and their functioning may be monitored regularly by the Department/ Government.