

PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF MONUMENTS AND ANTIQUITIES

MINISTRY OF CULTURE

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
(2015-16)

THIRTY-NINTH REPORT

SIXTEENTH LOK SABHA



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

PAC No.2071

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Presented to Lok Sabha on:

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LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
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COMPOSITION OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
(2015-16)

Prof. K.V. Thomas

Chairperson

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SECRETARIAT

1. Shri A.K. Singh - Additional Secretary
2. Shri Tirthankar Das - Additional Director
3. Shri Paolienlal Haokip - Deputy Secretary

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Public Accounts Committee (2015-16) having been authorized by the Committee, do present this Thirty-ninth Report (Sixteenth Lok Sabha) on 'Preservation and Conservation of Monuments and Antiquities' based on C&AG Report No. 18 of 2013 relating to the Ministry of Culture.

2. The Comptroller and Auditor General of India vide Report No. 18 of 2013 Union Govt. (Civil) Performance Audit on "**Preservation and Conservation of Monuments and Antiquities**" had assessed the performance of the Ministry of Culture in preserving and conserving precious monuments and antiquities which are of great importance to the country's rich cultural history and heritage. In the report, they have pointed out several areas of concern that need to be addressed by the Ministry to buttress their efforts so far. The Public Accounts Committee (2013-14) had felt the need to further scrutinize the shortcomings that were brought to the fore by the C&AG and monitor the actions taken by the Ministry following Audit's observation.

3. The Public Accounts Committee (2013-14) took oral evidence of representatives of Ministry of Culture and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) on 26th November, 2013. As the report could not be finalized, the subject was selected by the PAC (2014-15) which took further oral evidence of the Ministry and ASI representatives on 27th March, 2015. However, the report could not be finalized by PAC (2014-15) as well due to paucity of time. The PAC (2015-16) again re-selected the subject for examination and finalization of the report. The draft report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their sitting held on 01.04.2016. The Minutes of the sittings are appended to the Report.

4. For facility of reference and convenience, the Observations and Recommendations of the Committee have been printed in thick type and form part -II of the Report.

5. I extend gratitude to my predecessor Chairperson, Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, and members of the PAC past and present who have spared their time and effort in examining the subject thoroughly and making it possible for this Committee to finally give its report.

6. I, on behalf of the Committee, would also like to express gratitude to the representatives of the Ministry of Culture and Archaeological Survey of India who have deposed before the Committee and have provided all the information required by the Committee in their examination of the subject.

7. The Committee place on record their appreciation of the assistance rendered to them in the matter by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India and the Committee Secretariat in preparation of the report.

NEW DELHI;
April, 2016
Vaisakha, 1938

PROF. K.V. THOMAS
Chairperson,
Public Accounts Committee

Report

Part I

I. Background

1.1 The Comptroller and Auditor General of India in their Report No. 18 of 2013 Union Govt. (Civil) Performance Audit on “**Preservation and Conservation of Monuments and Antiquities**” had assessed the performance of the Ministry of Culture in preserving and conserving important monuments and antiquities which are of great importance to the country’s history and heritage. In the report, they have pointed out several areas of concern that need to be addressed by the Ministry to buttress their efforts so far.

1.2 The Committee on Public Accounts had felt the need to further scrutinize the shortcomings that were brought to fore by the C&AG and monitor the actions taken by the Ministry following Audit’s observation.

1.3 The Ministry of Culture had been in existence as early as 1961 and yet certain basic procedural and institutional lacunae still remain in its efforts to preserve and conserve a rich heritage of historical monuments and antiquities in the country, which is one of the largest depositories of such treasures of world civilization. Beyond their national importance, historical monuments and antiquities are a shared heritage of the world, of humanity, and therefore, national governments not only have a national responsibility in proper preservation and conservation of such valuable souvenirs of the past but also have a universal obligation to humanity as a whole.

1.4 The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), which today is under the Ministry of Culture, and continues to be the premier organization for the archaeological researches and protection of the cultural heritage of the nation, precedes the emergence of the Indian republic. It predates the Ministry of Culture

by a century, as in 1861 Cunningham was appointed as the first Archeological Surveyor.

1.5 From the antiquity of ASI itself and the fact that the Ministry of Culture had been created as far back as 1961 to protect and conserve ancient historical monuments and valuable relics of the past, the amount of public money spent over the years has been huge by any standard. However, has it been prudently done, can the country today take pride in our accomplishments towards such preservation and conservation of our heritage? If not, as the Audit observations seem to indicate, what needs to be done? It is in this frame that the Committee decided to further examine the subject.

1.6 The Committee, therefore, would take on from the Audit Report having considered the Ministry's replies to Audit's observations without going back into issues that the Ministry had resolved satisfactorily with Audit. Broadly, the subject is being further examined under the broad frameworks of policy related issues, issues related to Human Resources, Financial management and functional issues that stood out and still call for further remedial action. The focus of the report is on such issues over which the Ministry and the various agencies, particularly the Archeological Survey of India (ASI), have yet to take concrete remedial action on the lacunae identified by Audit and the findings of the Committee through their interaction with the representatives of the concerned organizations.

1.7 The Report No. 18 of 2013 of the C&AG on Performance Audit in respect of ASI and some of the museums contains a total of 197 paras. 90 to 95 per cent of these paras pertain to the functioning of ASI and the Audit Report has commented upon the deficiencies found in the working of all the wings of ASI, namely, conservation, museums, epigraphy, excavations, notification of protected monuments, manpower, budgetary allocation etc. The major findings of the audit relate to missing monuments, lack of reliable database of the exact number of protected monuments, absence of conservation policy, less

expenditure on exploration and excavation and poor documentation of excavation works, absence of comprehensive policy guidelines for management of antiquities, shortcomings in acquisition, documentation and conservation of antiquities by museums, improper record management in museums, absence of rotation policy for displaying artefacts in museums, shortage of manpower, etc.

II. Chapter II: Policy and statutory issues

2.1. The committee note that Audit had pointed out several shortcomings on even basic issues like evolving a National Policy on Conservation, having Acquisition Policies for antiquities and artifacts adopted at the Museums, evolving heritage by-laws, etc. Considering the fact that the Ministry of Culture had come into existence since 1961, and the ASI being an inheritance from British India, Audit had rightly pointed out that the public expenditure over the years does not appear to be fully justified by the achievements. The Committee, therefore, decided to examine the matter further.

National Conservation Policy

2.2. Taking note of Audit's observation in their report, the Committee enquired whether the ASI truly did not have a conservation policy, to which the Ministry replied as under;

"The conservation policy has now been prepared. The draft policy was placed on the ASI website for inviting of comments from different stakeholders, professionals and public. The observations have been evaluated and incorporated in the new policy"

2.3 Asked as to why the finalization of conservation policy by the ASI took so long and what the hurdles had been, they replied;

"Preparation of the "National Policy for the Conservation of Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites" under the jurisdiction of ASI has been a long and thorough process which is time consuming. For this purpose, a National Committee for Conservation Policy (NCCP) was

created to assist ASI towards the preparation of the Policy. The draft Policy once prepared, after the approval of the Ministry of Culture, was put up in public domain for two months to invite comments. Comments received were carefully scrutinized and subsequently a day long workshop was organized to discuss them further. These comments were accordingly incorporated to the Draft Policy. Draft Conservation Policy was also circulated to the members of the PAC as per their advice. The Policy has now been approved."

2.4 During evidence of the Ministry before the Committee, the Ministry representative stated:

"A conservation policy for conservation and preservation of monuments in archaeological sites has been finalised...The guidelines on notification and de-notification of monuments have been drafted and uploaded on the websites for public comments."

Exploration and excavation:

2.5 Exploration and excavation of monument of national importance being one of the central responsibilities of the Ministry of Culture, and taking cognizance of the importance of having an effective policy in place for concerted activities to achieve desired outcomes, the Committee wanted to know as to why the Ministry had not finalized the national policy on excavation and exploration so far. The Ministry replied as under;

"The National Policy of Archaeological Exploration/Excavations is in the process of being finalized..... awaiting approval."

2.6 According to Audit, ASI is spending less than one percent of its expenditure on exploration and excavation activities. Asked if this help in achieving the intended goals, the Ministry replied;

"The ASI is taking on excavation work based upon the potential of the site as well as problem oriented research project covering various time period of our past. Archaeological field works taken not alone by the ASI but by most of the State Archaeological Departments, Universities and other Research Organizations. Efforts are also on to augment the resources of

ASI with the enhanced resources at its disposal ASI would be able to focus more on Excavation & Exploration as and where required."

2.7 When further asked whether due to fund crunch any excavation has been stopped mid-way or not taken up in a year despite proven potential, the Ministry replied;

"As per the CAG report, the Survey is spending only 1% of its total budget on exploration/excavation. Now, it has been decided by the Ministry to increase it to 5% of total budget in first phase. Due to crunch of fund, no excavation has been stopped mid-way or not taken up in a year despite proven potential till date."

2.8 Asked about the reasons for delay in finalization of National Policy on Archaeological Excavation and Explorations, the Ministry submitted;

"The delay in finalization of National Policy on Archaeological Excavation and Explorations was due to in depth consultation required with various stake holders and is in the final stages of approval."

2.9 During the oral evidence taken by the Committee on 23rd March, 2015, the Ministry submitted as follows;

".....Similarly, the policy on excavation and explorations has been finalised."

2.10 Picking up from the Audit's observation of the absence of a common policy of museums for acquisition, preservation, conservation, etc. the Committee asked to be apprised of the reasons therefore. The Ministry in their reply stated;

"Although there is no uniform policy for acquisition, preservation and conservation of antiquities, the Museums do follow clear guidelines for acquisition, preservation and conservation. A Draft Acquisition Policy has been framed and is in the process of finalization after which, it will be followed uniformly by all the Museums under the Ministry of Culture. In addition regarding conservation of antiquities the best practices being followed by CSMVS Museum have been communicated to all Museums for compliance."

2.11 On why the Ministry has not been able to amend the Antiquities and Art Treasure act 1972, the process of which had started in 1997, the Ministry replied;

"A committee of Experts under the Chairmanship of Dr. Karan Singh has been constituted to look into all aspects pertaining to Antiquities and to suggest a suitable frame work of amendments to the AAT Act, 1972."

2.12 Upon further probing, the Ministry submitted that a retired LR has been appointed to draft the following Acts and Rules in Hindi and English: Antiquities and Art Treasures Export and Import Control Act, 2013-14 and Indian Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 2013-14 (To regulate and to promote domestic art market) which task is likely to be completed shortly.

2.13 The committee during evidence expressed concern over the huge illegal trade in antiquities and artifacts both inside the country and in the export market. Asked about the measures initiated to tackle the problem and prevent valuable antiquities and artifacts from landing in foreign shores, the ministry representative replied;

"For illegal exports, separately we have an Antiquities Act. One of the reasons for smuggling is that antiquity prices are very depressed in India. One of the reasons for depressed prices is that under the law you have to register and take permission. Every one year, the last 100 years become antiquity. So, it is very difficult for people though modern art sells at a very high cost in India. We are re-drafting the Act. One of the objectives is to make trade in antiquities within the country free. Otherwise, even if a person wants to buy and donate to a museum a lot of issues are there. We will get the final draft out very quickly."

2.14 On the efforts to evolve a structured policy on acquisition of Antiquities, the representative of the Ministry during evidence before the Committee stated;

"A legal consultant has been engaged for drafting the new Antiquities and Art Treasures Act for facilitating domestic trade in antiquities though the export would continue to be prohibited."

Living Monuments, And Ancient Mounds

2.15 On the guidelines that are prevalent for the management of living monuments, the Ministry submitted;

"Conservation policy proposed for protected monuments under ASI recommends conservation works on living monuments as a joint responsibility of owner of the monument and ASI. Field offices remain in a constant dialogue with owners of living monuments to ensure that no improper additions/alterations are carried out by them. However, in the revised Policy for the Conservation of Monuments and Archaeological Sites proposed by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) this aspect has been further reinforced. Instructions have been issued to all field offices reiterating that MoUs should be signed between ASI and owners of living monuments.

More effective measures will be taken for monitoring of signing of MoUs with the management of living monuments."

2.16 Asked what the long term plan of the ASI is for the protection of ancient mounds, the Ministry replied;

"The excavations on the centrally protected sites are normally taken on its potential. Most of the excavated sites are fully fenced and some unexcavated sites are to be fenced in due course. All the excavated structures are fully conserved properly with the help of combination material and open for public view like - Nalanda, Rajgir, Sarnath, Sringerapur, Vairat, Basenagar, Bhangarh, Sanghol, Sravasti, Lothal, Suryapahar, Purola, Chandpurgarhi, Kanhipur, etc.

On the basis of the recommendations of the committee constituted by the ASI, the ancient mounds are protected on the basis of their potential."

2.17 The Committee also desired to know if there are any guidelines prepared for their upkeep. In reply, the Ministry stated;

"The conservation manual by Sir John Marshall provided guidelines for the protection and preservation of the ancient monuments/sites with structural remains unearthed from the excavations. The proper preservation and conservation of the site has also been addressed in the new National Policy on conservation and preservation of monuments/sites"

2.18 Upon further comments of C&AG on their reply, the Ministry submitted;

"..... National Policy for Conservation of the Ancient Monuments, Archaeological Sites and Remains (NPC – AMASR) for protected monuments/sites by the Archaeological Survey of India has been made in April 2014."

2.19 On why the ASI has not prepared and implement any policy specially designed for the 12 more monuments that were more than 2000 years old, the Ministry replied;

"The protection of the monuments can be taken up on the basis of the study carried out by field officers keeping in view of the archaeological/historical and the significance of the said monument....A draft policy for protection of monuments has been prepared. It is applicable to all the proposals."

2.20 Asked if there is any specific policy for preservation/conservation of Rock Edicts, the Ministry stated;

"There is no specific policy for preservation/conservation of Rock Edicts. The conservation of the rock edict is being taken up on the basis of requirement after examining the condition of the same."

2.21 The Committee desired to know whether ASI has devised any comprehensive policy for the management of the antiquities. The Ministry responded as follows;

"The policy is envisaged in various clauses of the AAT Act, 1972 and Rules 1973. DG, ASI is the statutory authority for the implementation of the Act."

2.22 Asked if there are any uniform procedures developed for the museums for different aspects of their functioning, the Ministry in reply wrote;

"There are uniform procedures adopted for all Archaeological Site Museums in respect of opening/closing of the museum, inventory of collections, display, and security and reserve collections. The museum in-charge maintains opening/closing registers, gallery registers, accession registers, etc. A broad policy of 1915 for the site museums is now being

re-examined and re-defined. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between ASI-NCF-Getty Trust-BM for organizing a Capacity Building Programme for ASI professionals. The first workshop on 'Best Practices on ASI Museums' has been held on 19-21 November 2013 at Sarnath. A draft document on vision, mission and guidelines for Archaeological Museums has been prepared and has been submitted to the Ministry of Culture.....The digitization and documentation of art objects in the site museums is being done as per Jatan software in 2 Archaeological site museums. Further, six more site museums have been identified. The completion of digitization and documentation of Art objects as per NMMA template is also being undertaken. The time-frame for completion of work in all site museums depends on the availability of human and financial resources.

Presently no uniform laid down procedures are being followed in other Museums under MoC as they are independent entities working under the directions of their Board of Trustees/ Societies. However, by and large, there is a certain uniformity in the procedures being followed by them in different aspects of their functioning. MoC is, however, considering to standardize and implement uniform procedures/ practices in r/o important issues in all these Museums. In this regard the following steps have been taken by MoC so far:

i) A uniform policy for acquisition of art objects by Museums under MoC has been drafted which is under finalization.

ii) A Committee has been constituted by MoC to work out a uniform 'Security Policy' which could be implemented in all Museums under MoC/ASI.

iii) A Committee has been constituted by MoC under the Chairmanship of Director, Indian Museum, Kolkata to prepare a standard 'Manual of Procedures' for Indian Museum. Once this Manual is prepared it may, with suitable modifications, also be implemented in other Museums under MoC.

iv) A Museum Stake-holders' Consultation meeting was organized by MoC in February 2014. Important recommendations, which emerged out of the discussions therein, have been approved by the Ministry and communicated to all its Museums for implementation.

v) Uniform Guidelines for holding international exhibitions by the Museums have been framed by MoC and communicated to all the Museums under it for compliance and implementation.

vi) A set of instructions on the shifting of Museum objects has also been sent to various Museums under MoC for compliance."

2.23 On whether there is a policy evolved by the Ministry for evaluation of the genuineness of the art objects acquired/possessed by the Museums, the Ministry submitted;

"The collections in the Archaeological Site Museums are mostly the Archaeological material retrieved through explorations and excavations. These antiquities are meticulously examined by the Archaeologists. However, it is submitted that there is no notified policy for evaluation of the genuineness of the art objects acquired/possessed by the Museums under ASI. A committee of experts with sufficient experience in the concerned fields besides NLRC could be constituted to evaluate the genuineness of the art objects that may be acquired/ possessed by the museums under ASI in future. Presently there is no uniform policy for evaluation of the genuineness of the art objects acquired / possessed by the Museums under the Ministry of Culture. However, each Museum is verifying the genuineness of the objects while carrying out physical verification of its objects by utilizing the services of the experts in the field. Recently, the Ministry has asked all the Museums to formulate guidelines for evaluation of the genuineness of art objects acquired by them."

2.24 Asked about the steps taken for adopting a prescribed procedure in respect of the maintenance of accession registers for Museums, the Ministry replied;

"The Archaeological Site Museums have accession registers as per prescribed proforma which includes Sl. No., Accession No., Source or field register No., Mode of Acquisition, Description, Period, Locality, Price and Location in the museum (Display/ Reserve). The Museums under the Ministry of Culture are having standard Accession Registers which contain details of its collections. However, as a part of the digitization process and in order to have a computerized collections management system in the Museums, the Ministry has embarked upon a comprehensive computerization programme. Under this programme 'Jatan Collections Management Software' developed by C-DAC, Pune has been implemented in 10 Museums under the Ministry of Culture/ Archaeological Survey of India in the first phase. These 10 Museums are: National Museum; Indian Museum; Allahabad Museum; NGMA, New Delhi; NGMA, Mumbai; NGMA, Bengaluru; Goa Museum, ASI; Nagarjunakonda Museum, ASI; Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad and Victoria Memorial Hall, Kolkata. In the second phase of the programme it is also proposed to implement the Jatan software in all site Museums of the ASI in a phased manner. The implementation of Jatan programme will ensure that

the standard digital Accession Register is maintained in all the museums uniformly apart from having the physical Acquisition Registers.

Apart from the manual Accession Register being maintained by Museums it has been decided to digitize the collections of all the Museum under MoC/ASI in a phased manner. Accordingly, in the first phase the collections of 10 selected Museums of MoC/ASI viz: Allahabad Museum, National Museum, Indian Museum, Victoria Memorial Hall, Salar Jung Museum, Goa Museum, Nagarjunakonda Museum, NGMA, New Delhi, NGMA, Mumbai, NGMA, Bengaluru are being digitized with the help of Jatan Museum Builder Software, which has been developed by C-DAC, Pune. Digitization of the collections of Museums will automatically ensure that a uniform set of Accession Register covering all aspects of the art objects is available in the Museum."

2.25 On what policy is in vogue for the functioning and establishment of site museums in the ASI, the Ministry submitted as follows;

"A broad policy of 1915 for site museums is now being re-examined and re-defined. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between ASI-NCF-Getty Trust-BM for organising a Capacity Building Programme for ASI professionals. The first workshop on 'Best Practices on ASI Museums' was held on 20th-21st November, 2013 at Sarnath. A draft document on vision, mission, and guideline for Archaeological Museums is being prepared.

A broad policy for site museums was set-up in the year 1915 is now being re-examined and re-defined. Based on these guidelines a draft document on vision, mission, and guideline for Archaeological Museums has been prepared which is being finalised.

2.26 Asked if any steps have been taken to evolve a rotation policy for the display of artifacts at the Museums, the Ministry replied;

"The matter is being dealt in the draft document on vision, mission and guidelines for Archaeological Site Museums. Various Museums under the Ministry are rotating objects as per internal decisions being taken by them keeping in view the sensitivity of the objects to light and other elements of nature. The Indian Museum, Salarjung Museum, Allahabad Museum, etc. are regularly rotating the objects and bringing out new objects for public display. The National Museum has re-opened three galleries in 2012-13 and has brought out objects from its reserve collections to display in these galleries. The Museums are also taking steps to display objects from their

reserve collection by curating special exhibitions e.g. the Ram Katha Exhibition mounted at the National Museum in 2013 exhibited several miniature paintings from its reserve collections for the first time. Also, the Salarjung Museum has opened a new 'Walking Stick' gallery and the new 'Children's Gallery' is to be opened soon. The opening of the new galleries will ensure that more of the museum's collections are made available to the public for viewing.

ASI- A broad policy for site museums was set-up in the year 1915 is now being re-examined and re-defined. Based on these guidelines a draft document on vision, mission, and guideline for Archaeological Museums has been prepared which is being finalised.

Museum Division (MOC)- Rotation of objects in various Museums is an on-going process. Keeping in mind the need to bring new objects for public viewing and the conservation needs of the displayed objects, decisions on rotation of objects are taken by the concerned Museum Directors and the conservators. Many of the Museums are opening their galleries after renovation as well as new galleries, which would automatically ensure that new objects are brought to display for public viewing. A new 'Coin Gallery' has been opened in the Indian Museum, Kolkata and the coins in its possession have been displayed. In the National Museum, the Bronze Gallery, Jewellery Gallery and Manuscripts Gallery are undergoing renovation. Once the renovation work is completed and the new galleries are opened to the public more of the Museum's objects, which have been lying in the store, would be on display for public viewing. In the Salar Jung Museum a new 'Coin Gallery' and a 'Children Gallery' is being developed."

2.27 The Committee desired to know what steps were taken to maintain a proper reserve collection with suitable conditions for preservation and storing. The Ministry submitted as follows;

"The proper storage of objects in reserve collection as per 14 museum reforms identified by Ministry of Culture are being undertaken as part of annual works program as per availability of funds. Further, ASI officials have been provided training on 'Collection Management and Preventive Care' at Art Institute of Chicago under Vivekananda Memorial Programme for Museum Excellence. The Museums under the Ministry have taken several steps to maintain a proper reserve collection like purchase of movable compactors, storage racks and other appropriate storage devices specific to the artifacts. The reserve collections are inspected and cleaned regularly to keep them in proper shape. In some of the Museums, Hygro Meters and Data Loggers have been installed to monitor the temperature and humidity controls in the reserve collections....."

III. Chapter III: Human Resources Management

Shortage of Manpower

3.1 The Committee noted Audit's observation that the overall position of sanctioned strength *vis-à-vis* men in position in different cadres revealed an acute shortage of staff. With the passage of time, the work profile and scope of work had undergone sea change in the ASI. This, according to Audit, has adversely affected the performance and output of the organization.

3.2 The Committee found the manpower management in ASI and other subordinate agencies extremely unsatisfactory. In ASI, there was a shortage of 2,448 officials, including 229 in Group A and B. Four posts of Additional Director General (Archaeology) and 18 posts of Joint Director General created in 2011 remain unfilled. 159 posts out of 757 sanctioned posts for Conservation Branches remain vacant. In addition, out of 1,267 posts of Garden Attendants in Horticulture Branch, 246 posts are vacant. Out of 3,458 sanctioned posts of Monument Attendants, 1,279 (37 per cent) are vacant.

3.3 Manpower management in Museums was found to be still worse. 122 out of 276 posts are vacant in National Museum. 15 out of 86 in Allahabad Museum, 39 out of 166 in Salarjung Museum, 60 out of 209 in Indian Museum, 53 out of 176 in Victoria Memorial Hall and 45 out of 257 posts are vacant in Asiatic Society.

3.4 Some posts are vacant for the past 30 years, some for the past 25 years and a few for the past three years. In fact, it was found that the National Museum functioned without a full time Director General for four long years from 2007 to 2011. In these posts, not even ad-hoc arrangements have been made.

3.5 Capacity building of staff through proper training and deployment is crucial for the proper execution of conservation works. The sanctioned strength of the three main conservation branches mainly included the technical posts of archaeologist, engineers, horticulturists and chemists. Out of the 757 sanctioned posts for conservation works, 159 posts (21 per cent) were vacant. Besides this, out of the 1267 posts of Garden attendants, in the Horticulture Branch, 246 posts (19 per cent) were vacant. Also ASI had 3678 existing monuments for which there were 3458 sanctioned posts of monument attendants, however 1279 (37 per cent) were vacant. The distribution of work was uneven. In some cases Conservation Assistants (CAs) had as many as 50 monuments under their control which made the task of regular supervision and close monitoring practically impossible. The CAs were also burdened with administrative works viz daily receipts and deposit of revenue, monitoring of security, handling of legal cases, issue of notices to unauthorized constructions and other routine work. These additional responsibilities significantly reduced the time available with them for their prime responsibility of documentation, execution and supervision of ongoing conservation works.

3.6 Asked as to why several posts in ASI are lying vacant, the Ministry in their reply submitted;

"The shortage of manpower has happened owing to lengthy process for finalization of Recruitment Rules various court cases/ representations and resultant delay in the process of recruitment by UPSC, SSC and also by the Department. Non-availability of eligible candidates in Epigraphy and Conservation cadre is also a reason. Roster points have been issued for recruitment to 300 vacant non-gazetted posts other than erstwhile Group 'D' through SSC and Circles/Branch offices. All efforts have been made to overcome the situation."

3.7 On Audit's contention that the time frame may be fixed to complete the restructuring process, the Ministry stated;

"A concerted effort in the form of revision of RRs, recruitment against vacancies and restructuring of ASI has been undertaken. Vacancies are being filled regularly."

3.8 The Committee desired to be apprised of the steps taken by ASI to recruit personnel for the understaffed Museums of ASI. The Ministry in their written submissions stated;

"ASI has no separate cadre for staffing its Site Museums. These posts are filled by Archaeologists. The recruitment of a large number of posts of Assistant Archaeologists was held up in SSC due to court case. Recently, SSC has declared results recommending 66 candidates. All of them have been given offer of appointment. Out of them 45 have joined. ASI has been pursuing with SSC to recommend candidates for appointment of Assistant Archaeologists to posts requisitioned subsequently. Owing to shortage of Assistant Archaeologists Site Museums of ASI was understaffed, which was resolved temporarily providing staff and administrative support by Circle Offices of ASI. In the restructuring proposal a separate cadre has been proposed for Site Museums of ASI."

3.9 On when the restructuring proposal of the ASI will be finalized, the Ministry submitted in writing as follows;

"The draft restructuring proposal has been approved by Ministry of Culture. However restructuring involves approvals by DoPT/Ministry of Finance."

3.10 Asked as to why there has been acute shortage in the crucial cadre for conservation works, the Ministry in reply wrote;

"ASI has always faced the problem of shortage in sanctioned strength across all cadres primarily in case of Monument Attendants and Garden Attendants which was addressed through outsourcing to some extent. However, this has been addressed in the re-structuring exercise in hand. Other issues like making pay scale and career opportunities attractive have also been addressed."

3.11 Further commenting on the audit's comment on the need to set a timeframe for the re-structuring, the Ministry replied,

"The observations of Ministry of Finance have been addressed and a revised proposal has been submitted to MOF"

3.12 Asked as to why no recruitment was being made for administrative works so that technical cadres could focus on their primary responsibilities, the Ministry replied;

"The problem in the administration wing of ASI is due to shortage of sanctioned strength and delay in filling up of existing vacancies. While the former is being addressed through restructuring the later is being tackled by better liaison with DoPT & SSC, etc."

3.13 On the issue of fixing a timeline, the Ministry replied;

"The observations of Ministry of Finance have been addressed and a revised proposal has been submitted to MOF. No time frame can be fixed at present."

3.14 During evidence, the Committee raised the issue of manpower shortage facing the ASI and sought the comments of the Ministry. The representative of the Ministry stated;

"As regards manpower I would like to assure you that we have been very active on recruitment and promotion. Department of Personnel has been very helpful to us. They designated an officer especially for the Ministry of Culture to sort out our problems and they sat with us. The problem, as you know, is that if a post is vacant for more than two years it is deemed abolished. So, we have to go the Ministry of Finance. Then the RRs become old. Every three years the RRs have to be changed. So, we went through that whole process of redoing our RRs also. Then what had happened was that there was still Class IV in ASI which had been abolished in 1990s. We had never moved for multitasking staff. So again almost after 15 years we had to go to DOPT and to Finance. Then again they agreed on it. So, almost 1877 staff of ours in the lower category have agreed for recruitment. Now we have segregated them into two. One is around I think 400 which are those who want to be regularised, and there are some issues of age and otherwise which is with DOPT. The remaining 1400 and odd we have sent to the Staff Service Commission. They have to finalise the date but we hope that within this year even those 1400 will come. At officer level the main problem was of Deputy SA. We have sorted that out. We have approached UPSC for giving the date for their DPCs. Other DPCs and RRs also we are in the process of doing. Sir, Ministry of Culture has a large number of HOD posts which were vacant for many years. We have successfully vacated all the stay orders. Now DG Anthropological Survey, which was pending I think for ten years, we have vacated it. This month only the Cabinet Secretary is doing the

appointment. Similarly, DG National Archives has been cleared. Salarjung Museum DG was pending for six years. That has been cleared. NLRC DPCs have been held. So, wherever the number one was vacant, and these were vacant for many years, in all those cases either the stay has been vacated or they have been appointed. The prime example is in front of you. So, we are in the process today. There is no HOD who is not in the process of being nominated in the sense the ad has been issued and we are all in the process of doing that."

3.15 Asked about the steps taken by the Ministry to augment Staff strength of ASI, the Ministry replied;

"The Ministry has adopted a three pronged approach to augment the staff strength of ASI. The restructuring exercise in hand would address the issue of encadared posts and strengthen all wings of ASI at all levels. In addition the Ministry has worked out a comprehensive outsourcing model that would look after the problem of professionals other than those involved directly in archaeology/conservation/ excavation, etc. i.e. monument attendants/garden attendants/IT professionals, etc. In addition to the above the Ministry has also worked on MOUs with technical/educational institutions such as IITs/SPAs and Universities for sharing of professionals on deputation and training basis."

3.16 On the efforts made by the Ministry to provide sufficient manpower to horticulture branch to carry out their works after this was highlighted by the parliamentary committee; the Ministry submitted as follow;

"Efforts are being made by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to augment the requirements of Horticulture Branch through the filling up of vacant posts which have recently been revived. This aspect is further being strengthened through the ongoing restructuring exercise."

3.17 Asked about the steps taken by ASI to fill in the crucial posts of garden attendants, monument attendants, etc., the Ministry replied;

"As an ad-hoc measure the shortage of Garden Attendants is being regularly addressed through outsourcing of casual labourers though given the scale of operation of ASI and the limited financial resources certain shortage remains. The shortage of Monument Attendants is partly met by ex-servicemen, State Police and CISF (in Red Fort and Taj Mahal only) and private security guards. Here again outsourcing is subject to available financial resources."

3.18 On the issue of fixing a timeline, the Ministry replied;

"Approval has been obtained from DOP&T to fill the vacancies. Due process for recruitment has been initiated."

3.19 Asked as to why there was an inordinate delay in establishment of NMA and competent authority, the Ministry replied;

"After the notification of AMASR (Amendment and Validation Act, 2010) on 30 March, 2010, the process of filling up of the posts of whole time Member and Part-time Member in National Monuments Authority was initiated. The Member Secretary, NMA was appointed on 19 November 2010. A Selection Committee under the Chairmanship of Cabinet Secretary was constituted for selection of whole-time / Part-time Members of NMA who recommended some names.

Thereafter, necessary clearances in respect of the selected Members were obtained from various authorities before sending the case to ACC. The Appointment Committee of Cabinet (ACC) considered the candidature of the recommended candidates and communicated their approval on 18.11.2011 for appointment of one Whole-time Member and two Part-time Members. Thereafter, notification for these appointments was issued on 5.12.2011"

3.20 On why there was a delay in processing of applications by NMA, the Ministry replied stating;

"Although initially there had been delays in the grant of NOC's to the applicants by the NMA due to various reasons now the work has picked up speed. The NMA has held 94 meetings till date and had received 2592 applications. Out of these, 2092 applications have been considered by the NMA in its meetings and it has recommended 1982 cases. All the applications are checked for completeness at the time of processing and NMA has also deferred 79 cases for the requirement of additional information. Further, in 31 cases the applications received by the NMA have been rejected or decided otherwise. 394 applications have also been returned on account of being incomplete."

3.21 Asked to explain as why only one whole time member and two part time members were appointed instead of five each as per the validation Act for the NMA, the Ministry submitted as follows;

"In order to fill up the remaining vacancies, all the preliminary formalities before convening the meeting of the Selection Committee were completed. The Selection Committee interviewed the shortlisted six candidates. On the basis of the recommendations of the Selection Committee, one more post of Whole time Member and 2 Part time Member in NMA have been filled up with the approval of ACC. Thus, at present NMA has 2 whole time Members and 4 part-time Members. The approval of ACC in respect of appointment of one more Part-time Member in NMA has been received. Action to fill up the remaining vacancies of Whole Time in NMA has also been initiated with the issuance of advertisement for the same in the Employment News dated 16-22 November, 2013"

3.22 On Audit's comment that efforts may be made to complete the process at the earliest, the Ministry further submitted;

"Meeting of the Selection Committee was held on 11.12.2014 in Cabinet Secretariat. No applicant was found suitable by the Selection Committee headed by Cabinet Secretary. Vacancies will be advertised after minutes of the meeting are received."

3.23 Security of monuments identified for preservation is a primary responsibility. Audit has pointed out several shortcomings in the management of providing proper security to monuments resulting in encroachments. Asked whether the Ministry has put in place proper safeguard/security mechanism from unauthorized construction, risk arising from visitors and terrorists attacks, the Ministry submitted in writing the following;

"All efforts are made by ASI to provide adequate security within the available manpower and resources. The Security personal are deployed for the safety and security of some of the important monuments. CISF is also deployed at Taj Mahal, Agra and Red Fort, Delhi"

3.24 Upon Audit's comment that proper assessment needs to be done to access the total requirement of security staff, the Ministry submitted;

"A committee formed under the Additional Secretary (Ministry of Culture) to suggest Security measures at the monuments has submitted report and is being implemented."

3.25 During evidence, the Ministry representative submitted before the Committee the steps initiated to strengthen security arrangements around protected monuments in the following words;

"...the Committee for the manpower infrastructure has recommended engagement of 7000 additional security personnel for these monuments."

3.26 Proper training of personnel is a critical area of Human resource management. The Committee find that availability of trained manpower in adequate strength was found to be a problem within ASI. Asked if ASI conduct any training for its staff to make them aware of the site management plans, the Ministry replied as follow;

"New proposed HRD policy includes training on SMPs at various levels starting from induction training and continuing through mid-career training programs."

3.27 Upon Audit's comment that final outcome of the HRD policy may be intimated to PAC, the Ministry replied;

"ASI has formulated a HRD/Training policy which has been uploaded on its website."

3.28 The Committee desired to know the follow up action taken by the Ministry on the recommendations of expert groups such as Mirdha Committee, Parliamentary Standing Committee, Moily Committee. The Ministry submitted the following reply;

"As a follow up of the recommendations of the Moily Committee the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act was amended in the year 2010 and a National Monuments Authority was constituted for the purpose of categorization of the protected monuments into various categories and for giving permissions for renovation and construction of building in Prohibited monuments of ASI. Further, for ensuring better protection and security of the protected monuments 1877 Group 'D' posts which had been treated as deemed abolished have been got revived and these are to be filled up soon after the finalization of their recruitment rules. Also, in order to enhance its manpower, as

recommended by the Moily Committee, the ASI has prepared a comprehensive proposal for its restructuring to enable it to discharge its mandate more effectively. Similarly in compliance of the recommendation of the Yechury Committee, the collections management in the National Museum is proposed to be digitized by the implementation of the Jatan software developed by C DAC Pune."

3.29 Addressing one of the core concerns raised in the Audit report relating to lack of adequate training facilities and trained personnel for technical positions in the ASI, the representative of the Ministry, during evidence highlighted the efforts of the Ministry thus;

"As a part of the capacity building measures, the Ministry has taken up the training of museum professionals for wholesome improvement of museums in the country. The Ministry has entered into an agreement with some of the most advanced and popular museums in the world like the British Museum, the Louvre Museum, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Metropolitan Museum of New York, the Getty Foundation, etc., and has created unique training courses and workshops for its museums professionals... Similarly, Sir, we are setting up a training institute under ASI in Red Fort which is getting UNESCO recognition. We have forwarded our proposal to UNESCO. So this will become a regional training centre not only for our own ASI personnel but the whole of East Asia."

IV. Chapter IV: Financial Management

Inadequate Funding

4.1 Audit observed that the Ministry made budgetary allotments to the ASI without assessing their funds requirement and absorptive capacity. The requirement of funds should be commensurate with the number of centrally protected monuments and the need for preservation and conservation of these monuments. It was noted that the Ministry had made significant reductions in the funds requirement projected by the ASI

4.2 The Committee desired to know if this observation holds true. The Ministry in their reply stated;

"The Ministry makes budgetary allotment to the ASI annually based on the budget requirement projected by the ASI. It may be appreciated that besides Ministry of culture (Secretariat) the allocation made to the Ministry are to be further distributed amongst 43 attached/subordinate/autonomous organizations. On an average, approximately, 20% of the Ministry's financial allocation goes towards the ASI."

4.3 When Audit commented further that the total requirement of ASI was never assessed, the Ministry replied;

"The funds requirement for major Heads of accounts in use in ASI is based on projections made by field offices both for revenue and capital outlay in the ensuing financial year. Therefore MOC allocate to ASI from the available resources."

4.4 Asked to explain the reasons for reducing the Budget of ASI, the Ministry stated as follows;

"There has never been a unilateral budgetary reduction of ASI allocation made by the Ministry. Budgetary cut imposed by Ministry of Finance has to be absorbed equitably by all 43 attached/subordinate/autonomous organizations under MOC."

Revenue Generation

4.5 Audit has observed that there were deficiencies in the efforts made by ASI for augmenting revenue generation. Asked if the Ministry concurs with Audit's view, they replied;

"All efforts are made to generate the revenue through the monument. In addition to entry fee revenue is also generated through granting permissions for film shooting, culture events, sale of publications, grass auction, fruit auction, sale of photographs etc. There is a proposal to bring more centrally protected monuments under the category of ticketed monument."

4.6 To Audit's vetting remarks that the PAC may like to know the final outcome of the proposal to bring more centrally protected monuments under the category of ticketed monuments, the Ministry's reply given below seem diversionary at best.

"A decision has been taken to open Souvenir shops at select monuments. In this direction a MoU has been signed with Handicrafts and Exports Corporation (Ministry of Textiles). Initially shops will be opened at Qutub Minar and Sarnath."

4.7 Asked if any criteria or guidelines been fixed for categorization of a ticketed monument, the Ministry submitted as follows;

"There is no guideline fixed for categorization of a ticketed monument. Generally, footfall of the visitors at the monument is taken into consideration while identifying new monument to be brought under category of ticketed monuments. This issue will be addressed in the categorization of monuments presently in hand."

4.8 To this reply, Audit commented that no record is being maintained (or even prescribed to be maintained) at any monument in respect of the footfall of visitors, and hence, the reply is not tenable. The Ministry then submitted as follows;

"Yes. No record is maintained at any monument in respected footfall of visitors. Earlier ticketed monuments were categorized based on information from field offices. Presently, various stakeholders such as Ministry of Tourism, ITDC, and state departments will be consulted before increasing the entry fee or bringing more monuments under this category."

4.9 Asked if the Ministry think that rates charged for filming operations at a protected monument by the ASI is abysmally low in comparison to comparative rates, and what action has been taken in this regard, the Ministry replied;

"Revision of Rates for film shooting is under process. A balance has to be maintained between revenue generation from a monument and the impact that film shooting has on popularizing the monument amongst tourists.... A decision will be taken in FY 2015-16"

4.10 Asked as to why the rates of film shooting not revised after 1991 rejecting ASI's proposal in his regard, the Ministry informed;

"A balance has to be maintained between revenue generation from a monument and the impact that film shooting has on popularizing the monument amongst tourists."

4.11 Asked if there is any new proposal underway in this regards, they submitted;

"Yes, the proposal is under consideration. The Secretary (Culture has also taken up the issue with all the Chief Secretary of State Governments). ...A decision will be taken in FY 2015-16."

Non-Budget Funding

4.12 Apart from Budgetary allocations, the Committee are aware that funding can also be obtained from individuals and corporate groups through the National Culture Fund (NCF) which is a trust chaired by Minister of Tourism and Culture and accepts donations towards promotion of arts and preservation of culture. Asked if the option of obtaining funds through NCF have not been explored, the Ministry replied;

"Donors have not expressed interest in excavation and exploration works. Public and Private Sectors including Multinational Companies are interested in conservation, restoration and development works of world famous monuments which give them good publicity. Accordingly there is a number of ASI assignment funded through NCF"

4.13 Asked if ASI actually is facing a fund crunch and if so, efforts the Ministry made to strengthen NCF and its activities, the Ministry replied;

"Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is undertaking conservation works of monuments and archaeological sites across the country within the available budget and man-power. To further strengthen the budget provision, funds are sought from other agencies through NCF to utilize them for conservation works as well as for providing various amenities for which incentives in the form of 100% tax exemption for the funds made available for such works. More posts have been sanctioned for NCF, as well as within the ASI, new posts have been proposed to exclusively deal with the NCF Project."

4.14 On how the Ministry makes an assessment of funds requirement in the ASI, the Ministry submitted;

"Funds assessment and allocation for ASI follows general budget provisions and processes. As regards NCF projects is concerned, assessment of funds is done together by NCF, ASI and the funding agency."

4.15 On whether such assessment meetings are really effective in terms of meeting ASI's demands and on the issue of arbitrary cuts in funding by the Ministry, the Ministry wrote;

"The requisite funds for conservation are provided by the Ministry of Culture to the ASI. The budget allocations are finalized by the Ministry in consultation with the ASI. Higher allocations are desirable, having limitations of budget of the Ministry, but there is no acute fund shortage to ASI."

4.16 Asked as to how ASI prioritize its projects requiring funding through NCF the system of monitoring of these projects, the Ministry submitted;

"ASI had provided a list of 100 Projects to NCF seeking funds through public private partnership. Recently, ASI also provided a list of 25 projects to NCF for which funds have been sought for conservation and for providing visitor amenities. However, apart from ASI's indicating priority for certain monuments for conservation, it is also the prerogative of a donor agency, its funding capacity, location of a monument, that contribute to the selection of a monument for its conservation under NCF...The projects being undertaken through NCF are regularly monitored by the Project Implementation Committee (PIC), under the chairmanship of DG, ASI that comprise members from ASI, NCF and funding agency."

V. Chapter V: Functional Issues

Identification and Protection of Monuments and their documentation

Monuments of National Importance

5.1 According to section 3 of the Ancient Monuments and Archeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act, 1958, all ancient and historical monuments and all

archaeological sites and remains, which had been declared by the Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Declaration of National Importance) Act, 1951 or by Section 126 of the State Re-organizations Act, 1956 to be of national importance, shall be declared to be of national importance. The Act stated that *protected monuments* should be the ancient monuments and archaeological sites and remains which are of historical, archaeological or artistic interest and which have been in existence for not less than 100 years. However, the Act did not define the term "national importance" in objective terms with a defined set of criteria. Even the Ministry so far had not specified any detailed criteria for declaring any monument to be of national importance. The Ministry agreed that there was urgent need to review and survey all the ancient monuments and archaeological site declared as of national importance whether they still continue to be of national importance.

5.2 Asked as to why the Ministry did not conduct any comprehensive survey or review for identifying monuments of national importance, the Ministry replied;

"Identification of any monument of National Importance is an ongoing process. As per procedure, the proposals of protection of any monument are received from field offices of ASI after conducting a detailed survey and are scrutinized by technical and advisory committee at ASI HQ before declaring it as of National Importance under the provisions of the AMASR Act 1958. It may be informed that during the years 2011-13 six (6) numbers of proposals were approved for preliminary notification and two monuments have been declared of National Importance....A draft guideline for protection for monuments has been prepared based on the recommendation of the expert committee in which criteria have been prescribed. Out of 24 monuments 09 have been declared as protected so far."

5.3 Asked if the Ministry has attempted to define these terms on some objective criteria, after being pointed out in Audit, the Ministry submitted;

"Sub Section 2(a) of Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 defines 'Ancient Monuments' and Sub Section 2 (d) defines 'Archaeological and Remains'. The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites should fulfill the criterion as defined under the Act to declare the same as monuments of national importance. However, a draft guideline for declaration of any monument to be of national importance has already been prepared."

Protected Monuments

5.4 ASI did not maintain a reliable database regarding the number of protected monuments. Further, the information in respect of number of monuments provided by the ASI HQ was at variance with the information provided by Circle/Sub-Circle offices. Further discrepancies were observed in the figures of protected monuments provided by the ASI to the Ministry of Finance in 2006 and to the Parliament in June 2012.

5.5 About there being no Centralized database of protected monuments available at ASI HQ and at the Ministry till now and whether no need was felt for such a database, the Ministry wrote;

"The list of centrally protected monuments/sites is already available on ASI web site of the HQ. In addition, Circle/State wise list of monuments/sites are also available on the web site of each Circle. These lists are updated as and when any new monuments/site is declared as centrally protected. Further, a committee has also been constituted to verify the data to avoid any discrepancies."

5.6 Audit had pointed to a variation between the number of protected monuments as maintained at ASI Headquarters and by Circle offices. On being asked as to what action had been taken to ensure no further misinformation recur in future, the Ministry replied;

"The variation in respect of number of monuments maintained by the ASI Headquarter and by the Circle/sub-circle offices has been cross checked and necessary corrections have since been carried out. Necessary instructions have already been issued to field offices to verify all monuments periodically. A committee has already been constituted at ASI HQ to compile the data to avoid any discrepancies in future."

Notification cases

5.7 No procedures were found laid down for the Circles under the ASI, to send recommendations for the protection of monuments periodically. Even after the approval in nine cases, for issue of preliminary notification for declaring the monuments of national importance, only one monument was found notified.

Many proposals submitted by Circles were found not even considered and no reasons recorded for the same. It was also noticed by Audit that even after Circles submitted proposals for denotification of monuments which did not exist, no action was taken by the ASI HQ and the Ministry. Even Circles made considerable delays in submitting the proposals for de-notification. The Ministry stated that the proposals received from the Circles were not taken on record as these were incomplete and had been sent without completing the formalities.

5.8 Asked as to why no guidelines were made for regular submission and timely action on notification and de-notification cases, the Ministry replied;

"The notification and de-notification of any monument is taken up only on the basis of the proposal received from the field officers or the public after examining the merit of the case. Further instructions have been issued to all circle SAs asking them to submit the protection proposal every year in the month of January with complete documents"

5.9 On whether any instructions have been made to the Circles, incorporating the points to be checked before sending any proposal to Ministry, they submitted the following reply;

"Archaeological Survey of India has well set procedures for submission of protection proposals in 'Form B' supported with revenue schedule, site plan, revenue map and photographs. The 'Form B' designed for this purpose by the Department is being followed since long. Important information related to monuments is called for its evaluation. As per the guidelines the Advisory Committee evaluated the protected proposals in the light of criteria laid down under Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 and other related information."

5.10 On why the Ministry was sitting over the de-notification proposals for so many years, the Ministry replied;

"A committee has already been constituted to frame the guidelines for de-notification of the monuments which have ceased to be of National Importance."

5.11 Asked why there was no system established for conducting regular/ annual survey to know the exact status of the monuments which were required to be included or deleted from the list of centrally protected monuments. The Ministry submitted;

"Protection of any monument as National Importance is an ongoing process. However, the circles have been asked to submit such proposals after examining the cases in the month of January every year. The committee has been constituted to frame guidelines for de-notification is mainly on the basis of periodical inspection/survey of the monuments by the field officers. However, instructions for regular inspection of the monuments have been reiterated....The field Officers were directed to conduct the Physical Inspection/verification of the monuments. So far 3335 Monuments have been verified. Based on this report and the guidelines the monuments will be identified for de notification."

5.12 Asked why no updated documentation stating the importance of each protected monument was being maintained at ASI -HQ, the Ministry submitted;

"Each monument declared as centrally protected monument or monument of National Importance has its own historical cultural and architectural importance based on which it has been declared as monument of national importance under the provisions of the Act. The inventory of monuments of some of the circles has already been published and the publication of the monuments of other circles are under process. The National importance of each protected monument is being reviewed in the process of categorization of monuments"

5.13 On whether a timeline has been fixed for publication of the inventories of all the monuments, the Ministry wrote;

"The committee under Chairmanship of Additional Director General (Archaeology) has been constituted to prepare inventory of remaining protected monuments. No time frame has been given to the committee to complete the work. Latest details/present states of each monument is to be compiled for preparation of inventory of the protected monument. Considering the amount of the work with each field officer, the time period for completion of the work cannot be given precisely. However, all efforts will be made by ASI to complete the work as early possible."

Number of Missing Monuments

5.14 The Ministry communicated to the Parliament and other concerned authorities that the number of missing/untraceable monuments were 35. However, a joint physical inspection of 45% of the total monuments revealed that 92 monuments are found missing/untraceable. Though in most of the cases, the Circles were aware of the missing/untraceable monuments, the same was not thoroughly checked by ASI HQ before informing the Parliament.

The Ministry accepted the recommendation and stated that the number of missing monuments i.e. 35 reported to Parliament was based upon a survey done in 1998-99, however no documentary evidence was shown.

5.15 On why the Ministry did not feel the necessity to conduct a survey since 1998-99, they replied;

"Conducting survey of ancient archaeological remains is a continuous process and regular surveys of varying nature have been carried out viz. temple Survey, Village to Village Survey of Antiquarian remains: Excavation and Exploration Surveys; Conservation Survey etc."

5.16 Audit commented that the Ministry's reply is incorrect as the question is regarding comprehensive survey of all monuments already notified as "protected" monuments of national importance to ascertain their continued importance and existence. Further, Audit claimed that negligible surveys have been done by temple survey project. Village to village survey has not been undertaken due to manpower crunch for past several decades. Thus these activities do not substitute the need for comprehensive survey of already protected monuments to ensure their continued national importance and status of preservation. To this, the Ministry replied;

"The field Officers were directed to conduct the Physical Inspection/verification of the monuments. So far 3335 Monuments have been verified"

5.17 Asked whether the Parliament/Ministry were informed that the information is more than a decade old and has not been verified since then, the Ministry explained as follows;

"There was no intention to provide out of date information. Information provided was based on last verification done by ASI"

5.18 Asked as to when the Ministry intends to conduct a complete survey in a time bound manner and report the status of each protected monument to Parliament, they replied;

"As on date, physical verification of 1205 monuments has been completed. Necessary direction has been issued to field offices to complete physical verification of the balance monuments by the end of December 2014."

5.19 After Audit's vetting comments, the Ministry revised the figure as below;

"As on date 3335 Monuments have been physically verified. Certain monuments could not be verified as there located in militant infested areas. No time frame could be fixed."

Criteria for issue of Notifications

5.20 A monument is declared to be of national importance only after publishing a notification in the Gazette of Government of India in this regard. However, many discrepancies were noticed by Audit in the issue of notifications by the Ministry/ASI as mentioned below:-

- a) There were no criteria fixed for notifying number of monuments in one complex either as a single monument or as an independent monument.
- b) There were cases where only a part of the monument is protected and the rest of the part of monument was left as unprotected.
- c) Cases were noticed where same monument was notified twice.
- d) Cases were noticed where monuments were declared protected though the final notification was not issued.
- e) ASI notified the monuments before clearing the ownership and encroachment which resulted into the court cases and failure of ASI to carry out any action for conservation of the monument.

- f) Cases were noticed where monument was protected by centre as well as state. This indicates lapses in the coordination with state Government agencies.
- g) Cases were noticed where the monument was first notified then de notified and then again identified for notification.
- h) Cases were noticed where monuments were notified even before their completing 100 years, which is a prerequisite for declaring any monument as protected.
- i) Several cases were noticed where items/antiquities were declared as protected monument though they did not fall under the definition of the ancient monument.

5.21 Asked why no assessment had been carried out till now to make required corrections in the notifications issued during British period, the Ministry replied;

"There is no prescribed provision for periodic review of notifications issued in the past. It is the duty of the ASI to maintain and provide correct information."

5.22 On whether copies of all notifications are available with DG ASI/ Ministry, and if so, why these were not provided to CAG during Audit, the Ministry submitted;

"Most of the notifications are available with ASI HQ and its Circle Offices. However, certain old notifications are not available and, hence, could not be provided to C&AG. Efforts are being made to trace the missing notifications from State/National Archives."

5.23 Asked by when ASI can issue a final notification for the monuments, as listed in Annex 2.2 of the CAG's Report, which are being taken as protected without any final notification having been issued so far, they replied;

"There are a few isolated cases in which protection/conservation is taken up pending issue of final notification. These primarily pertain to Excavated sites and cases of de-facto transfer of monuments from State Government. Verification of final notification is being carried out alongside physical verification of monuments is likely to be completed by Dec 2014.... A cell has been created in ASI to address all these issues and is working on CAG observations such as physical verification/ collection of notification of monuments as centrally protected / double notifications reported as missing by CAG etc. The work is likely to be completed in one year."

Categorization of Monuments

5.24 The ASI HQ notified in 2011 that all the monuments were to be categorized in eight specified categories. It was noted that the categorization was followed only in one Circle. No other Circle had carried out this categorization so far. No detailed guidelines or any timelines were prescribed for the completion of this activity. Lack of documentation was also noticed in categorization of monuments in some categories.

The Ministry stated that the categorization of the protected Monuments/Sites was the responsibility of the NMA and not that of the ASI.

5.25 Asked as to why guidelines and timelines were not prescribed for categorization of the monuments, the Ministry replied;

"The categorization of monuments under section 4 of the AMASR Act has been completed and handed over to National Monument Authority for its consideration and making recommendations to the Ministry....

There is a proposal to amend the AMASR Act. Categorization of the monuments will be part of that process.
Time frame – one year"

5.26 The Committee desired to know as to when the Ministry would be able to complete the process of categorization of monuments. They submitted;

"The proposal for categorization of monuments under section 4 of the AMASR Act has been drafted and handed over to National Monument Authority"

5.27 When no information is being maintained for footfall in un-ticketed monument, the Committee desired to know how the Ministry would categorize the monuments under category VI. They replied;

"Listing under Category VI has been done by the SAs in-charge of ASI Circles based on their assessment of the number of visitors to such monuments."

5.28 The Committee were apprised that in the absence of any record of footfall in non-ticketed monuments, SAs can at best provide a subjective assessment. This may result in grossly incorrect categorization. Further, it is ironical that though SA's subjective assessment would be the basis for categorization, the actual categorization has been handed over to the NMA for further action. This indicates a major flaw in process and accountability for correct categorization. On the issue the Ministry submitted as follows:

"The Categorization of monuments will be carried out by ASI under sec.20 (1) (a)

While the NMA will carry out classification of monuments under sec.20-1(a)

Presently there is no other means of assessing the footfall at un-ticketed monuments."

5.29 Whether the Ministry are not the ultimate custodians to the protected monuments, they stated;

"DG, ASI is the ultimate custodian of all centrally protected monuments in the country. SA of the Circle is responsible to maintain and preserve the monuments in the Circle."

Unauthorised activities at the Monuments

5.30 The ASI intimated that 955 monuments were being used for worship and prayers. ASI did not have the details of the monuments where prayers/worship were being held prior to issue of notification. As the actual handling of the monument is in the hands of the trusts/organisations/individuals carrying out the unauthorised activities, the ASI failed to protect the monument. ASI failed to have any formal agreement with these trusts/organisations.

5.31 On why no guidelines were issued for the use of living monuments and why strict and timely action were not taken against the encroachers of the protected monuments', the Ministry submitted;

"As per the Archaeological Manual, the status of the monument at the time of protection has to be maintained. If the monument is used under religious practice the same will be allowed to continue even after the protection. As per section 6 of AMASR Act 1958 an agreement is to be executed between ASI and user. In some cases authorities with whom such agreements are to be executed are not willing to have an agreement. All efforts are made to remove the encroachments from protected areas of the monuments. Timely action is taken by ASI to approach the District Authority for action/intervention as Law and Order; issue is vested with them. But due to lack of timely action/inaction by the District Administration, encroachments happen in certain cases."

5.32 Audit pointed out in their vetting comments that it was found that in most cases, there were no attempts to contact management of trusts or individuals owning these living monuments to enter into MoUs. Further, in cases of encroachment, matter was taken up mostly only upto the level of SAs and was not raised to DG, ASI/MOC. During the study visit of the Committee to Bhubaneswar in September 2015, the Committee were informed that for removal of encroachments from monuments, Guwahati circle had taken up matter with district Administration in all seven states of the North East. Further, a State level co-ordination Committee under the chairmanship of Secretary (Culture), Government of Assam had been constituted to take up issues for removal of encroachments from monuments. The matter should be taken up at the highest level of MoC with state governments/private trusts managing these monuments to save the national heritage. To this the Ministry replied;

"The Secretary (Culture) has addressed letters to the Chief Secretaries of all States on this issue.

Further all the State Governments have been requested to form Committee to look in to the issue of encroachments"

5.33 Asked as to when the Ministry would complete its database of information regarding monuments being used for worship and prayer; the Ministry stated;

"Such data are available with ASI. Presently there are 955 numbers of centrally protected monuments under worship".

5.34 Audit opined that Ministry's reply is evasive as it did not provide any time frame to collect the information. The numbers mentioned in the reply do not include further cases pointed out in audit report. To this the Ministry responded

"A cell has been created in ASI address to all these issues and is working on CAG observations such physical verification/collection of notification of monuments as centrally protected /double notifications reported as missing by CAG etc. the work is likely to be completed in one year."

5.35 Asked if the Ministry ever took the issue it up with the State police and district authorities for stopping the unauthorized activities; The Ministry submitted;

"ASI has listed 249 encroachments within the protected monuments by individuals or organizations. There are several cases wherein constructions were in existence prior to the notification of the monuments and such cases have not been considered as encroachments. It is not correct that sub-circle did not inform the concerned Circle office about the encroachment in the monuments. The sub-circle in-charges are duty bound to inform the Circle office about the encroachment. However, all efforts are made to remove encroachment from protected area by the Circle level as well as by the Directorate. There are several instances where the ASI is not the owner of the land and in such cases it is difficult for the ASI to process the removal of encroachment. For example, in case of the encroachment at Sisupalgarh fort, District, Bhubaneswar, Audit itself mentioned that ASI is owner of only 0.775 acre of land out of 562.681 acre of protected area. In spite of that, ASI has made its best effort to stop encroachment within the protected area. In respect of other monuments/sites as pointed out by Audit, necessary information is being collected from the circles for suitable action. In spite of sincere efforts made by ASI unauthorized construction have not been removed at many places. The Audit party has also mentioned its report that "in many cases despite best efforts of the ASI offices District authority and police were not cooperating". DG, ASI has requested all Chief Secretaries of the States in this regard. After enactment of Ancient Monument and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Amendments & Validation) Act, 2010 necessary data regarding unauthorized constructions in prohibited and regulated areas of centrally protected monuments have been collected from field offices. It is further mentioned that based on the information received from Circle offices, Director General, issued demolition orders in respect of 1231 cases under rule 38(1) of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Rules, 1959 to the owners of the building and 2004 demolition orders have been issued to respective Deputy Commissioners

under the provision of rule 38 (2) of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Rules, 1959.

In spite of sincere efforts made by ASI unauthorized constructions have not been removed at many places. The Audit party has also mentioned its report that "in many cases despite best efforts of the ASI offices District authority and police were not cooperating". DG, ASI has requested all Chief Secretaries of the States in this regard. In addition, for illegal constructions and encroachments within the jurisdiction of Delhi circle of ASI, a Committee under the Chairpersonship of Minister of Culture has been constituted which has representation from all the local authorities, the State Government, Delhi Police, INTACH, Ministry of Urban Development etc. with the objective of sensitization of all these agencies about the illegal constructions and encroachments within the protected, prohibited and regulated areas of ASI monuments. An inter-ministerial committee under AS (MoU) also takes periodic review of such issues. Moreover, an inter-departmental committee has been constituted for monitoring the illegal construction and encroachments in and around monuments in Lucknow."

Use of Monuments for Other Purpose by the ASI

5.36 Audit pointed out that the ASI themselves are not following their rules and regulations and was carrying out unauthorized activities in the monuments. Even parts of the monuments were used as residences of the officials of ASI, a case in point being Director General's residence inside Red Fort. There were no do's and dont's for use of monument by ASI officials for official use also.

5.37 The Ministry had intimated that residence of the ASI officials and accommodations of the security guards were in the modern barracks and not in the protected monuments. Audit is of the view that the ASI was incurring the expenditure for the entire complex as a protected monument.

5.38 Asked as to why no guidelines were issued for use of monument for official purposes, viz., establishing office etc, the Ministry stated

"Parts of certain monuments are being used for offices of ASI. However, all care is taken to retain authenticity and integrity of the monument while using portion/parts of such monument as office accommodation. The

proposed conservation policy states:- "Adaptive reuse of secondary portions of a monument should be preferred to incorporate functions such as providing visitor amenities, ASI field Officers, stores etc. subject to the condition that the authenticity and integrity of the monument is least disturbed. But the main portion of the monuments however should not be subject to any reuse or tampered for any physical modification. In case of Red Fort and Fatehpur Sikri, the modern facility has been provided only to the inspection room and no intervention has been made to the ancient structure. In case of the Red Fort, Delhi the monument is to be conserved/maintained as per the recommendation of Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan prepared under the direction of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. CCMP mentions to selectively retain the modern structures that contribute to understanding the history to the site and are useful to house visitor amenities and other activities that are proposed for the site."

5.39 Asked if officials were officially allowed to use parts of the monuments for their residences and as to why the expenditure on maintenance of barracks were incurred from the conservation head, the Ministry replied:

"In general officials are not allowed to use the parts of monuments for their residences. However, in exceptional circumstances, officials may temporarily reside in existing buildings within the protected area.....

Under the Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan of Red Fort, Delhi some barracks are identified to house the antiquities presently kept at Purana Quila and to relocate the museums of the Red Fort which are functioning in the monuments. Since these barracks are more than 100 years old and played an important role in freedom movement of India and are part of monument, expenditure on the maintenance of these barracks was incurred from the conservation head."

5.40 Audit noticed instances where permissions were granted to organize festivals in the protected monuments. While allowing these types of functions, the guidelines issued in this regard were not followed. Cases of damage to the monument and carrying out of commercial activities were noticed in the monuments of national importance against the guidelines of ASI. The Ministry intimated that the religious functions were allowed as per customary practices. However..... since the rules did not permit for waiver of prescribed fees for religious functions the Ministry were asked as to why the ASI gave permission to

carry out cultural activities in and around the protected monuments without fees. They replied;

"Prescribed fee is waived only in case of traditionally/customary functions which are celebrated at a particular monument since long. DG ASI is authorized to waive off such fee under rules."

5.41 Audit found the justification given not tenable and in contravention of the AMASR rules. The Ministry were asked to reply specifically on its failure to comply with the conditions for organizing the cultural events in the centrally protected monuments. Further, there is no rule authorizing the DG to waive off the fee. To this, the Ministry submitted:

"The point is well taken. A draft guideline regarding organizing cultural event has been prepared and the same was uploaded on the website seeking public comments. It is in final stages of being approved."

5.42 Audit observed that two different agencies of Ministry i.e. ASI and GNCA were providing different information in respect of location of the monuments. Instances were also noticed where the information provided by Circle office was different from what available in the notifications. The Ministry accepted the recommendation and intimated that efforts would be made to eliminate ambiguities. Asked as to when the data of centrally protected Monuments were compiled and published for all circles, the Ministry submitted.

"As per Office Order No. 2/1/97-M dated 28.06.1997, a committee was formed for preparation of "An Inventory of Centrally Protected Monuments under the Archaeological Survey of India. The committee could not be continued beyond July 2001 owing to transfer/retirement of the Members and the Chairman. A New Committee has been set up to prepare the inventory of centrally protected monuments."

5.43 On whether the Ministry had set out a timeframe for completion of the task, the Ministry were non-committal citing the magnitude of the task.

Maritime Archaeology

5.44 During evidence, the Committee desired to know whether the Ministry of Culture and the ASI have given adequate importance to Maritime archaeology with focus on both academic aspects of building knowledge on our past ties and achievements in the naval field as well as on establishing the strong historical ties we shared with the Indian ocean rim countries in cultural and economic fields. Responding on the issue, the representative of the Ministry submitted as follow;

"We have launched a project last year in June 2014 in UNESCO which we have called Project *Mausam*, which basically addresses the Indian Ocean Rim and India's historical rings at the whole region. We have focused both on academic work and historical work in this region.....As regards, maritime museum, we propose to open a new Maritime Museum in Mumbai at a dis-used textile mill. A part of that, the local body of Mumbai has agreed in principle to allot to us. We are in dialogue with them. But we will have a full-fledged maritime museum in Mumbai which will look at the history of the entire Indian Ocean world and focus on Project *Mausam* also."

5.45 Replying to queries during an earlier evidence on whether ASI have a wing of Marine Archaeology and the steps taken, the Ministry's representative stated;

"In Goa, we entered into a MoU with the Institute of Oceanography... For example, the IIT, Gandhinagar are willing to set up a unit for Archaeology plus they have asked for one person for deputation from ASI just to set up a Department of Archaeology"

Leveraging IT for preservation and promotion

5.46 During evidence, the Committee were keen to be apprised of the efforts made to leverage Information Technology in preserving and promoting the national cultural heritage. Outlining the initiatives taken by the Ministry in the field, the representative of the Ministry submitted during evidence;

"A proposal for e-ticketing is some of the ASI's protected monuments is under consideration. For the purposes of proper collections management of monuments and museums or project on digitalisation of museums collections has been undertaken by the Ministry in association with C-DAC under which a software namely 'JATAN' developed by C-DAC, is being

installed in ten museums of the Ministry of Culture and ASI in the first phase of implementation....Under the Google Art Project, more than 150 masterpieces of the National Museum and NGMA, New Delhi, have already been digitalised and made available on the website. We have also entered into an MoU with Google for ASI monuments. Similarly the Salarjung Museum and Indian Museum will also be collaborating with Google soon....Recently the ASI has also undertaken a project in collaboration with Google India for 360 degree photography of chosen historical monuments for making the same available over the internet for public viewing."

5.47 The Committee also expressed grave concerns over the non-availability with ASI of important national monuments like the original historical document of 26th November, 1949 that is the signed copy of the constitution, Jallianwala Bagh Statutory Commission Report, the creation of two dominions Act which is very important for India etc. in digital formats while the same are accessible from the online library of foreign institutions. Taking note of the concerns of the Committee and expressing the Ministry's willingness to work in that direction, the representative of the Ministry stated;

"As regards Archives, we have 60 lakh files with us. Our first priority is only to digitize first page of the documents. We know the index. Hon. Members have suggested about some documents to be digitized. Most of them I understand are property of Parliament itself. We can request Parliament library for that. If they want any help, we can help them.... Many of these documents are available with British Library and from there they have got it as per some agreement. We are in the same process. We have entered into agreement with the British Library also."

Maintenance of Monuments and Baolis

5.48 The Audit Report also highlighted the utter negligence of some important monuments. The Committee are apprised of the need for widespread preservation and conservation, requiring immediate attention. Improper conservation works leading to dilapidated conditions of walls, plasters, floral and other designs were pointed out. Improper maintenance of gardens and problems of water-logging inside monuments were also pointed out by Audit's inspection reports. They also pointed out how the Old Delhi area of Shahjahanabad has nearly 525 havelis that were constructed in the 19th and 20th century and how these havelis, having Hindu, Mughal, British and European art influences, are in a pathetic condition. They observed how this heritage needs to be saved from unauthorized construction, encroachments and traffic jams, etc. The Committee also take note of the commendable work done by Heritage India Foundation in preservation and conservation of these threatened heritage monuments..

5.49. The Committee were especially concerned about the poor maintenance and negligent conservation of Baolis or water wells. Noting that these step wells not only represent an era gone by but also highlights the achievements in water conservation the country had seen.

PART II

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee observe with appreciation that the C&AG have carried out a much needed performance audit of the Preservation and Conservation of Monuments and Antiquities and submitted Report No. 18 of 2013 to Parliament. The Committee would like to reiterate here that the Ministry of Culture had been in existence as early as 1961 and yet certain basic procedural and institutional lacunae still remain in its efforts to preserve and conserve a rich heritage of historical monuments and antiquities in the country, which is one of the largest depositories of such treasures of world civilization. Beyond their national importance, historical monuments and antiquities are a shared heritage of the world, of humanity, and therefore, national governments not only have a national responsibility in proper preservation and conservation of such valuable souvenirs of the past but also have a universal obligation to humanity as a whole. The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), which today is under the Ministry of Culture, and continues to be the premier organization for the archaeological researches and protection of the cultural heritage of the nation, precedes the emergence of the Indian republic. It predates the Ministry of Culture by a century, as in 1861 Cunningham was appointed as the first Archeological Surveyor. From the antiquity of ASI itself and the fact that the Ministry of Culture

had been created as far back as 1961 to protect and conserve ancient historical monuments and valuable relics of the past, the amount of public money spent over the years has been huge by any standard.

The Committee also would like to place on record the important role that the Ministry and its subsidiaries, the ASI, National Museum, etc. can play in national integration by establishing historical linkages of different regions of the country through geographically inclusive and representative works of conservation, excavations, protection of monuments of regional significance, etc. and through an inclusive display of antiquities and artifacts collected from all corners of the country, thereby building an integrated historical narrative of the country's past. With this background, and supplementing the recommendations contained in the Audit report, the Committee would like to make the following important observations and recommendations.

1. National Conservation Policy

The Committee are pleased to note that the Ministry have taken steps to remedy the absence of a National Conservation Policy and have finalized the National Policy for Conservation of the ancient monuments, archaeological sites and remains (NPC – AMASR) and notified the same in February 2014. The Committee are of the opinion that the absence of a well laid down policy for systematic conservation and restoration of the artifacts had

resulted in their deterioration. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry take necessary steps like notifying the rules under the policy to streamline notification and de-notification of monuments and its conservation activities under the new policy within three months from the date of presentation of this report to Parliament and revert to the Committee on achievements and progress made thereon.

2. Exploration and Excavation Policy

The Committee, pleased to note the progress made towards evolving the National Policy on Archeological Excavations and Explorations post Audit's observation, desire that the Ministry should further expedite the final notification and drawing up action plans under the policy so that public resources earmarked for excavation and exploration of archeological remains are henceforth properly streamlined and focused, resulting in improved outcomes. They feel that exploration and excavation of the archeological remains in the country and their study is one of the primary activities of the ASI. However, the Committee are surprised to note that ASI was spending less than one percent of its total expenditure on such activities. They, therefore, recommend that while drawing up action plans under the policy, the Ministry should ensure adequate allocation of funds and effective utilization by ASI for exploration and excavation of archeological remains. Actions taken in this regard may be intimated to the Committee.

3. Acquisition of Antiquities and Art Treasures

The Committee express displeasure over the absence of an appropriate and effective mechanism for acquisition of antiquities in the country so far, as also the delay in bringing about amendments to the Antiquities and Art Treasures Act 1972, leading to the development of an illegal domestic and export market for such items, some of which are of great heritage value to the nation. The Committee note with serious concern that the Ministry is yet to bring amendments to the Act even after a lapse of nearly two decades, though the process to amend the Act was initiated in 1997. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry expedite the finalization of the draft Antiquities and Art Treasures Amendment Bill. They also recommend that the Ministry should explore and take necessary steps to recover or procure antiquities which are of cultural significance to our country but have been sold to buyers abroad and also to bring back the artifacts/antiquities and or Cultural Property of Indian origin that were taken away outside the country during Colonial rule by initiating dialogue at the diplomatic level as well as through appropriate legal mechanism. Progress made in this regard may be intimated to the Committee within three months of presentation of this report.

4. Management of Living Monuments

The Committee note that Living Monuments are being managed and preserved under the joint responsibility of owners and ASI through Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), which has been further strengthened through the National Policy on Conservation of Ancient Monuments, Archeological Sites and Remains (NPC-AMASR), 2014. The Committee were also informed that more effective measures would be taken to monitor the signing of MOUs with the managing bodies of living monuments. The Committee were also apprised of the Conservation Manual by Sir John Marshall being used as a guideline for protection and preservation of Ancient Mounds. The Committee desire that the Ministry may apprise the committee of the progress achieved in signing MOUs with managements of living monuments and the enhanced efforts to protect and preserve ancient Mounds. Moreover, conservation and preservation of Rock edicts is yet another issue of concern for the Committee when they observe that there is no specific policy for their conservation. The Committee, therefore, recommend that ASI should make concerted efforts to ensure conservation and preservation of Rock edicts as these edicts have pristine value and depict a definite era in historical evolution of our Nation's culture.

5. Uniform procedure for Archeological Museums

The Committee observe that no uniform laid down policy is being followed in Archeological Museums under Ministry of Culture as they are independent entities working under the direction of their Board of Trustees/Societies. Moreover, as Audit have pointed out, the ASI did not have a comprehensive Policy Guidelines for management of Antiquities owned by it. There were no standards for acquisition, preservation, documentation and custody of object possessed by the ASI. Further, systematic maintenance of the accession register was largely absent in the Museum. The Committee are of the opinion that proper maintenance of the accession registers was essential to correctly account for the museum objects and also for their safety. It was surprising for the Committee to note that the Museum did not evolve a rotation policy for displaying artifacts in galleries, as a result of which more than 95% of objects were lying in reserve without ever having been put on display. However, the Committee have also been informed that Ministry of Culture is considering to standardize and implement uniform procedures/practices in respect of issues as highlighted above and have taken various steps in this regard. The Committee are of the view that artefacts of culture and cultural excavations are pristine cultural glory of any nation and therefore, they recommend that the Ministry should expedite the implementation of uniform procedures for Museum so that such

artefacts are preserved and maintained in a proper manner and issues highlighted above are addressed effectively. National register may be prepared highlighting the details of each and every Ancient Monuments, Archeological sites and remains, both of National and State importance, including the details of artefacts lying in museums, government treasuries and/or in other government and private possession spread over the country which relate to Cultural Heritage of India. Action taken in this regard should be informed to this Committee at the earliest.

6. Shortage of Manpower and Restructuring

The Committee note with grave concern the severe shortage of manpower in the ASI and take strong exception to some posts being left vacant for years together without even any ad-hoc arrangements. They were apprised of an ongoing cadre restructuring process which has been submitted to the Ministry of Finance for financial approval. Taking into account the debilitating handicap faced by ASI in fulfilling its primary functions due to the acute shortage of manpower, and taking cognizance of a proper restructuring of the organization being essential to overcome its deficient functioning in the important mandate to preserve our cultural heritage, the Committee recommend that the Ministry of Culture should pursue the matter with the Ministry of Finance for early clearance of the restructuring proposal and finalize the same at the earliest to

overcome the shortage of manpower at the earliest under intimation to the Committee and also to ensure adequate financial allocation for Archaeological Survey of India to help strengthen future archeological survey, excavations and proper maintenance of ancient monuments in archaeological sites and remains.

7. Filling current vacancies

The Committee have been apprised that while the restructuring exercise is aimed at strengthening all wings of ASI as far as encadared posts are concerned, there are existing vacancies in the organization which need to be filled. The Committee observe that the Ministry had opted to outsource jobs that are not directly related to the spheres of archeology, conservation and excavation, while also entering into MoUs with institutions and Universities for sharing professionals on deputation and training basis to meet current shortage in technical manpower. The Committee however note with great concern that the Ministry have not been able to fill the vacancies as pointed out by audit in a report laid in 2013. While deprecating this lackadaisical attitude on the part of the Ministry, the Committee recommend that the Ministry should make concerted effort to fill all vacant posts in ASI and a compliance report be submitted to the Committee within six months of this report being laid on the table of the Houses of Parliament.

8. National Monuments Authority

The Committee note that pursuant to Audit comments on the delays in establishment of NMA and appointments of members therein, the Ministry had taken steps to expedite the entire matter. The Committee feel that it is desirable for authorities to pursue their tasks earnestly without awaiting Audit's comments and desire that the Ministry evolve an internal mechanism to set targets and monitor timelines for its various agencies and units in consultation with units concerned. The Committee urge the Ministry evolve proper systems to fill vacancies in important positions in a time bound manner.

9. Security and safeguard arrangements

From Audit's findings, the Committee observe that there are huge gaps in the management of security and safeguard around important monuments and museums arising out of lack of proper attention. They note with concern the lack of effective monitoring in removing of encroachments and absence of any coordinated effort to check unauthorized constructions within conservation areas. The Committee however note with appreciation that the Ministry has formed a Committee to suggest security measures at monuments to strengthen protection of monuments from possible damage, loss or destruction through terror attacks and weak monitoring of visitors, etc. The Committee recommend that the ASI should

constitute a coordination mechanism with representatives of respective State Governments at each Circle to check the incidents of encroachments with the cooperation of District and Police authorities and there should be regular monitoring of progress on existing encroachments. While they feel that efforts should be made by the Ministry to strengthen the manpower for security, the Committee also feel that the ASI lagged behind in leveraging the advances in IT for enhancing security of the monuments. They, therefore, recommend that the Ministry should develop a comprehensive security policy for all monuments and museums under its control by addressing the shortage of security personnel and at the same time exploring the possibility of taking the help of ISRO for aerial survey and installation of satellite cameras and other agencies like Electronics and IT department for IT-based security modules. They also desire that the Ministry should apprise this Committee of the status of implementation of recommendations of the Committee on Security. The Committee further recommends that all monuments, archaeological sites maintained by A.S.I. must have Clean and Modern toilets, Eateries, Medical Shops and other urgent conveniences in and around their precincts and also accessible motorable roads to the benefit of both domestic and foreign tourist.

10. Training and implementation of expert group's report

The Committee are surprised to note with much concern that the training needs of various technical personnel had been left unattended by the management until Audit highlighted the problem. The Committee desire that the ASI implement the New HRD policy in right earnest to overcome shortage of trained personnel for its technical tasks of conservation, preservation, excavation and exploration, and constantly review training needs through a feedback mechanism encompassing all units. Further, the Committee while appreciating the Ministry's agreements with advanced and popular Museums for training and their plan to set up a training institute under ASI in Red Fort with UNESCO recognition, recommend that these may be pursued in right earnest and progress achieved be reported to this Committee.

11. Budgetary allocation

The Committee note the Ministry's claim that issue of inadequate fund allocation and reductions made on the projections of requirements are related to availability of resources within the Ministry subsequent to cuts imposed by the Ministry of Finance. However, since government works on the basis of projections of requirements and not on allocation of available resources, the Committee feel that inadequate assessment of requirements of ASI highlighted by Audit is a responsibility of the Ministry and ASI. They, therefore, strongly

recommend that demands must be raised for adequate funding of needs for growth and efficiency and not for mere survival of ASI for which both ASI and those responsible in the Ministry must join hands to infuse a sense of direction and progress through pre-budget planning exercises keeping in view that the archaeological Survey of India is performing enormous and onerous duty in maintaining thousands of ancient monuments, archeological sites and remains of National importance for more than a century with a very limited fund allocated form time to time.

12. Revenue generation

The Committee are dismayed to note that there is no structured system of determining whether protected Monuments are to be placed under ticketed Monuments category or not. They also note that the Ministry is dithering on the issue of increasing the rates for film shooting, which has not been revised since 1991. During deliberations, the Committee also dwelt on other possible avenues of Revenue generation including renting out premises of well-known monuments like Red Fort, Taj Mahal, Victoria Memorial Hall for premium social and family events. The Committee recommend that a structured system for categorization of Monuments as ticketed or non-ticketed must be developed and a comprehensive review carried out to bring more monuments in the ticketed category. Further, the rates of entry tickets should be reviewed and suitably revised upwards at par with the rates at Monuments in other countries. The

Committee also recommend that rates for film and documentary shoots in premises of monuments must also be appropriately revised upwards and promotional short films can be produced by ASI separately in coordination with the Tourism Ministry. The Committee also recommend that the Ministry/ASI should seriously explore enhancing revenue generation through premium renting of well-known sites for social and family events with proper guidelines.

13. Non-budgetary funding

The Committee note that funding apart from Budget allocations are accessible to ASI for Conservation and visitor amenities through the National Culture Fund and that currently funding through PPP mode is sought from NCF for 100 projects and 25 identified projects of ASI for conservation and visitor amenities. The Committee recommend that the coordination between ASI and NCF should be strengthened to rope in more Corporate groups and high net-worth individuals into funding conservation and visitor amenities at monument sites.

14. Identification criteria and survey

The Committee note that a comprehensive survey to identify monuments of national importance for placing such monuments in the centrally protected category is overdue. They also note that a proper guideline for determining whether a monument is

considered to be of national importance is still in the process. The Committee recommend that the guidelines for determination of national importance of monuments be finalized at the earliest and not later than six months from the presentation of this report and thereafter, a comprehensive survey with target timeline should be conducted to identify the exact number of monuments of national importance that can be protected.

15. Notification issues

The Committee note with concern that despite their claim of the existence of well laid down procedures regarding proposals for notification of monuments as protected monuments, the pace of notification is found to be very slow. They also note with much reproof that after so many years, no de-notification guidelines have been put in place. The Committee recommend that the Ministry cause ASI to issue detailed instructions and if necessary conduct workshops for circle office personnel for effective preparation of proposals for notification. They further recommend that the finalization of de-notification guidelines may be expedited and the list of centrally protected monuments updated at regular intervals. The Committee found it elusive that the Ministry should claim inability to fix a time frame for preparation of inventories of all monuments notified to be of national importance and recommend that definite time frames may be given to circles concerned to complete the task. The Committee also desire that punitive action may be initiated

against the circles and officers found to be defaulting in accomplishing the task.

16. Missing Monuments

The Committee are apprised of the discrepancy in the number of missing monuments which, besides raising issues of safeguarding monuments, also reflects a complacency in maintaining data on such monuments. The Committee are perturbed to note that ASI did not have a reliable database of the exact number protected monuments under its jurisdiction. They feel that in the absence of this primary information, it is difficult to judge if the ASI is able to fulfill its basic mandate effectively. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that the ASI expedite the verification of the physical condition and existence of the notified protected monuments and furnish details to this committee at the earliest.

17. Process of notification

The Committee note that notifications issued in British India also remain without review and there are no provisions for periodic review of notifications issued in the past. They also note with dismay that certain old notifications are even untraceable. The Committee were also apprised of certain cases where protection/conservation tasks were taken up before issue of final notification as protected monuments. While the Committee appreciate the circumstances requiring pre-

notification work of conservation in specific cases relating to Excavated sites and cases of de-facto transfer of monuments from State Governments, they are appalled to note cases of old notifications missing from records and the absence of any provisions for periodic review of old notifications. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the ASI/Ministry of Culture put in place a system of periodic review of old notifications to verify the physical existence and continuing importance of notified monuments. They also desire that the ASI/Ministry may take up as a priority retrieving copies of old notifications that were found missing. The Committee also desire that the ASI/Ministry may consider issuing guidelines whereby Ancient monuments (predating say 1700 AD) and contemporary Monuments that are 100 years old and are of national importance stand automatically protected, requiring special notification for monuments of importance but are less than 100 years only.

18. Categorization of Monuments

The Committee were apprised that, the proposal for categorization of Monuments had been made in the absence of any record of footfall in non-ticketed monuments and merely on the basis of the assessments of Superintending Archeologists (SAs), of the number of visitors to such monuments. The Committee also take strong exception to the Ministry's submission that the categorization of Monuments will form a

part of the amendment of the AMASR Act as the legislative process of amendment of an Act is entirely independent of the administrative task of categorizing Monuments into various categories such as ticketed, non-ticketed, etc. The Committee desires that the Ministry may expedite the process of amendment of the AMASR Act to address existing lacunae. They recommend that ASI should put in place a system of recording footfalls in non-ticketed monuments, and that proposals for clarification may be reviewed once the record of footfalls are obtained.

19. Encroachments and unauthorized activities

The Committee note that in certain living monuments, religious worship and prayers are being held and feel that considering the need for protection and conservation of such monuments, certain guidelines on their use that ensure safeguarding and preservation of the monuments would certainly be useful with regard to the issue of encroachments. The Committee, while taking note of the ongoing efforts of the Ministry/ASI to have the encroachments removed, desire a more proactive and coordinated effort with closer monitoring. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the ASI/Ministry should consider evolving clear guidelines on the use of protected monuments and to ensure that proper MOUs are signed with users/occupants based on the said guidelines for retaining integrity of the monuments. Moreover, the Committee are of the opinion that ASI should have a laid down policy for notification

of sites with contested ownership or encroachments. These sites can be placed in the tentative list for nomination till all disputes are resolved. The Committee feel that such notification will not only provide a legal status for protected monuments but also define the area of the site. The Committee therefore, recommend that ASI should maintain the records and the notifications related to such sites which should also be readily available with the ASI HQ. They also recommend that ASI should constitute a coordination body with representatives of respective State Governments at each circle to check incidents of encroachments with the co-operation of District and Police authorities and also to initiate timely action for removal of all encroachments and to protect the ancient monuments, archeological sites and remains from vandalism, theft, spoliation and disfigurement, etc in accordance with law. They further recommend that proper guidelines should be evolved to put in place a transparent and time bound system of issuing no objection certificates to projects requiring ASI clearance.

20. Use of Monuments for other purposes:

The Committee were apprised that some structure and some parts of Monuments were being used as accommodation/offices by ASI. They also note with disbelief that the Director General is provided a residence inside the Red Fort. While they appreciate the fact that in using some parts of certain Monuments, the ASI ensures the authenticity and integrity of structures, they felt

such practice may not always be helpful in conserving Monumental buildings. The Committee also note that ASI are yet to put in place a set of guidelines on allowing cultural events to be organized in the centrally protected Monuments. The Committee, therefore, recommend that use of parts of Monuments for residence should be done away with and usage as offices by ASI or any agency should be discouraged, kept to the barest essential minimum and stricter guidelines developed to ensure that the authenticity and integrity of such structures are not damaged. They further recommend that the Ministry may expedite the finalization and notification of the guideline regarding organizing cultural events in the vicinity of Centrally Protected Monuments.

21. Inventory of Centrally Protected Monuments.

The Committee are deeply concerned to note that no reliable inventory of Centrally Protect Monuments have been maintained by ASI. They take strong exception to the ASI/Ministry's unwillingness to spell out a time frame within which the Committee constituted to prepare an inventory of centrally protected Monuments must complete their task, citing the volume of work. The Committee strongly disapprove of such an attitude on the part of ASI. They, therefore, recommend that the Committee for preparation of the said inventory must be given a timeframe of not more than two years and must be given necessary resources to accomplish the task within the specified time frame. Further, the Committee desire that such an inventory

of all monuments of importance should be compiled in such a way and made accessible through a portal where visitors of the portal should be able to get ready-made information on various categories of Monuments like monuments of national/regional/state importance, Circle and state of location and distance from nearest major city or town, historical and cultural significance of the monument, number of missing monuments, number of encroached monuments with details, etc. The Committee further desired that such an inventory should be updated every 5 years.

22. Maritime Archaeology

The Committee are pleased to note that some efforts have been made in the direction of exploring and preserving maritime archaeology under project Mausam which is expected to unearth our ties with our maritime neighbors. The Committee would like to reiterate the importance of establishing the archaeological narrative of our strong cultural ties and thriving economic relations with Indian Ocean rim countries. The Committee, therefore, recommend that a separate wing of ASI with relevant expertise should be specially tasked to bolster efforts in this direction. They also desire that maritime museums displaying antiquities and monuments of our great maritime past as has been setup at Cuttack by the State Government of Odisha, which is one of its kind be taken as a cue and also be established at

other appropriate locations with adequate financial support for their upkeep.

23. Leveraging IT for preservation and promotion

The Committee express grave concern over the limited way in which the advances in IT have so far been leveraged in the preservation and promotion of the National cultural heritage. While appreciating the initial steps taken by the Ministry and ASI in this direction, they recommend that enhanced efforts must be made to fully leverage the advantages of using information technology in preserving perishable monuments and antiquities for prosperity and to promote them across the globe through the internet. The Committee desire that ASI should enhance the use of modern scientific technology, build capacity of its officials and establish an upgraded dating laboratory of its own. The Committee desire that the Ministry/ASI should evolve a roadmap for preserving historical and cultural monuments using electronic data and images, and to promote our rich cultural and historical heritage into more prominence. They also desire that ASI should have funds earmarked specifically for awareness, interpretation and related activities.

24. Maintenance of Baolis and other monuments

The Committee were deeply concerned about the lagging efforts of the ASI in the maintenance and conservation of some very important monuments leading to dilapidation of invaluable symbols of the nation's heritage and culture including Baolis.

Pictures of depleting plasters, damaged floral designs, neglected gardens, dilapidated walls contained in the C&AG report presents a damning narrative of the state of conservation. The Committee at the same time note that some efforts are being initiated by ASI as well as private foundations like Heritage Foundation of India to remedy the situation. The Committee strongly recommend the ASI to strengthen its efforts to restore the monuments to their pristine glory by proper and diligent conservation efforts. They also desire that the ASI work in collaboration with some of the pioneering private organizations active in conservation and preservation of the nation's heritage particularly Baolis in old Delhi areas, either through MoUs or through grants and support funding. Action taken in this regard may be intimated to this Committee.

25. Restoration of damaged Monuments

The Committee observe with concern that in the process of restoring damaged Monuments, certain damaged parts of the ancient monuments are often removed and replaced with new material to maintain the structural integrity and to prevent further damage. The Committee feel that such restoration works should be limited only to monuments that require unavoidable restoration. Further they recommend that the damaged parts so removed may also be preserved and displayed near the site/or at Museums with explanatory notice providing information about where they are removed from and when they were replaced.

NEW DELHI;
April, 2016
 Vaisakha, 1938 (Saka)

PROF. K.V. THOMAS
 Chairperson,
 Public Accounts Committee