

ABSTRACT - 4. CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES IN HERITAGE DISCOURSE - A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE STATE OF THE ART IN HERITAGE DISCUSSIONS, CONSIDERING THE EVOLVING PERSPECTIVES AND CHALLENGES THAT HAVE EMERGED SINCE THE INCEPTION OF THE VENICE CHARTER. EXAMINING THE RELEVANCE OF THE VENICE CHARTER IN THE CURRENT CONTEXT, WITH A FOCUS ON CHALLENGES POSED BY THE WESTERN DIVIDE BETWEEN NATURE AND CULTURE, THE GROWING IMPORTANCE OF METROPOLISES, SOCIAL INEQUITIES, THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF HUMAN ACTIVITIES, DISASTERS AND CONFLICTS, AMONG OTHERS.

**DISCOURSE UPON NATURE CULTURE JOURNEY AND SETTLEMENTS:
VOICES FROM TILARI AND THAMSA RIVER BIOREGIONS IN INDIA**

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India, a land of immense diversity, boasts varied geographic features such as deserts, mountains, plateaus, and rivers. Indigenous communities and their local architectural styles visibly represent these adaptations. Across the country, the connections between people, culture, and the natural environment are evident. Local architecture has historically evolved in response to sociopolitical and natural dynamics. Both natural and human-made ecosystems help preserve ancient forests around settlements in the form of sacred groves. This reflects historical and mythological ties and embodies the essence of people's architecture, characterized by human scale and organic settlement patterns that harmonize with the natural environment.

This research paper examines cases from natural heritage sites in the Western Ghats and Himalayan settlements to highlight the diverse and complex approach to studying settlements as an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary process. The study focuses on the Western Ghats near the Tilari Biodiversity region, renowned to naturalists, and second is Himalayan settlements along the Har Ki Dun natural trail in the Garhwal Himalayas of Uttarakhand. The Western Ghats and Deccan Plateau, among the oldest mountain ranges in India, contrast with the Himalayan ranges, which are still forming and thus considered the youngest mountain ranges.

Both contexts are situated in rich biodiversity regions, where the close relationship between humans and nature is prominently evident. These areas maintain their unique vernacular architectural styles and settlement patterns, shaped by various natural and human influences. The study of settlements in natural heritage sites deserves focused attention, particularly their vernacular architecture and typologies, which have evolved over centuries. These settlements have witnessed numerous dynasties, rulers, and the blending of diverse communities.

The discussion focuses on the Nature-Culture journey, settlement patterns, and local architecture, highlighting their evolution in response to the natural, socio-political, and cultural fabric of each place. In this changing era, issues of common heritage and identity, collective memory, and associations, as evidenced by the existence of sacred groves and protected forest areas, are explored. The paper addresses the challenges posed by the changing patterns of vernacular architecture due to rapid urbanization, and migrating young generation, and insensitive tourism. It examines how new infrastructure and connectivity bring challenges that devastate the ecology and alter the built environment. New infrastructure developments are harming the natural environment, contributing to rising temperatures and floods.

How can we modify guidelines to support local architecture and culture in settlements, preserving their identity and sense of place? The Venice Charter highlights the importance of diverse epistemologies and focuses on the built environment. Reexamining the Venice Charter raises the question of whether we can reconsider settlements within a strong natural context in today's world. Heritage practices globally are evolving by recognizing different contexts, as seen in the transformation of guidelines from the Athens and Venice Charters to the Burra Charter. These changes reflect a shift from tangible to intangible heritage. The paper aims to understand heritage as an evolving process

influenced by natural, socio-political, and cultural factors, illustrated through two cases from natural heritage contexts.

Palavras-chave: nature culture journey; indigenous settlements; local architecture; bioregion; charters; asian approach.