

State of Conservation

Archaeological Site of Nalanda Mahavihara

Nalanda, Bihar, India



Report submitted by:
Archaeological Survey of India
State Party India
December 2019

STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORT BY THE STATE PARTY

(In compliance with Paragraph 169 of the Operational Guidelines)

Name of World Heritage Property : Archaeological Site of Nalanda Mahavihara
(Nalanda University) at Nalanda, Bihar

State Party : India

Identification Number : 1502

1. Executive Summary of the report

Nalanda Mahavihara site is in the State of Bihar, in north-eastern India. It comprises the archaeological remains of a monastic and scholastic institution dating from the 3rd century BCE to the 13th century CE. It includes *stupas*, shrines, *viharas* (residential and educational buildings) and important art works in stucco, stone and metal. Nalanda stands out as the most ancient university of the Indian Subcontinent. It engaged in the organized transmission of knowledge over an uninterrupted period of 800 years. The historical development of the site testifies to the development of Buddhism into a religion and the flourishing of monastic and educational traditions.

The site was inscribed in 2016 under criteria (iv) and (vi). While inscribing the site on World Heritage List in 2016, the World Heritage Committee recommended few actions to the State Party in respect to the property which was duly taken care of post its inscription. However, other concerns were highlighted in 2018 during the 42nd Session of World Heritage Committee at Bahrain which were regarding the following:

Integrated Master Plan - The Integrated Master Plan for Rajgir Regional Planning Area and Nalanda Mahavihara is under preparation by the Housing and Urban Development Corporation, Government of India. It is at an advanced stage and will incorporate recommendations and approaches regarding any development plan within or in the vicinity of the property that may have an impact on its Outstanding Universal Value, including authenticity or integrity.

Conservation plan for the site- Conservation works have been carried out in the monument based on a 5 year plan from the year 2014-19. Conservation plan for the next 5 years from 2019-2023 has been formulated which identifies conservation works to be undertaken annually.

Additionally, a site management plan for the monument is being prepared by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

Preparing and implementing a visitor management plan - A site management plan for the monument including the visitor management plan is under preparation by ASI. However, interim works of amenities for visitors and site interpretation have already started and while some have been completed, others are underway.

2. Response to the Decision of World Heritage Committee

The most recent decision of the World Heritage Committee for this property was taken at its 42nd session held in 2018 at Bahrain. The committee acknowledged the progress made by the state party on a number of recommendations made by the Committee at the time of inscription of the property.

The committee also took note of the continuing historical and academic research related to the property. Besides these, the committee entrusted the state party with the following tasks:

Decision 1:

The State Party to include appropriate recommendations and approaches in the Integrated Master Plan regarding any development plan within or in the vicinity of the property that may have an impact on its Outstanding Universal Value, including authenticity or integrity.

Response 1:

The Housing and Urban Development Corporation, a public sector undertaking of Government of India and an experienced techno-financial organization has been assigned by the Urban Development and Housing Department, Government of Bihar, to prepare the Geographical Information System based Integrated Master Plan for Rajgir Regional Planning Area and Nalanda Mahavihara. Satellite imagery of best possible resolution is to be used for this purpose. The Master Plan is in an advance stage of preparation with the Rajgir Regional Planning Area being notified in 2016, Rajgir Regional Planning Area Authority being constituted in 2017, submission of the Preliminary Inception report by HUDCO and the digital map of the area including the site already been done to the Urban Development and Housing Department for vetting it. Following this, the regulations and master plan will be laid out which will include appropriate recommendations and approaches regarding any development plan within or in the vicinity of the property.

Decision 3:






The State Party to work out a formal conservation plan for the excavated remains of the property.




Response 3:




The inscribed property of Archaeological Site of Nalanda Mahavihara is under the custodianship of and is managed by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) under AMASR Act, 1958 (Amendment and Validation, 2010). Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), being the custodian of the monument, undertakes conservation and maintenance of Archaeological Site of Nalanda Mahavihara. All conservation, preservation and maintenance works are carried out by an interdisciplinary team of ASI comprising technical officers of Patna Circle, Science Branch and Horticulture Branch of the ASI under the overall direction and supervision of the Director General and his/her support officers. All three technical divisions work in tandem and coordination to conserve and maintain the monument and its premise. ASI carries out all works as per the *National Policy for the Conservation of Monuments, Archaeological Sites and Remains, 2014*. Under this policy, ASI follows the principle of minimum and reversible interventions, repairs (whenever necessary), with maximum retention of historic fabric. National Conservation Policy, 2014 provides comprehensive guidelines for conservation, preservation and maintenance of protected monuments, devising conservation principles for protected monuments and incorporating best international practices in conservation.




Based on the above principles and guidelines, a brief conservation plan identifying the works to be undertaken in every financial year was formulated for the monument for a period of 5 years from 2014-

2019 based on which conservation works were undertaken. Some of the works have been completed while some are still ongoing.

SITE No.	ITEM OF WORK	STATUS
YEAR 2014-2015		
Site No. 12	Resetting of brick structures in eastern side pointing of joints and laying of lime concreting of flooring. 	Complete 
Site No. 13	Resetting of bricks in lower portion and lime concreting on progress of flooring. 	Complete 
Site No. 14	Resetting of out of plumb brick structures, pointing of joints and lime concreting of floor.	Ongoing
Site No. 01	Resetting brick works and lime concreting in cells and corridors.	Ongoing 

Site No. 08	Resetting of brick works in whole area including repairing of damaged and broken brick floor and lime concreting in verandah.	Ongoing 
YEAR 2015-2016		
Site No. 13	Continuation of previous work including resetting of brick and lime concreting.	Ongoing
Site No. 08	Completion of works started previous year.	Ongoing
Site No. 01	Replacement of damaged old RCC/Concrete lintels to support super structure.	Ongoing 
Site No. 07	Debris clearance resetting of fallen bricks lime concreting in verandah and courtyard at the First level of occupation.	Ongoing 
Site No. 03	Pointing repairing of out – of –plumb portions repair of drainage channels, repaving of damaged brick floor and lime concreting of votive stupas in the complex.	Ongoing

YEAR 2016-2017		
Site No. 03	Restoration an application of water – proofing coat of damaged stucco images and panels based on evidence.	Ongoing
Site No. 12	Clearance of debris resetting of out-of-plumb masonry pointing of joins provision of apron to subsidiary shrines.	Ongoing
Site No. 06,07,08,09, 10 & 11	Providing Apron for peripheral wall	Ongoing
YEAR 2017-2018		
Site No. 03	Chemical treatment and consolidation of facades and repairing of bulged portion Resetting and underpinning .bulged/out-of-plumb masonry removal of weeds.	Ongoing
Site No. 1A & 1B	Chemical treatment and consolidation of structural remains.	Ongoing
Vihara no 6,7,8,9,10 & 11	Providing apron for outer walls.	Ongoing
Monastery no 01	Conservation works 	Complete 
Monastery no 07	Conservation works of Corridor	Ongoing
Monastery no 08	Conservation works of Corridor	Ongoing
Structures to the west of Temple Site 03	Conservation works	Complete 

Around Temple No. 13	Conservation works	Complete
Cluster of votive stupa and main shrine including Panchaytan Chaityas behind temple no. 03	Conservation works	Ongoing 
YEAR 2018-2019		
Site No. 12	Consolidation to prevent further erosion.	Ongoing
Sarai Mound	Debris clearance of area abutting structure Restoration of interior spaces repairs of moldings and pedestal etc. Preservation and consolidation of the painting of the interior walls	Complete 
	Painting of compound wall and grill	Complete 
Monastery no.10	Scientific cleaning	Completed

		
<p>Around Temple Site 12, 13, 14 and Sarai Mound</p>	<p>Garden development</p>	<p>Completed</p> 

Conservation plan formulated for the next 5 years from 2019-2023 includes the following conservation works to be undertaken annually:

Year 2019-20

- Conservation works of Monastery 1A, 1B, 7 and 8, Temple Sites 13 and 14 apart from the Panchayatan temple and cluster of votive stupas around Temple Site 3.
- Patch work repair of structures, as and where required.
- Repair of pathway wherever it has been corroded due to treading by the large number of visitors.
- For proper security of the structures the boundary wall around the site is being constructed where it was damaged. The boundary wall and its grill to be painted in weather coat of enamel of matching shade.
- The drain around Temple Site 3 to be repaired for draining out the water which helps in maintenance of ancient structures.
- Replacement of the existing gate with a new one complementing the site.
- Structural conservation work of Monastery Site 1, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10 & 11 and Temple Sites 2, 3, 12 and Sarai Mound.

Year 2020-21

- Construction of main gate complementing the site.
- Cluster of Votive stupa & miniature shrine behind temple No. 3
- Conservation works of Monastery No. 1 (A) & 1 (B)
- Provision of ramps.
- Documentation work including architectural documentation.
- Refurbishment of site through patch work repairs of structure & pathway

Year 2021-22

- Construction of damaged and decayed brick masonry and fallen wall monastery No 9- Conservation & lime concrete etc.
- Conservation of lower portion of northern side temple No. 13:- Conservation, lime concrete etc.
- Conservation of monastery No. 8:- Conservation, lime concrete etc.

Year 2022-23

- Conservation of all around of lower portion of Temple No. 14:- Taking out of damaged brick masonry & resetting the same and lime concrete etc.
- Conservation of monastery No. 7- Conservation, lime concrete etc.
- Conservation of monastery No. 9 - Conservation, lime concrete etc.

Additionally, the preparation of a site management plan of the site has been undertaken by ASI.

Decision 3:

The State Party to strengthen its approach to visitor management and interpretation, notably by preparing and implementing a visitor management plan

Response 3:

The excavated remains receive consistent flow of visitors for leisure, educational as well as religious purposes. While visitation is not restricted to any particular time of the year, the foot-fall intensifies during the winter season, i.e. during the months of October to March.

Over the 800 meter stretch of the property, visitors walk along the defined pathway and draw information from the introductory interpretation panels fronting each structure. Their movement is halted at specific resting spots or to take shelter from rain. Also, frequent checks are conducted on movement pattern of visitors to ensure that persons are not lost or do not climb atop excavated remains.



Figure 1: Present visitor circulation and Position of Interpretation panel in Property

The site and its remains are under constant manual surveillance to prevent the same from any mechanical injury induced by increased footfall, especially during the months of October to March i.e. at the peak season. Visitor movement is closely monitored to prevent any member from climbing atop the walls of the viharas and from physically accessing the stucco art in the principle-stupa-chaitya.

Preparation of a site management plan which includes visitor management is underway which is addressing the following aspects:

1. Revision of on-site interpretation system - Content of the Interpretive Panels
2. Re-direction of visitor circulation path
3. Universal accessibility to maximum possible areas of the monument but which do not impact the excavated remains.
4. Up gradation of existing museum and interpretation centre (in the Buffer Zone) in terms of improved exhibition and content.
5. Conducting capacity and impact assessment of the monument.
6. Allocation of public amenities like washrooms, drinking water points, ticket counter, dustbins, signage etc.

Implementation of public amenities has already started.

Signages have been improved and new Cultural Notice Boards have been installed separately for each major structure (temple and monasteries). They are bilingual (Hindi and English) and made in sand stone to ensure durability and to match the original building materials used at the site.

Dustbins complementing the site have been installed at suitable places to encourage the visitors from not littering the monument premise.



Image 1: Signages installed at site

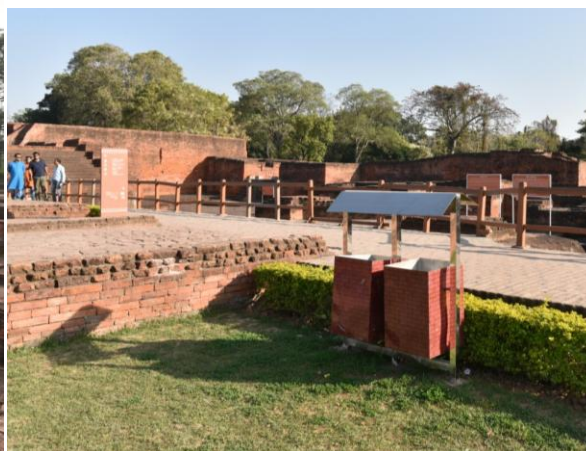


Image 2: Installation of new dustbins

Construction of booking counter, cloak room, cafeteria, publication counter and drinking water is also underway. To ensure proper quality, these works have been outsourced to specialized agencies. The works are in advance stage of completion.



Image 3: Ticket Counter, Cloak room under construction



Image 4: Cafeteria, Publication counter under construction

The preparation of a site management plan of the site has been undertaken by ASI of which the Visitor Management plan forms a part.

3. Other current conservation issues identified by State Party which may have an impact on the property's OUV

None

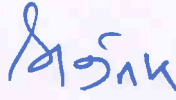
4. Any potential major restoration / alteration and / or new construction intended within the property, buffer zone and / or corridor or other areas where such developments may affect OUV / authenticity / integrity.

Construction of public amenities to facilitate the visitors has been undertaken within the property area. These include toilets, drinking water facility, ticket counter, publication counter and cafeteria. However, the location and design of these amenities is such that they do not interfere or compromise the visual and physical integrity, authenticity and OUV of the world heritage site.

5. Public access to the State of conservation report

The conservation report is regularly published in the "Indian Archaeology: A Review" of the respective year published by the Archaeological Survey of India on annual basis which can be referred by scholars and public. The annual conservation programme with identified works and estimates are also uploaded on conservation portal of Archaeological Survey of India which is in public domain.

6. Signature of the Authority


-13/12/19.
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