

Legacy That Historic Cities Carry: A Case of City of Joy Maandav, Dist. Dhar, Madhya Pradesh

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Abstract- India is home to more than 300 historic cities with very unique character in each of them. These cities carry a legacy since times immemorial, of art, culture, tradition, architecture, planning, engineering, ancient forms and so on. Historic cities are best understood through understanding basics of heritage, land, context & cities.

Heritage : Heritage is what we inherit from our ancestors & from our past

Land: The land & the people are two integral components of the heritage.

Indian context: Heritage in India is result of development in the society, economy, culture, architecture & lifestyle of the people

Cities: Those active human settlements strongly conditioned by a physical structure originating in the past & recognizable as representing the evolution of its people (Source: S. Mutal)

This definition recognizes that a historical city is not constituted only by a material and physical heritage. It comprises not only Buildings, Streets, Squares, Fountains, Arches, Sculptures, Lamp posts but includes the natural landscape, and of course:

- Its residents,
- Customs,
- Jobs,
- Economic and social relations,
- Beliefs and urban rituals.

This definition also includes the important presence of the past and understands by “historical” all those cultural, architectural, and urban expressions which are recognized as relevant and which express the social and cultural life of a community. It eliminates any selection based on restricted interpretation of the term historical and an outlook which places more value on past periods of history.

It is also the recognition of a society or a social group which qualifies a sector of the city as a historical area and interrelates with the totality of the Urban Compound, and in a way is intimately related to the Metropolis in various forms. It need not be a “ghetto” or a “gentrified” segment of the urban landscape. Today, more than ever an interaction is in place to avoid a new phenomenon of gentrification “banlieus”, “favelas”, and “shanty towns”. A negative social-economic segregation; leading at times to social exclusion. (Source: S. Mutal)

Keywords – Heritage, Legacy, Town Planning, Monuments

I. INTRODUCTION

Maandav a story untold, folded and certainly yet to be decoded in terms of folklore, art, culture, love, bravery, skills in architecture, visual design, town planning, urban design, water engineering, sustainability, climatology and the list may go on since 6th century BC.

Maandav is located at the sprawling Vindhya range overlooking robust Malwa plateau with an elevation of 633 m about 95 km from Indore and 40 km from Dhar, connected through SH 22 from west via Dharampuri and SH 31 from north via Dhar. It also located on regional tourism circuit of Maheshwar, Bagh, Maandav and Indore. It is also at the tentative list of UNESCO world heritage site since 1998 and yet to become a world heritage site. Maandav is a fort town with 37 km of fort wall at periphery and 45 sq km of town area.



Figure 1. Madhya Pradesh in India
 Source: Maps of India



Figure 2. Dhar in Madhya Pradesh
 Source: Maps of India



Figure 3. Maandav in Dhar
 Source: Maps of India

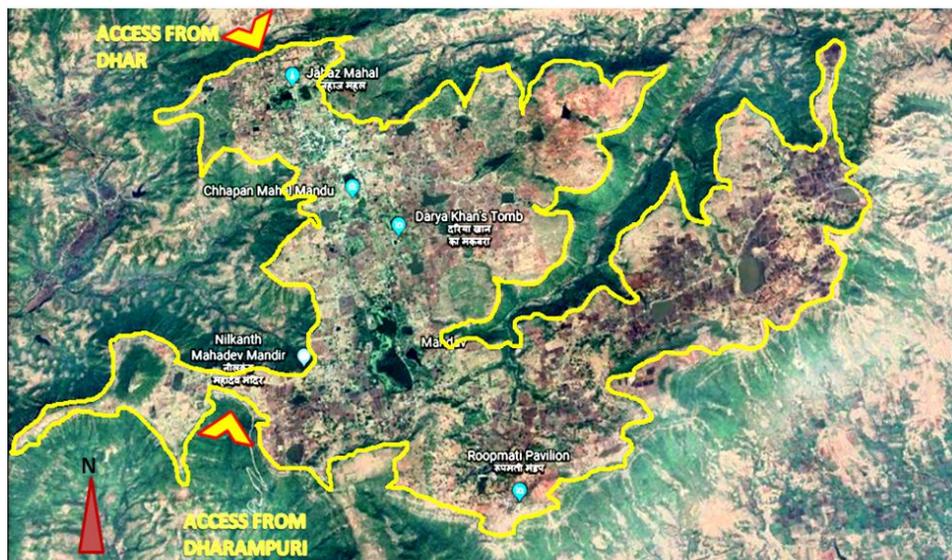


Figure 4. Terrain Map of Maandav
 Source: Recreated by author from Google Earth

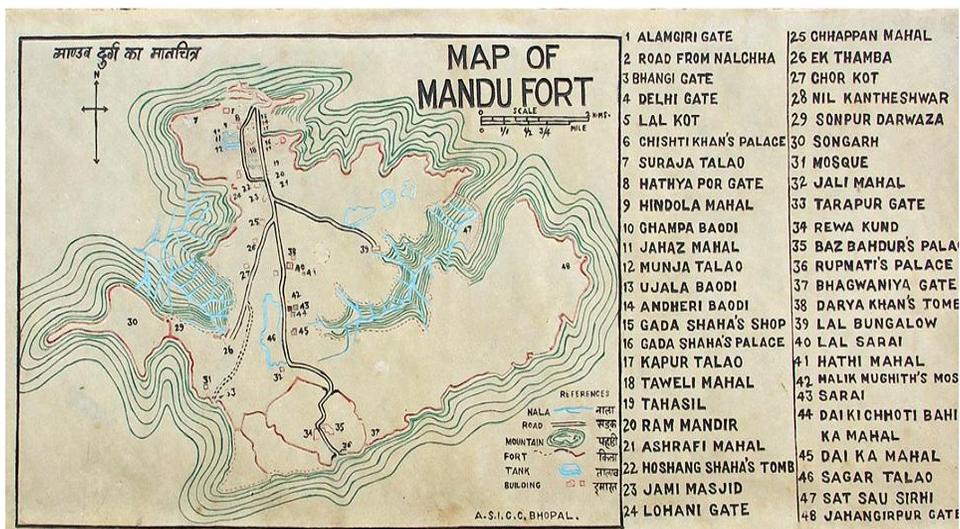


Figure 5. Cadastral Map of Maandav Showing Heritage Assets
 Source: Archaeological Survey of India circle Bhopal

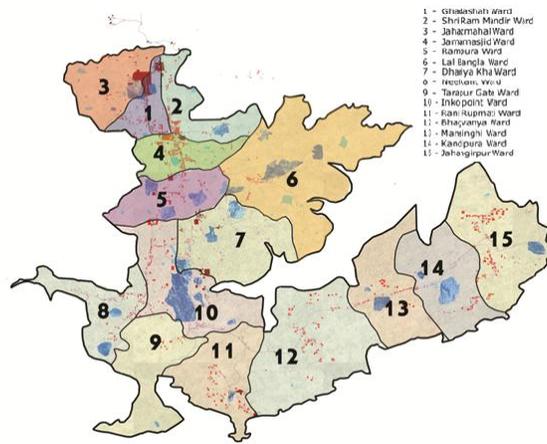


Figure 6. Ward Map of Maandav
 Source: Author

Maandav: the city of joy as they call it. So how does it become the synonym of joy? It may be an open ended question but the ruins are the robust answer to the fragile wander waves of joy, excitement, and awe. Maandu became pioneer in town planning techniques since 9th century which evolved itself up to the end of 17th century.

II. TOWN PLANNING

Sir J.M. Campbell writes “In 15th century Maandu a 12000 acres hill top had 560 fields, 370 gardens, 200 wells, 780 lakes and ponds, 100 bazar roads, 1500 dwellings, 200 rest houses, 260 baths, 470 mosques and 334 palaces.” This certainly is a robust detail for a city of 15th century that says story of its physical, economic and social sustainability which is far lacking among even in cities today.

Maandu certainly is the most robust example of a town so ancient with stands magnificently on the Malwa plateau with amazing town planning schemes.

It was planned on the concept of ancient plan form “Padmaka” This type of plan was practiced for building of the towns with fortress all round. The pattern of the plan resembles the petals of lotus radiating outwards from the center. The city used to be practically an island surrounded by water, having no scope for expansion.

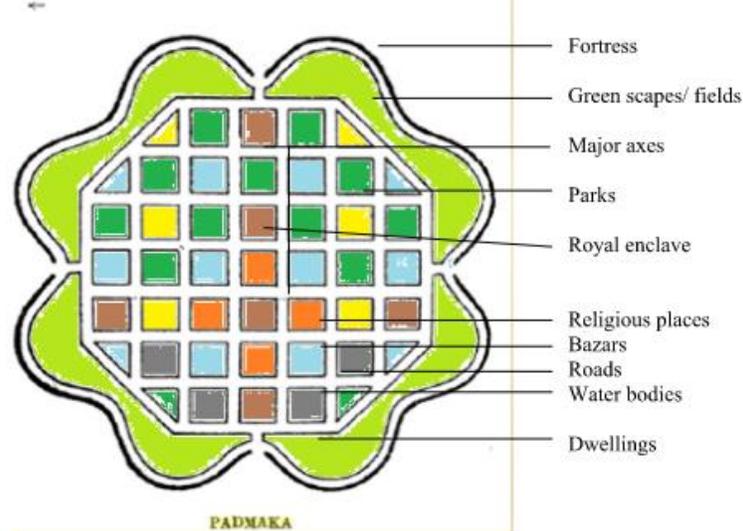


Figure 7. Padmaka Illustration
 Source: Author

It had two major axes NS & EW being NS lengthier one and the royal enclave befitting on it due to sun's orientation.

The major axes (roads) of the town were 5-6 dandas wide (1 danda = 1.5 to 2 m) and met each other on 90 degrees. There was a set hierarchy in roads, major roads leading to royal enclave, then roads leading to bazars, then roads leading to plazas or gardens, and finally roads leading to residential areas into the decreasing order of their width. The fort wall was 7-8 dandas high as per ancient planning norms. Ruins of Maandu town start showcasing its legacy way before its fort wall, starting from river of Naalchha town till Narmada River in its west moving down from Dharampuri.

III. WATER ENGINEERING

Water supply was ensured through the major water bodies, interconnected with each other through covered stone drains lined with lime and terracotta.

Supply of water was ensured through manual system and syphonic system along with Persian wheel system, to the forts and to the other parts of town as evident. This system also supported the fountains in pressure gravity system at fort landscapes and public gardens.

Aqueducts were bestowed by Persian wheels fitted with chained buckets and were drawn by animals to supply the aqueducts with water, most evident in Jal Mahal, Jahaz Mahal & Baz Bahadur's Palace.

Public baths were provided near plazas and were facilitated with hot and cold water supplies through coal burning in a large metal cauldron placed at the mouth of hot water channel which gets its cold water supply from stone channels. These baths were equipped with glazed pipe systems to keep water warm for a larger period of time. Bath campuses are equipped with flush cisterns, showers, sauna, steam, oil massage areas and dressing rooms. These baths were both public and private royal Hamams extremely influenced with Roman Thermae. These also worked on supply of water from aqueducts still present and water was obtained in highest tank further overflow tanks are provided to pass the water to the lower tanks through pressure gravity techniques with decorative cascade, fountains and sheets of water.



Figure 8. Persian Wheel Illustration

Source: (a) parts; and (b) in Hama on Orontes River in Syria

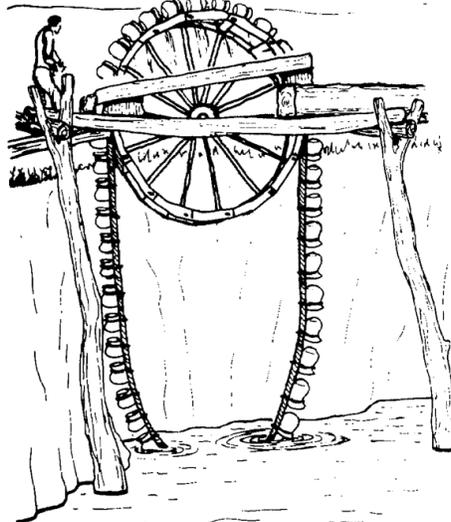


Figure 9. Persian Wheel Illustration

Source: MDPI.com

IV. ECONOMIC PLANNING (ROYAL MINT, TEXTILE INDUSTRY, POTTERY & GLAZE INDUSTRY)

Maandu had the only royal mint that produced coins of silver and copper in entire Malwa sultanate which was then named as Shadiabad Maandu. Further Akbar added mints to Ujjain, Sironj and Sarangpur.

Maandu sarkar was once the only province in Malwa sultanate that produces Muslin & Chintz cloth in its Haslipur area. Muslin was traded by merchants and chintz was a transparent sort of printed cloth and was not allowed to trade by merchants as it was exclusively wore and gifted by royal families and due to gold and silver embroidery was priced costly.

Maandu had a very elaborate pottery & glaze industry and it reached a very high standard mark. Blue & yellow painted glazed tiles are distributed throughout the buildings of Maandu.

Potters possessed a secret formula, now apparently lost for the preparation of a turquoise blue which for brilliancy has never been surpassed.

Figure 9. Persian Wheel Illustration
Source: MDPI.com



Figure 10. Turquoise Blue in Hoshangshah Tomb
Source: Author



Figure 11. Chintz Figure
Source: Author



Figure 12. Muslin Figure
Source: Author



Figure 13. Silver Coins From Royal Maandu Mint
Source: Madhukar Arts

V. MONUMENTS

Maandu bore first few examples of provincial architecture that expands boundaries of religion based architecture. It proved to be important link for founding indo Islamic architecture encouraging and celebrating the brotherhood of Hindu and Islamic connections like inserting a horizontal lintel at the afghan arch to relieve Indian ideology of “an arch never sleeps”, and created the first model of trabeated and arcuated structure.

Hoshangshah’s tomb was the first building that exhibited an all marble architecture detailing and finally became an inspiration for the wonderful Taj Mahal.



Figure 14. Trabeated Arches
Source: Author



Figure 15. Hoshang Shah’s Tomb
Source: Author

Jahaz Mahal and Jami Masjid were the first monuments that had marble gateway integrated with sandstone and Baroda Green Marble, Which further drew inspiration in the making of Humayun’s Tomb.



Figure 16. Jahaz Mahal
Source: Author

Jahaz Mahal laid foundation for the expressionism in architecture that started long after its existence and 20th century architects are said to be its pioneers as Walter Gropius and Mies Van Der Rohe. Its robust form of a ship like structure bestows it the new dimensions of expressionism in form and planning. Its ship like form bestows freedom to a stable structure.

Its open pavilions and outward form of plan provides sense of freedom to the women for whom it was build. The plan reflects the progressive thought process of the constructor that bestows respect to women and admires their belongingness to the environment which itself is an example of an idea of women empowerment times ahead of an era that considered women not more than an object of disguise.

Amazingly Jahaz Mahal finds similarity with gothic plan forms; the rose windows the gargoyles find transboundary similarity in detailing. This plan form came in an era when Indian architecture was mainly comprised of courtyard planning or temple architecture.

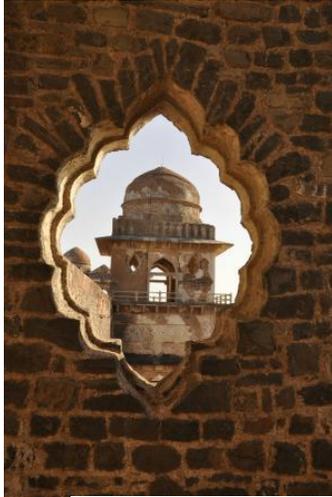


Figure 17. Jahaz Mahal
Source: Author



Figure 18. Jahaz Mahal
Source: Author

VI. VISUAL DESIGN

Visual connections among group of monuments based on visual design principles. Frames and illusions that could only be experienced are novelty in visual design.

Each and every arched window or gateway of Jahaz Mahal is a frame for Jal Mahal, Taveli Mahal, Hindola Mahal and vice versa. At each place one stands and looks outwards to another monument in visual setting appears to be in frame of afghan arches.



Figure 19. Rupmati Pavillion

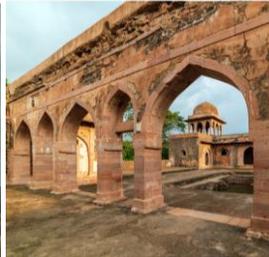


Figure 20. Bazbahadur's Palace
Source: Author



Figure 21. Hindola Mahal

Visual retreat is best experienced in the setting of Jami Mosque & Asharfi Mahal. The arches of Asharfi Mahal pavilion are visual galleries to view the beauty of moon on a full moon night. With the rise in steps of Asharfi Mahal the moon rises high and from final step with highest rise of moon it looks like a silver coin through the arched frame and hence the Mahal was named as Asharfi Mahal. This is the most supreme example of dynamic visual retreat in ancient afghan architecture which just out performs any modern building.

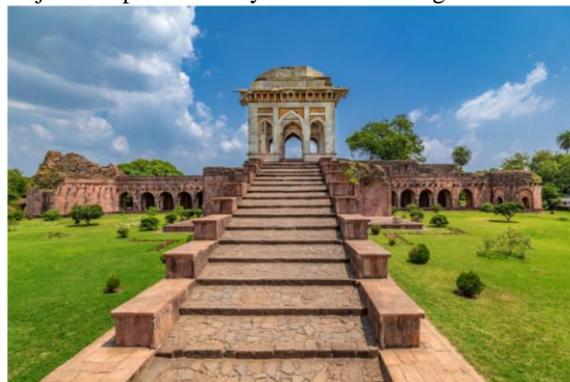


Figure 22. Asharfi Mahal
Source: Author

VII. CONCLUSION

Maandu has so many accolades earned to its shoulders, some of them are:

First ancient resort city of south East Asia.

The first impregnable fort of Malwa sultanate

The First fort to house public plazas and public baths replicating the roman ideology of pleasure and technology of water engineering.

House of the monuments that pioneered construction techniques complimenting the local climate.

Maandu not only had the pleasure palaces but proved to be Avant Garde in physical social and economic advancement.

Maandu was the first capital of Malwa sultanate

Maandu housed the first royal mint that produced silver and copper coins in reign of Akbar

Maandu had cotton industries that produced finest Muslin and Chintz

The artisans of Maandu were the first to produce turquoise blue in glaze and pottery and were pioneers in using it on monuments

Architects of Taj Mahal were sent to study the Hoshang Shah's Tomb for its all marble construction techniques.

Maandu in entire Malwa region hence had been Avant Garde in its planning, design, architecture, art and trade activities. It was the richest sarkar as Shadiabad Maandu in reign of Akbar and before housing a population of about 10 lakh.



Figure 23. Shahi Hamam at Jahaz Mahal for King
Source: Author



Figure 23. Shahi Hamam at Jahaz Mahal for Queens
Source: Author

Maandu hence is a story untold and yet to be unfolded with tons of mysteries beneath.

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