WORLD HERITAGE DAY

Heritage is the essence of India, we must preserve it

We celebrate April 18 as World Heritage Day. But, most of us do not work to preserve our heritage culture. We find it in a foreign culture mainly because of lack of awareness about the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH).

INTACH was founded on January 27, 1984, by Rajiv Gandhi, who was its first chairman. Headquartered in New Delhi, it is the largest non-government, non-profit organisation dedicated to the conservation of India's culture and heritage.

Ever since its inception, it has spread in most cities across the country, and has engaged MoUs with various nations for co-operation of work.

The organisation, over the years, has undertaken the restoration work of hundreds of monuments that fall outside the purview of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). Places, the local administration also hands over the task of upkeep of heritage structures to INTACH.

Documentation and listing of heritage sites is one of its thrust areas. Heritage education and communication services are a highlight. A large number of publications are regularly brought out including the quarterly newsletter Vigyanik for attracting awareness.

The scope of work is slowly widening. With a network of volunteers and a database of each state or district level, the latter has been a Centre for Training and Capacity Building to promote excellence for heritage management of our heritage.

It also focuses on intangible cultural heritage (ICH) to preserve endangered tribal India. In its long journey, INTACH has contributed to the creation of various policies and laws to save our heritage, which was threatened due to vested interests that try to exploit the intrinsic and unique way of life.

India, a member of the World Heritage Convention, proudly preserves 29 world heritage sites (33 cultural and six natural), and over 300 protected monuments. Cultural heritage is the essence of India. We must preserve it.

Colonel A D Singh (retd)
JAMIA CART

TOI Chandigarh, 17 Apr ‘19