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Architectural Heritage, ASI, Filming Location, Filming Impacts, Filming Policies and Guidelines

Architectural Heritage as Filming Location: A View from Literature

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ABSTRACT

Using architectural heritage sites as filming locations is a longstanding practice linked to the parallel existence of the film industry and heritage discourse. It creates complex impacts on tourism, building protection, and association between heritage and its people. The moderate yet consistent recognition of the study of this phenomenon is found in the global Western context, but the available literature discusses limited practical learnings. The phenomenon regrettably remains underexplored, particularly in the Indian context. This review paper aims to illuminate the current understanding of this phenomenon internationally and rigorously within India through a comprehensive literature review. Owing to the overall scarcity of knowledge in this regard, the paper examines published and unpublished works across various discourses: Heritage Conservation, Film-Induced Tourism, Film and Architecture, and Films and Audiences. An integrated literature review framework highlights research gaps, while content analysis assesses existing Indian policies, particularly in Rajasthan, a key filming location. The critical paradigm position aids in summarizing pertinent research and practice gaps, corroborating the pressing need for further investigation in this area.



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Introduction

“Ismail Merchant, our producer diverted and took away the site guard with him” and ordered the film crew “to shoot a sequel” for *The Householder* (1963) inside Jantar Mantar, Delhi. It was an “adventurous experience as we had no permission for filming yet we finished our task flawlessly”. Bollywood’s former veteran actor Shashi Kapoor’s humorous way of narration in one of his recent interviews indicates that the nationally protected heritage site witnessed the trespassing and violation of the rule of filming permission set by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI, 1959) (Kapoor, 2017). “The Rajasthan High Court ordered discontinuation of the shooting of Salman Khan’s film *Veer* (2010) at the World Heritage Site of Amber Palace, Rajasthan, because of the collapse of a historic wall and demolition of the historic roof during the filming. The court questioned the permission guidelines that could not control the serious injuries caused to the building and a large number of people present on-site and ordered the immediate police inspection of the existing rules” (The Indian Express, 2009) (TOI, 2009). Chanderi’s “haunted historic structures received ‘filmic’ tourism boost as the celebrities of Bollywood films *Stree* (2018) and the sequel *Stree 2* (2024) endorsed the ‘seeing the Ghost’ experiences during the filming activities in the village” (Mid-Day, 2024) (TOI, 2024).

The above instances raise important questions: How is the management of architectural heritage sites as filming locations regulated? Are existing policies sufficient to protect these sites from filmmakers? Have on-site experiences prompted rule changes for heritage protection? Does the promotion of historic structures in films aid tourism and revenue? Most importantly, is there any need to conduct a detailed study of the phenomenon of filming at architectural heritage sites and their subsequent management?

This review paper aims to highlight and justify the need for the said research and its relevance in the current heritage conservation discourse in India. It deploys an integrated literature review method to trace the gaps across diverse scholarships that address this phenomenon actively and passively. The review consists of four sections: the first examines the literature on the effects of filming activities on heritage site management and conservation internationally; the second critically reviews ASI guidelines and State Archaeology guidelines using Rajasthan as a case study; the third explores scholarly commentary on the impact of Indian Cinema on audiences; and the fourth studies FIT at heritage sites. Based on a thorough examination of literature and practical experiences, the research concludes that there is an urgent need for analytical studies on this phenomenon to prioritize heritage vulnerability over film production demands while strategizing co-benefits for both parties. Before starting the review, a brief on the methodology used in this work and its importance in grounding the study's execution is presented below.

Methodology

As the central argument in this paper progresses, it will become more evident that the studies directly dealing with the phenomenon of architectural heritage as filming locations are fewer in general and negligible in India, in particular. This study, therefore, will act as a preliminary guide and comprehensive literature review for the emerging studies on this phenomenon in India. "An integrated literature review (hereafter ILR) is the best suitable method which leads to the initial conceptualization of such new topic" (Torraco, 2005, p. 357). This method, as (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005) demonstrates, unlike the "systematic review approach", allows "identification of the problem through an integrated study of the findings from diverse disciplines" (Lubbe, Smit, & Baloyi, 2020, p. 309). Such an approach is pivotal for this paper which identifies the problem of heritage protection owing to the neglected effects of filming through the literature examination across: Heritage Conservation, Film and Architecture, Film-Induced Tourism, and Film influence on the audience. Further, ILR helps in the cross-synthesis of the 'multi-disciplinary literature review' and 'evidence-based review' (Latvala, Liimatainen, & Hopia, 2016).

The examination of policy documents, facts revealed in public interviews, and news reports is crucial in this research and will be reviewed under this style. This particular step is complimented by the content analysis method which helps in "interpreting and understanding the intentions of narrations in interviews, authoritative documents, and communication contents used in news reports" especially when the "contextual controversies" are identified in the work (Bengtsson, 2016, p. 10). This method prominently informs the "categorization" of five different sections identified while "organizing the central body" of the paper (Bammidi, 2008, p. 180).

Finally, the critical paradigm position is taken in the stage of summarization. This perspective enabled the "critical collation and synthesis of the contesting ideas and the reviews" (Asghar, 2013, p. 3129) (Christou, 2023) presented in separate sections, which collectively come out as a significant conclusion and contribution of this paper to the evolving theorization of the said phenomenon.

Architectural Heritage as Filming Location:

International Context: An Overview

'Location Filming' has been used since the beginning of filmmaking, as it was found more 'economical' to shoot at architectural heritage sites than to create 'costly studio replicas' (Shimko, 2019) (Flynn, 2016). While the use of such sites in films persisted gradually, a marked increase occurred in the 1980s with the rise of 'heritage film' in Britain (Higson, January 2003). Notable films including *Brideshead Revisited* (1981), *Pride and Prejudice* (1995), and *Shakespeare in Love* (1998) used English Heritage extensively (Higson, 2012) alongside American counterparts like *The Terminator* (1984), *The Ghostbusters* (1984), which showcased iconic sites such as The New York Public Library (Masterman, 1995) (Robin Raven, 2023). The filmmaker's willingness to pay 'hefty location fees' encouraged

site authorities to 'consistent site maintenance' (Flynn, 2016). In the 1990s, such projects significantly contributed to the UK's national economy (Flynn, 2016), while USA News reported a rise of over 3 billion dollars in the last decade of the 20th century (GSA, 2004). The rapid spread of 'economic impact' resulted in the 'dedicated departments for filming projects', including the National Trust of the UK and National Trust for Historic Preservation, USA, which "enabled smooth shooting processes and loosened site-protection regulations" (Masterman, 1995, p. 2) (Flynn, 2016, p. 16).

Filmmakers typically consider the site's physical appearance for the "visual impact required in the plot," (Masterman, 1995, p. 2) so the 'cost becomes secondary'. Well-preserved sites often satisfy "nostalgia for period drama," while horror genre filmmakers prefer 'dilapidated or less-maintained sites' (Reynolds, 2016, p. 49). Thus filming helps "satisfy the essential need of heritage site's survival by being in constant use and of value to contemporary culture" (Reynolds, 2016, p. 49). These studies also discuss the creation of local employment including "set dressers, spot boys, site supervisors, watchmen, equipment assistants", (Masterman, 1995, p. 5) and "local commercial agents" (Shimko, 2019, p. 56). Filming projects and the subsequent activities have also contributed to the wide recognition of the site through "multiple publicity and marketing tools, that further generate educational awareness" (Shimko, 2019, p. 30) and "revive the existing affection amongst locals for their heritage site" (Shimko, 2019, p. 83).

Following the sudden outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, a couple of researchers through cases of the UK and the USA, have argued that the most 'frequently visited' heritage sites experienced 'abandonment' but regained and earned their much-needed income through filming projects during the partial un-lock period (Fry, Tomlin, Marsland, & Barnes, 2022) (Jones, 2022) (Columbia University, 2024).

In later times, as noted by scholars through their heritage management studies, for instance, in Scotland, the Scottish heritage sector is 'increasingly becoming aware' of the 'relationship between filming and heritage' and developing 'inclusive management strategies' (Munro, 2021) (Schiavone, Reijnders, & Brandellero, 2022). Thus, summarily, it can be said that these heritage sites receive the financial benefits in a wide variety of ways through "location fees, production crew expenditures during their stay on site, FIT and so on". These earnings are applied toward necessary "conservation, restoration, or repair work" (Flynn, 2016, p. 19). Additionally, sometimes these sites receive "free of cost" repair works or "beautification" which again contribute to the maintenance of the site. It is clear in following Reynold's observation "For Vanity Fair (2004), the production company installed period street lamps on Great Pultney Street in Bath. Deemed to improve the overall appearance of the historic street appropriate to conservation principles, they were left in situ by the council and remain to this day" (Reynolds, 2016, p. 53). Thus, the filming phenomenon at the architectural heritage site "share the symbiotic and reciprocal relationship" (Reynolds, 2016, p. 50).

Masterman notes, that while the 'monetary gains' are positive for sites, the film productions often 'prioritize their own interests' over heritage vulnerability. This is supported by subsequent scholarships (Winter, 2002) (Reynolds, 2016) (Flynn, 2016) (Fry,

Tomlin, Marsland, & Barnes, 2022) (Shimko, 2019), The “trade-offs like physical damage and miscommunication can be negligible to massive and involve risk and should be weighed against positive effects” (Masterman, 1995, p. 7). Masterman provides a detailed account of these negative effects with case studies in the USA and parallels in UK studies are drawn by Reynolds (2016), Fry (2022), Jones (2022), Shimank (2019), and Flynn (2016). The likelihood of a ‘bad experience’, during filming depends on the ‘transparency’ of film companies in negotiations with local authorities and communities. An ‘incomplete picture’ about the use of site for shooting can foster ‘distrust among locals’ and cause ‘irreversible damage to structures’, making them ‘less viable for future projects’. She terms this phenomenon “Location Burnout,” warning that “even the monetary compensations offered by film productions can not make up the permanent loss or irreversible damage of heritage” (Masterman, 1995, p. 8). Additionally, she notes that satisfying “film plot requirements” often jeopardizes a site’s integrity, leading to “Hollywoodization of heritage” (Masterman, 1995, p. 9). Thus, she asserts that site authorities should fully ‘shoulder responsibility for protecting heritage structures’ while film crews bear ‘partial responsibility’. These arguments are further explored in the UK case studies.

Reynolds's emphasis upon “robust written requirement for supervision and on-site vigilance at all times by conservation professionals” resonates well with the ones occurring in Masterman’s research. The following example supports these arguments. A crew member was observed “dragging heavy equipment across the historic floor of the Roman Baths, part of a World Heritage Site”....although no noteworthy...” damage was caused as the action was immediately stopped due to site officer’s intervention, but it demonstrates that “the potential need for supervision” (Reynolds, 2016, p. 56). Further Shimko resonates with Reynolds that the ‘filming can result in loss of normal/ regular/ original use’ if not monitored ‘professionally’ (Shimko, 2019). “Private and small-scale properties like country houses face potential difficulties of having over one hundred people on location with heavy equipment”. Sometimes the site and residents do not possess “enough capacity to accommodate such unexpected activities” (Shimko, 2019, p. 102). Despite the scale, as Reynolds argues, the “filming proposals, periods of shoot closure, and their estimated impacts on visitor’s perceptions at these locations need to be judged based on individual site characteristics” (Reynolds, 2016, p. 56).

These studies, in their conclusions, express a degree of solidarity; while tracing both “positive and negative impacts on architectural heritage sites, they assert that the latter should not outweigh the former” (Schiaivone, Reijnders, & Brandellero, 2022, p. 1117). Scholars also emphasize the need to develop “knowledge, skills, and expertise in the heritage sector, which need not to be universally accepted, but derived at specific region/ country level” (Reynolds, 2016, p. 60) (Pan & Ryan, February 2013).

This paper, through analysis of literature review, proposes such ‘region-specific’ research requirements for heritage sites in India, due to their unique physical and cultural characteristics. Moreover, the above literature review indicates minimal scholarly commentary on the said phenomenon that is rooted in primarily the UK or the USA. As India seeks alternatives to West-centric heritage conservation methods, it is crucial to consider the uniqueness of its architectural heritage and the challenges related to filming

against the backdrop of well-explored Western cases (Guha, 2004) (Gupta, 2021) (Bharne and Sandmeier, 2019) (Chalana & Krishna, 2021). This discussion leads us to review the literature and policies on this phenomenon within the Indian context.

Overview of Indian Context

The Indian architectural heritage conservation primarily stems from colonial practices established in 19th century British India with the Archaeological Survey of India (hereafter ASI). This approach has been shaped by West-centric influences, including international systems like UNESCO and ICOMOS. Similarly, State Archaeology Departments, while slightly differing from ASI, have relied on 'colonial premises' (Dominique, 2018). The late 20th-century rise of awareness for 'India-centric approaches' (Gupta, 2021) led to the establishment of the Architectural Heritage Department (AHD) under the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), which has significantly influenced private conservation practices in India (Chalana & Krishna, 2021).

As efforts grow towards these approaches, practitioners and academicians debate the complexities of identity, authenticity, significance, vulnerability, and contested meanings of heritage sites (Dominique, 2018) (Dominique, 2018) (Chalana & Krishna, 2021) (Bharne and Sandmeier, 2019) (Srivastava, 2018) (Weiler and Gutschow, 2016) (Jain A. K., 2015) (Thakur, 2017). However, the challenges of heritage sites as filming locations remain largely unrecognized. Intersections of filming and architectural heritage in India are mainly discussed within Film-Induced Tourism and Film and Architecture discourses, often lacking depth and comprising only a few case studies that focus on tourism marketing and hardly address challenges faced during filming at architectural heritage sites. (Angmo & Dolma, September 2015) (Dineshan & Shamala, February 2020).

The longstanding discourse of 'Film and Architecture' explores the interdependencies between film mediums and urban design but often relegates architectural heritage sites to mere 'Objects of Nostalgia' or 'Beautiful Backdrops' in films (Lamster, 2000) (Roberts, 2008) (Barber, 2012) (Setiawati, et al., 2019). In India, research on architectural heritage projection in films is scarce and primarily conducted by Mass Media and Communication scholars. Dwyer (2011) examines filmmakers' use of Bombay Gothic architecture in horror and romance genres, while Sen (2013) discusses Havelis as Ghosts's second homes due to their cinematic representations (Jaikumar, 2017). She further analyzes the 'selective imagination' and portrayal of 'authentic architectural values' in these projections. While informative, these understandings of architectural heritage and film medium have two major drawbacks. First, the commentary focuses on filmic representation styles and their impact on audience perceptions, neglecting pre-shoot and during-shoot effects on the identity of heritage site and its management. Second, it is limited to methods provided by film academia which concentrate only on post-shoot experiences—i.e., cinematic representations. The perspective of architecture, though not heritage architecture, is seen in Dalvi's interdisciplinary work (Smita Dalvi, 2023), which challenges conventional approaches to studying architecture and establishes the importance of 'filmic' representation of architectural spaces as a key method to study 'lived experiences' in

architecture field. She also urges furthermore interdisciplinary research in Film and Architecture from this lens (Dalvi, July 2019) (Dalvi, 2020). This scholarly urge can apply to the study of architectural heritage and film medium, given that the understanding of architectural spaces and respective heritage spaces share a lot of similarities and the latter remains underexplored from architect's lens in India. Overall, the discourse of Film and Architecture, primarily addresses effects related to the 'screen appearance' of sites while missing the impact of two key periods associated with filming processes at architectural heritage sites: pre-shooting and during shooting. This limited discussion on heritage sites as filming locations may stem from ignorance of their unique, vulnerable nature, and protection challenges (Mennel, 2019). Therefore, an in-depth study of filming processes at architectural heritage sites from a heritage conservation perspective is warranted. This particular need is evidently substantiated as we conduct the review of ASI filming guidelines and Film-Tourism Policy, the only existing data indicating 'authorized concern' in these regards.

Review of ASI Guidelines

Archaeological Survey of India, as the primary government body for heritage conservation in India, follows the 'Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act' of 1959. This Act "provides rules and guidelines for the preservation of ancient and historical monuments and archaeological sites and remains of national importance" (Ministry of Culture India, 1959, p. 2). The document includes a working definition of "filming= the preparation of a cinematographic film (including video film) with the aid of a camera which is capable of taking films of more than eight millimetres and which requires the use of a stand or involves other special previous arrangements" (Ministry of Culture India, 1959, p. 2). This definition underpins rules 40 to 48 in Chapter VIII, regulating commercial photography and filming at ASI-protected heritage sites. The following text reviews these rules in detail, identifying gaps related to heritage conservation.

Chapter VIII outlines guidelines for 'Copying and Filming of Protected Monuments.' 'Filming' first demands the Filming Licence application from an applicant to the "Director-General with Form IX, at one month before the proposed date of the commencement of such operation" (Ministry of Culture India, 1959, p. 10) . Notably, this licensing procedure was overlooked during the filming of *The Householder* (1963), just five years after the law's establishment (Kapoor, 2017), as mentioned previously, highlighting a practice gap and the need for research on guideline implementation and potential modifications. Licence sanctioning happens after receiving Form X and daily payments of Rs. 1 Lakh for World Heritage Monuments (security deposit: Rs. 50,000) and Rs. 50,000 for other monuments (security deposit: Rs. 10,000) (Ministry of Culture, India, 31st July, 2015, p. 4). This set of rules raises questions: How much of these fees support site conservation? Does the percentage change with the monument's size and complexity? Are security deposits sufficient to prevent irreversible damage to historic sites during film shoots? The ambiguous nature of these legal documents warrants critical analysis regarding their evolution and on-site implementation.

The next guideline permits “filming in exteriors while prohibiting access to interiors covered by roofs and disallowing large-scale scaffolding or artificial sets” (Ministry of Culture India, 1959, p. 10. Rule no 41. a&b.). Violation of this rule is evident in site’s film appearances, for instance, several scenes in the Marathi film *Ajinta* (2012) were shot within the World Heritage Site's Ajanta Caves, blurring distinctions between semi-closed areas and ‘interiors – parts covered by roof’. This intrigues next questions: Does the authority give freedom to the site officer to interpret the rules as per the requirement of the film or the characteristics of the heritage site?

Are these laws pertinent to the heritage conservation or friendly to the film script requirements? This particular possibility is undeniable because of the pieces of evidence of “loosening regulations for smooth filming processes” (Masterman, 1995, p. 2) as already noted in international context review. Furthermore, the rules in the Act document, prohibit the application of any “extraneous matter, such as water, oil, grease or the like on the physical fabric of the monument” and also directs the placement of “electric power generating plant to be away from the monument façade” (Ministry of Culture India, 1959, p. 10. Rule no 41. a&b.). The rules indicate the gap of specificity regarding the distance between the monument surface and such vulnerable plants or equipment; and most importantly, regarding the appointment of specially trained professional expert to vigilantly control the actions at every stage.

Therefore, this paper argues that there is an in-depth study need on the personal experiences of the site authorities of such sites who have witnessed the following or violating of the rules, if any in past. The Licence application and declaration forms: form IX and form X respectively ask for the “submission of attachments including the script and detailed description of scenes” to be shot at the site (Ministry of Culture India, 1959, p. 29 & 30). No guidelines, however, are provided for the scrutiny of these descriptions and their obligation during the actual filming processes. Moreover, these rules and regulations, although underwent amendment from 1966 to 2012, have received only following two upgradations (RTI, Statewise documents, 2024). That is, Rule no. 40- “application can be sent one month (formerly three months) before the commencement of shoot”. Rule no. 44 wherein “location fees are increased overall with variations for World Heritage Sites” (Ministry of Culture, India, 31st July, 2015, p. 3). Additionally, as per the latest news report, ASI claimed to bring necessary changes in their guidelines and make it more stringent for filmmakers because, for instance, “the filmmakers seek permission to shoot at a particular historical fort or site but end up shooting in the prohibited area using heavy equipment which causes severe damage to the delicate monuments” (Aravinda Gowda, 2014). However, the ASI guidelines document, as available on their website does not show any reflection of the change/ upgradation of existing rules. Such a gap, even after the damage experienced on historic sites, can pose a more unexpected threat to the heritage as proved in international context’s commentary. There is, thus, a need to conduct the study in this regard.

ASI guidelines are, to a certain extent replicated along with a few variations by other central and State departments. A few guidelines, however, are recently upgraded under

the plan of 5 years of film tourism policy by the Film Facilitation cell with the main goal of encouraging filming projects at all types of tourist/ unmapped sites and further, the site's promotion through film screen, encouraging film tourism, generating local job opportunities etc (PIB Delhi, 2020) (Panda, 2020) (Nair & Suri, 2017). 'Single Window System' has been introduced in past couple of years for easing out process of permissions procurement for film productions (Film Facilitation Cell, 2022). These initiatives, however, raise a few foundational queries: Why do the guidelines prioritize film production convenience and tourism objectives? Has this gap created threats to the historical significance and identity of these sites? Has any state department addressed heritage site challenges separately? If so, what motivated this approach and what has been its impact on site management?

The following section reviews the guidelines adopted by State Archaeology, Rajasthan, as a leading example in this context of discussion.

Review of State Archaeology Guidelines: Case of Rajasthan

The state of Rajasthan is a hotspot for film-shootings owing to its vibrant natural, cultural, and architectural beauty. The grandiosity and picturesqueness of the architectural heritage have always caught the fancy of Indian as well as international filmmakers including the projection of the Udaipur Palace in Bollywood's classic *Guide* (1960) and Hollywood hit *Octopussy* (1983). The popularity of these sites for filming was the primary reason for the formulation of the filming guidelines by the State Archaeology Department under the law of The Rajasthan Monuments, Archaeological Sites and Antiquities Act, 1961 (Department of Archaeology and Museums, 2024). The state receives over 400 commercial filming requests per year at the Film Facilitation Cell and executes approximately 350 projects (RTI, Rajasthan, 2024) (Department of Tourism, Rajasthan, 2024) at different heritage sites. This makes the state the oldest in tackling the said phenomenon. As a result, the heritage property stakeholders including the government authorities and private owners have increased location fees by an unregulated percentage every year. Moreover, the Rajasthan Film Tourism Promotion Policy, 2022, follows the strategy as described in the above section (Film Facilitation Office, 2022) (Department of Rajasthan Tourism, 2022). Such attempts entice Film Induced Tourism and further the development of tourism planners and agencies to cater to FIT. There are approximately fifteen curated routes that showcase the heritage sites which are popular filming and tourist destinations (Rajasthan Tour Planner, 2018) (Delhi-Rajasthan Tour, 2019). Nonetheless, the years of experience, the attempt to take up new initiatives and the consistent exposure of its heritage sites to film shoots and screen tourism make Rajasthan a case in point. Hence, this study identifies Rajasthan state for State Archaeology's detailed guidelines review under this section in particular.

The Rajasthan Monuments, Archaeological Sites and Antiquities Act, 1961 shares similarities in few guidelines with AMASR act like the definition of 'filming' (p.21). The overall act's amended version is known as Rajasthan Film Shooting Regulations 2016

(Department of Archaeology and Museums, 2024) and the following text presents the point-wise review of this document. Filming licence application is issued through the single window system with the submission of Form I and II and necessary 'location fees as per Schedule IV', only if an Archaeological Officer finds the proposed contents of the 'script free of any discrepancies' (p.24 & 25). The Department of Archaeology, Rajasthan waived this fee in 2017 with the intention of promoting screen tourism through films and simultaneously continuing the smooth and seamless film shoots at these sites (Ahuja, 2017). This point definitely calls for the study of location fees variations, their reasons, and advantages and disadvantages for the conservation cause of the site.

The next point prohibits the entertainment of any 'request for either to facilitate the operation or for opening the monument beyond the normal hours i.e. sunrise to sunset' (p.25). The contradiction to this point is evident in the scene in *Rang De Basanti's* (2006) shot at Nahargarh fort's *Baoli* which shows the night's darkness i.e. beyond 'normal hours'. The analytical verification study on such contradictions or 'special permissions grants' if any is highly warranted. The following point of 'Charges for police convoy shall be determined by the Superintendent of Police or Police Commissioner, on the basis of strength of manpower required and logistics to be deployed during the shoot', questions the lack of clarity of the number of guards, their role and involvement in protecting the site required for any particular shoot. Does this lack of concern justify the accident at Amber Palace (TOI, 2009) (The Indian Express, 2009) that damaged a historic wall and a roof during a shoot as mentioned in the introduction section? The accident also showed the controversy of another rule that says "No artificial/ permanent structure shall be constructed inside the monument" (p. 26). Despite such continued discrepancies, the site gained World Heritage status from UNESCO in 2013 (Mahim Pratap Singh, 2013). This indicates: firstly the modifications in guidelines despite of wide media coverage and court verdict, are not made in an amended document (Rajasthan Tourism, 2023); the authorities rely on "the filmmakers to ensure the safety of the tourists and ensure no damage to the monument" (Ahuja, 2017, p. 3). The reliability of the authorities is questionable. It is undeniable that the next point in guidelines mentions the appointment of an officer from Tourism Department for overseeing the filming activities and affording assistance to the film unit (p.26), however, the tourism officer is not professionally trained for heritage conservation and this act does not justify such 'appointments' in the context of Amber Palace's accident either. This discussion needs scrupulous scholarly attention in research.

The next set of rules (p.27) "disallow the usage of artificial lights in respect of interior paintings" but fail to recognise the vulnerability of exterior wall paintings. Similarly, the usage of any heavy equipment (cranes) and vehicles inside the premises and near the monument is prohibited. The social media videos, however, clearly show the violation of these rules of cranes and vehicles, especially during the filming of *Khoobsurat* (2014), *Manikarnika* (2019) (You Tube Shorts, 2022) (Ghosh, 2014, p. 00:55:50). The heavy vibrations generated by use of these objects can cause severe damage to the delicate foundation of the structures as seen in the section of ASI guidelines review. Hence this argument presents the pressing need of assessment of such events on-site. The following guideline bans the "cooking of serving, eating food within the premises" (p.27). The leading

curiosity question here could be, how do the film crew manage such activities? Is it affordable for them to be on and off the location during meal times? Are they following this rule or using their celebrity power to manipulate them?

Although the above last question need not to be true in every case, the possibility of these matters is higher as per the cases of filming and the celebrity power discussed in the next section of Indian Cinema and Impact. These pointers call for ethnographic enquiry through the locals for detailed verification.

Indian Cinema and its Impact on the Audience

Screen Impact: International and Diasporic Audience

“Cinema, in general, is a mirror of the cultural and social life of society and today’s society is the by-product of this most powerful medium” (Wamane, February 2023, p. 527). “Indian Cinema is the best example to experience this influence” (Nair & Suri, 2017, p. 1166) (Mittal & Swamy, December, 2013). Through Cinema, India has become more unified due to its tenacity, creativity, and cultural resonance. Bollywood produces more than 1000 films per year almost double the production of Hollywood (Josiam, Spears, Dutta, Pookulangara, & Kinley, June 2014) and South Indian Cinema’s latest Oscar Win on RRR (2022)’s musical talent (TOI, 2023) are the boost signs for the Indian Film industry to come out as one of the ‘largest film industries in the world’ (Diwanji S., 2021). It’s entry into “global mainstream consciousness and heavy influence on its audience in continents of Asia, Europe, and to certain extent in America” (Hong, 2021, p. 347) is substantially noted by Mass Media scholarships.

Key influences on people include the inspiration to learn Hindi (Hong, 2021); ‘changed perception’ of Indian culture, people, and places (Balabantaray, 2020); visitation to the ‘screen locations in India’; Indian diaspora’s identity ‘construction and notions’ of home and ‘tourism decisions’ to visit Indian sites (Bandyopadhyay R. , 2008) (Josiam, Spears, Dutta, Pookulangara, & Kinley, June 2014) (Karan & Schaefer, 2013). These places undeniably include the architectural heritage sites, they consume 65% share of the overall tourist places of India (Ministry of Tourism, 2023), but their consideration as a unique category in this particular Diasporic Tourism phenomenon is ignored. This discussion, on the one hand, indicates the pressing need to conduct the research from the perspective of heritage professionals, on the other hand, brings us to the literature review of Indian Cinema’s impact on the Indian audience where heritage stakeholders are no exception.

Screen Impact: Indian Audience

According to an estimate, almost 84 million people in India enjoy movies on a daily basis. Its incredible mass appeal and potential to affect the common lives of Indians week in and week out is well-studied (Roongta Cinemas, 2023). The very first research on the impact of Indian cinema on its audience was through statistical and psychological perspectives (Shah, July 1981). In subsequent scholarships, the power of film to leave positive and negative

effects on Indian society was progressively noted. Mishra declares “Cinemas as the temples of modern India” by linking their form, content, and impact on how the audience perceives India’s national identity, epic tradition, culture, and history (Mishra, 2002, p. 2). Furthermore, the Indian cinema has “huge influence on shaping the values, lifestyles, costumes, cuisines culture etc. since the time of its inception” as proven by (Roerge, 2010). Deshpande (2013) takes these assertions ahead and brings out the uniqueness of the “dialectic relationship between the Indians and their Indian Cinema which is impacting their daily actions and overall behaviour”. He further claims the need to conduct studies on the multifaceted impacts of cinema on its audience from the perspective of various disciplines (Deshpande, 2013, p. 00:14:01).

The argument of ‘Cinema as Source of entertainment as well as knowledge’ is echoed in other research which concluded that Indian Cinema’s captivating plotlines can disseminate historical, cultural, and traditional information and they certainly convey moral values, through the blending of fun and societal values learning (Dudrah & Desai, 2008) (VK Muthu, 2021). Javed Akhtar a veteran lyricist from Bollywood asserts that “Indian directors make films that should be liked and appreciated by society. The absurdity in songs lyrics and story line is the demand and dictation made by society” and hence “a film mirrors the society but works vice-versa also” (Akhtar, 2023, p. 00:08:04). Stated during the initial years of Indian Cinema’s evolution, therefore, Rangoonwalla’s observation seems to be apt till date “Indian Cinema is so highly rooted in the thinking of its audience that the both share a reflective and intertwined relationship and thus evolve by shaping each other’s individual cultures, beliefs, and styles of representation” (Rangoonwalla, 1983, p. 49). The subsequent scholarships widely resonated with his assertion (Mishra, 2002) (Bandyopadhyay R. , 2008) (Basu, 2010) (Panda, 2020) (Bandyopadhyay N. , 2023) (Bagchi & M., 2024).

Since the above discussion indicates very clearly that Indian Cinema’s impact on its audience is powerful and evident through their behaviour and actions, let us now understand the cinema’s impact on people of heritage. Direct scholarly commentary in this regard is negligible, thus the reviews of distant literature are presented here. Jaikumar (2017) ‘s research shows how “cinema potentially participates in turning built environments into promiscuous icons, disloyal to actual history, and absorptive of all forms for cultural meaning” (Jaikumar, 2017, p. 235). The cinema creates its own set of assumptions about spaces and their representation on screen which shapes the fixed messages and languages about the sites in audience’s minds. For eg:- Dwyer and Patel note, that “stairwells and passageways become generalizable visual mark of grandeur incorporated into the filmic iconography of any set design connoting wealth” (Dwyer, 2011, p. 140). Similarly, Jaikumar again observes “Havelis are portrayed as muted witnesses of feudal period violence and subsequent possessions of spirits of female victims”. Film Screen has the immense potential to “scramble the histories and original evolution of meanings of the site/ locations” (Jaikumar, 2017, p. 237). Such observation about potential of film screens with regards to the creation of new meanings, contamination or enhancement of the existing significance, need to be deeply studied. Several questions arise: Does this mental image influence tourist expectations? Do these mixed identities

affect conservation efforts? In summary, these inquiries aim for scholarly insights to understand this phenomenon before it harms heavily exposed sites.

Celebrity Cult Impact on the Audience

While a “picture speaks a thousand words, a video speaks a million and a fame-acquired person from cinema video becomes the God in India”! (Chawda, 2015, p. 89). If the Indian Cinema’s impact changes the behaviour of society, then one of the crucially induced behaviours is ‘worshipping celebrities’ and ‘endorsing celebrity cults’. As Tremblay describes “Celebrity cult is the spin-off product of this ‘Impact Phenomenon’” (Tremblay, 2007, p. 310). Indians are prone to “fall for the screen behaviour and later the off-screen public talks/ behaviour of celebrities and tend to follow it blindly in daily actions” (Vijaykumar, 2020, p. 15). These findings possibly be abiding by the stakeholders while working with or seeing celebrities during the shoot at the heritage site. Does this behaviour bring any threat or heritage-friendly impact on the site? The interview narration by actor Shashi Kapoor, as discussed in the introduction section gives a glimpse of this pattern and warns the heritage policymakers to take this phenomenon and its research seriously.

Film-Induced Tourism (FIT)

Almost three decades old, the well-established discourse of Film Induced Tourism (FIT) views this tourism type as a “By-Product of powerful Film Medium” (Han, Kim, Radic, Quan, & Lee, 2024, p. 5). The scholarships are primarily located in the academia of Tourism and Marketing. Pioneering studies by Cohen (1986), Butler (1990), Riley & Van Doren (1992), and Tooke & Baker (1996) informed Beeton’s extensive research on this tourism (Beeton, 2005) which proved to be the seminal text to date (Nieto-Ferrando, Sánchez-Castillo, & Gómez-Morales, 2024) (Araújo-Vila, Cardoso, Goretti Feijó Almeida, & Almeida, 2024). FIT is variously defined but collectively agreed upon as “tourism attracted to sites where movies and TV programmes are filmed as well as to tour production studios” (Beeton, 2016, p. 9). The “motivation to visit filming locations is induced by their on-screen image, hence known as FIT” (Bąkiewicz, Anna, Paul, & Tijana, 2022, p. 249).

Key themes in this discourse include recognition of popular sites, tourists' expectations, screen promotion and marketing of destinations, employment generation, collaboration between filmmakers and destination authorities, local residents' perceptions and involvement, management aspects related to tourism pressure or decreased footfall, sustainability challenges (Beeton, 2001) (Hudson & J. R. Brent, 2006) (Roberts, 2008) (Horrigan, 2009) (Nicosia, 2015) (Herrschner, 2016) (Heitmann, 2010) (Bąkiewicz, Anna, Paul, & Tijana, 2022) (Haddad, 2023) (Araújo-Vila, Cardoso, Goretti Feijó Almeida, & Almeida, 2024). A very minimal research, however, studies the interface of FIT with architectural heritage sites (Young, 2008) (Winter, Angkor Meets Tomb Raider : setting the scene, 2010) (Pan & Ryan, February 2013) (Bąkiewicz, Leask, Barron, & Rakic, March 2017) (Ghisoiu, Bolan, Gilmore, & Carruthers, 2017) (Agarwal & Shaw, 2017) (Segota, 2018) (Cui & Song, 2024).

Winter (2010) examines Angkor temple's media representation through Hollywood movie *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* (2002), its impact on generating 'new narratives' that 'attract FIT during and post-filming' while highlighting 'conservation agencies' focus on revenue over the 'detrimental effects of mass tourism' on site management (Winter, 2010, p. 326 & 327). The role of conservation agencies for identifying heritage street of Wang Lee for conservation was "awakened by the heavy media coverage and subsequent changing public opinions" for its 'filmy significance', as argued by (Pan & Ryan, February 2013, p. 127). While resonating with unique character and FIT pattern of such heritage sites, (Bąkiewicz, Leask, Barron, & Rakic, March 2017) gives analytical presentation of "possible management challenges through the case of Rosslyn Chapel and Alnwick Castle", UK (p.15). Supporting their argument that these sites require scrupulous attention not only from conservation agencies but also from professional FIT managers, (Ghisoiu, Bolan, Gilmore, & Carruthers, 2017) to figure out the "co-existence grounds for the sustainability of physical fabric protection aims, and management of 'filmy' expectations" of FIT on the site for encouraging all types of 'tourism footfall on site' (p. 2125).

These studies, although limited, theorise the phenomenon of FIT and its effects on heritage sites. However, all the above-mentioned and reviewed studies are situated in Tourism academia, focus more on the enhancement of sites as tourist destinations than the heritage materials. Secondly, the majority of them are concentrated on the global Western cases and hence cannot be applied as blanket guidelines for other cultural contexts. These two pointers indicate clearly that the perspective of heritage conservation research is warranted in this regards and additionally, a "context-specific study especially for underdeveloped countries, here India, requires an in-depth and separate research" (Beeton, 2005, p. 58). The above discussion probes questions regarding the impact of expectations of FIT on the historical authenticity and identity of the heritage sites and thus, calls for the review of India-specific FIT.

This discourse specific to India, although takes references from internationally influential West-centric studies in shaping their approach, a few important studies bring out the uniqueness of Indian Cinema's impact on influencing decisions of Indian as well as Indian diasporic audiences to visit India's tourists places (Bandyopadhyay R. , 2008) (Angmo & Dolma, September 2015) (Chawda, 2015) (Nair & Suri, 2017) (N. & D., 2019) (Setiawati, et al., 2019) (Mohanty, Thomas, Pudota, & Deka, 2020) (Nanjangud & Reijnders, 2021) (Ipsita Yadav, 2022). They deal with the above- mentioned themes and derive a few context-specific themes including, a) 'destination image vs film-induced image', for instance, Hawa Mahal= the icon of Jaipur was replaced by Nahargarh/ Jaigarh fort due to popularity of *Rang de Basanti* (2006) movie (Panda, 2020, p. 24). b) 'Diasporic impact', "Bollywood movies shot in the locales in India and foreign lands are instrumental in enticing tourists to realize their favourite celluloid dreams" (Mittal & Swamy, December, 2013, p. 50). c) "The search for root and identity inspire the NRIs to travel back to the 'Homeland' like Others' to 'Self'" (Bandyopadhyay N. , 2023, p. 7149).

However, these studies on Indian context lack enormously in development of study-approach for FIT at architectural heritage sites and further effects. Nevertheless, the news

media has been widely capturing the FIT phenomenon at heritage sites and attracting attention of related policy makers in India. Maharashtra Tourism Department began an initiative of boosting tourism at popular filming locales in which posters of films-shot were proposed to be displayed in heritage sites. (Vijay Chauhan, 2017) (Bureau, 2017). Bor and Wai, are claimed to be the most frequently used Bollywood shooting locale and receiving heavy tourism since blockbusters of *Dabangg* (2010) and *Singham* (2011) (Lokmat News Network, 2018). Filmmakers and the Tourism departments making a collective effort to encourage filming at heritage sites and tourism (ETT, 2021). As a result, FICCI's FIT statistics in India noted "that over the last couple of decades, an increasing number of tourists began to visit destinations featured through films which are not directly related to tourism promotion campaigns" (FICCI, 2019, p. 13). Further, this awareness led to the development of Film-Tourism Policy, first adopted by Madhya Pradesh State government, with the implementation plan of five years (Madhya Pradesh Tourism Department, 2020). This policy had a ripple effect in few other states including Rajasthan, starting in 2022 (Department of Tourism, Rajasthan, 2022). However, as seen in the section of Guidelines overview, these initiatives, although, generate employment for locals and revenue for the sites, are generically applied for heritage site and any regular tourist destination and appear to be inclined to film-convenience and tourism marketing more than to the consideration of challenges involved in handling vulnerable surfaces/ parts of architectural heritage sites during the film shooting and the tourist visits too. This observation, therefore, further establishes the need of a detailed investigation of the origin and timely evolution of such policies and finally their implementation on the sites against the background of increasingly growing FIT at heritage sites (Soumitra Das, TNN, 2023).

Conclusions and Scope for Further Studies

This review paper rigorously explores the underexamined phenomenon of architectural heritage as a filming location in India through an integrated literature review. A thorough examination of the scholarly materials, policy documents, news articles, and interviews, used content analysis and critical perspective methods. At the outset, the critical lensed discussion presented in this paper seems to indicate more of the detrimental effects than the positive effects of filming on architectural heritage conservation. The study does consider the need of exploration of both effects, however, this is merely a literature review paper that brings out the gaps through the possible probing question, as shown in the respective sections, and does not intend to give any analysis and investigative commentary on the phenomenon.

Key conclusive study requirements include:

- a) Studying government guidelines against actual on-site implementation and heritage site vulnerability.
- b) Investigating guidelines of privately owned monuments to understand differences from government guidelines and on-site implementation challenges for eventually developing holistic learning in this regard for all the sites in India.

- c) Examining intangible associations between people and heritage due to filming activities to grasp their perception about heritage site in terms of impact on identity, authenticity, significance, and meaning.
- d) Recognizing the phenomenon as a nexus of film studies, heritage discourse, and tourism management, necessitating interdisciplinary and investigative research and a holistic practice.
- e) Proposing the design of guidelines for the mutual benefits and coexistence of heritage conservation, and filming productions across government sites, privately owned sites, and unprotected areas by considering the learnings from international practices and the uniqueness of the Indian context. This literature study serves as an initial awakening regarding the lack of scholarship related to the effects of filming and related activities on the conservation of architectural heritage sites in India. Thus, the paper creates new knowledge about the significance of this phenomenon and paves the path for the conduct of more analytical and exploratory research in this field. ■

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