

Article

# Cultural Consumption and Citizen Engagement—Strategies for Built Heritage Conservation and Sustainable Development. A Case Study of Indore City, India

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**Abstract:** Cultural heritage is an invaluable asset of any city, region, or community and is an important component in the sustainable development of societies and economies. However, the role of cultural heritage has been understudied in terms of its social embeddedness and impact on social cohesion. This has led to a demand for more insights on how cultural heritage is conserved globally and more significantly via the role of societal stakeholders. Inclusive strategies allow diverse sections of a community to engage and enrich not only the anthropological interpretations of society but also support social stability and foster positive social change. This paper exemplifies how an inclusive approach was used to engage citizen engagement for the sustainable development of the built heritage in the city of Indore in central India. Best practices are presented through secondary data through various print and online sources relevant to the context. Open coding of secondary data has helped to identify strategic approaches and relationships that emerge as crucial to citizen engagement as presented in this study. The paper discusses strategies that, based on diversity and inclusivity, contribute to the enrichment of community knowledge, increased synergistic participation, and the enhancement of the sense of collective responsibility in cultural consumption.

**Keywords:** cultural heritage; cultural consumption; built heritage; citizen engagement; inclusive strategy



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## 1. Introduction

With the increasing focus on sustainable development and optimisation of local resources, the focus on cultural consumption is finding new ground. Culture is the foundation stone of any given society that establishes a connection between the past and present. It provides knowledge about indigenous social contexts, lifestyles, and habitats and facilitates the comparison between similar and dissimilar human settlements. In the classic discourse of culture, Herskovits [1] elaborates on the use of various cultural aspects such as cultural structures, materials, institutions, and dynamics to strengthen the anthropological interpretations of society. Cetina [2] elaborates that such cultural observations provide information about diverse agents of causality, logic, practice, and processes to better understand symbolic doings, enactments, and rituals that are associated with human activity in different parts of the world. In contemporary times, the Agenda 2030 and its sustainable development goals (SDGs) have highlighted the contribution of regional diversity and global and local cultural elements towards the sustainable development of human settlements. These elements are crucial for creating an ecosystem to engage available tangible and intangible resources inclusively to encourage the sustainable development of people and cities [3].

Given the increased emphasis on sustainability and protection of global resources, there is increasing research attention on understanding how consumers of culture actively influence the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage [4,5]. Despite the deeply embedded function of culture in socio-economic constructions of society, extant research has highlighted that there is a dearth of published scientific information on the role of local culture in the sustainable development of cities, regions, and communities [6,7].

Additionally, it is essential to examine how local, cultural, and heritage symbols can be included in the context of sustainable consumption and how these are interpreted by consumer cultures [5]. The role and impact of culture on sustainable development must therefore be systematically studied, measured, and operationalised [8].

Built heritage is an important aspect of local and regional culture that contributes through various socio-economic forms to regional development [9,10]. However, the commercial exploitation of cities and regions has compromised the authenticity of local culture and associated built heritage [11]. Existing research expounds on how local governance works with cultural preservation, including that for built heritage, although how to involve the residents or local citizens in this issue is yet underexplored [12]. The aspect of the cultural landscape adds another layer of complexity regarding how citizens and their identity may be included in the strategic efforts directed towards cultural and heritage preservation. To instigate more work in this direction, knowledge about existing solutions and operational approaches in the form of best practices is imperative [13]. Therefore, to address some of the identified research gaps, this paper investigates a diversity-based inclusive approach for the sustainable development of cities and regions and expounds on the culture-driven models.

It poses the following questions:

1. How can consumer participation and citizen engagement be involved in the preservation of local built heritage?
2. What key approaches emerge as pivotal for diverse stakeholder engagement and inclusive strategy creation for built heritage preservation?

The result of the study aims to explicitly show how diversity, creativity, and the collaborative engagement of people and processes can be leveraged to create a culture-based model for sustainable development. The empirical context is a city in central India called Indore. The study is based on secondary information obtained from various online and printed published sources from governmental, public, and private institutions. An inclusive framework for culture-based sustainable development with a focus on citizen engagement is presented. The presented framework can inspire other policymakers and communities to adopt similar practices and create innovative culture-based solutions to protect and conserve local cultural resources. In the context of rapidly developing economies, this study provides an in-depth insight into best practices and exemplifies how regional historical background and the embedded socio-cultural dimensions can support the built heritage of a region. The paper begins with a section of theoretical discussion on culture-based constructs in culture consumption and sustainable development. This is followed by an empirical section on Indore and the efforts of the Indore city municipality for built heritage conservation. Analysis of the empirical information is presented next, followed by discussion and conclusion of the study.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

### 2.1. Culture-Based Sustainable Development

In terms of sustainable development, culture has several crucial attributes—firstly, culture is the tangible or intangible expression of social capital and its evolution [14], secondly, it is an interactive process through which people contribute multiple meanings to their social realities to create relevant actions [7], and thirdly, culture becomes a binding element for the existing diversity and disparity among social structures thereby motivating social actors to design sustainable actions and plans for the wellbeing of society [6,15]. Hosagrahar [8] further underlines that culture can promote inclusive growth, encourage social diversity, and create unique knowledge based on local information. The importance of cultural knowledge is thus duly emphasised in the face of growing challenges regarding the preservation of cultural diversities and identities, especially due to rapid globalisation [16].

The three-pillar approach of sustainable development has traditionally focused attention on the role of environmental development, economic growth, and social inclusion.

However, it failed to give due importance to cultural paradigms for societal growth [6]. In recent times, this ignorance has been rectified to some degree with the growing awareness of the need to recognise the role of cultures and cultural phenomena in sustainable development. For example, the new urban agenda 2016 emphasises the need for adopting culture-based approaches for urban planning and development. It highlights its role in bolstering local and regional identity and consequently in the protection of associated creative industries. According to a report on Culture for Urban Sustainable development [17], culture is posed as the inherent power to challenge barriers of urban development, namely, inequalities, violence, and insecurities by changing social mindsets about how people and communities in a given context should live, develop, and prosper. Culture-based development is now actively incorporated into several sustainable development goals (SDG, 2030) [18], such as SDG 11, 17, 8, and 4 (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** Sustainable development goals (SDGs) and their implication for cultural heritage.

SDG Goal	Name of the Goal	The Implication for Cultural Heritage
11	To make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.	Protecting global and local natural and built heritage to promote the growth and development of related cultural and creative industries.
17	To revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.	Proposes that the knowledge regarding the importance of cultural preservation will empower local communities and trigger the conscious consumption of cultural heritage.
8	To foster decent work and economic growth.	Local cultural heritage is placed to not only instigate local industry and job opportunities but also encourage inbound tourism and micro-entrepreneurship.
4	To work towards quality education.	Local communities, when strong in the knowledge of their cultural heritage, can develop inroads into local businesses and create employment opportunities, while also enriching their ecosystems around the appreciation and implementation of cultural diversity.

This attention to the role of cultural dynamics is aimed to instigate the preservation of traditional occupations and skills, whilst at the same time, creating sustainable systems of economic growth for the local populations and their innate knowledge of local resources [8]. Increasingly, the attention is on the Anthropocene era, underlining how human activity is harming the ecosystem and drawing attention to the impacts caused by how humans build and maintain their habitats [19]. Thus, a deeper and reflective understanding of integrating cultural heritage with modern urbanisation is crucial for sustainable regional development and regeneration.

## 2.2. Cultural Heritage and Consumption

Culture is identified as the fourth pillar of sustainable development and supports the consumption of cultural identities, cultural artefacts, industries, and processes [16]. There is an increasing emphasis on creating a socially directed cultural arena that can aid in the preservation of arts and heritage, thereby, also of the society [6,17]. Heritage is an asset that is not just unique to a given region or context but can indeed be interpreted differently even within the same context, between contexts, and over periods of time [20]. Heritage creation is thus a continuous meaning-making process in which both the material aspects such as sites, and non-material aspects, such as cultural events, are used as cultural tools to create, recreate, and validate new meanings [21]. Heritage also creates diverse knowledge depending on who is experiencing the value of the heritage and the level of subjective engagement and interpretation involved in heritage consumption [20]. Such heritage consumption, driven by cultural motivation and cultural intentions, impels individuals towards an increasing interest in culture [22]. Nostalgia about the past is also an important identified element that encourages cultural consumption and consumption of related goods and experiences [23]. This interest is not limited to tourists visiting a given region or area. It can also apply to the engagement of local citizens and institutions who are seeking to associate themselves with their surrounding historical references.

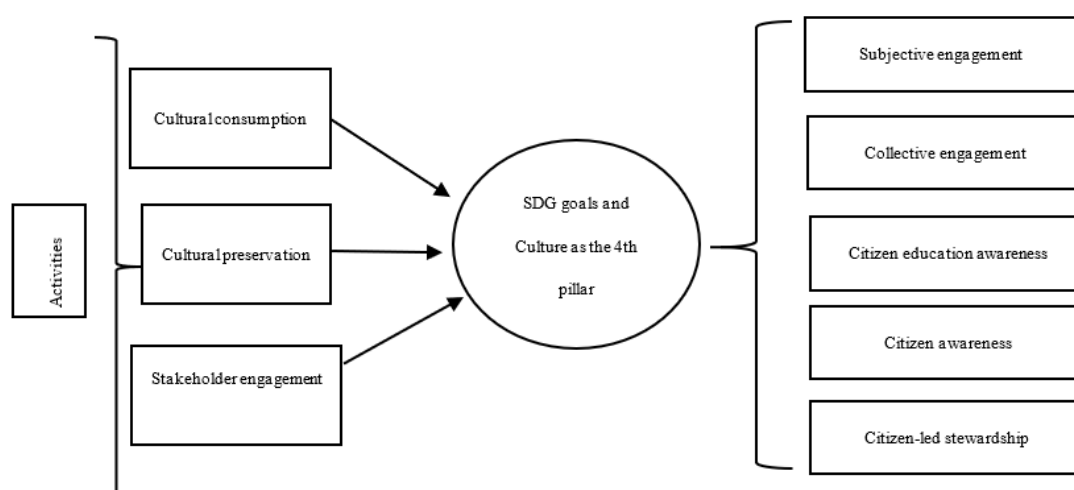
Poria et al. [24] discuss that consumer motivations for interest in local heritage venues produce critical outcomes such as cultural learning, leisure-based consumption, and emotional involvement. Such outcomes further instigate consumer interest in cultural sites and promote heritage consumption. Through such outcomes, consumers expect experiential benefits related to the experience of sensory cues, narratives, and temporal transitions [25] and seek subjective value benefits [26]. Modern consumers are seen to become involved in cultural heritage experiences not only in situ but also through digital technology and social media, thereby impacting the cultural consumption models [27]. In most cases, a host of tourism-centred businesses flourish around heritage sites. Large investments are made to create marketing and promotional activities where, “the complex cultural heritage is simplified, homogenised, and packaged and in the end, trivialised, for the quick and easy consumption of the tourist” [28] (p.176). The danger, however, lies in that such indiscriminate consumption of cultural heritage can be a threat to its existence due to the fragility and limited tolerance of the heritage structures. However, if consumer engagement can be secured efficiently it can bring in higher economic valuation by the end user and create more emphatic support for cultural heritage consumption and generate consumer loyalty [29]. The challenge to most institutions lies in making heritage consumption not only a fulfilling personal experience but also in empowering the consumer through knowledge to invoke responsible consumer participation. Consumers, through participation, must be educated to appreciate that, “if heritage is the contemporary use of the past and if its meanings are defined in the present, then we create the heritage that we require and manage it for a range of purposes defined by the needs and demands of our present societies” [20] (p. 1004). Hence, knowledge regarding how consumer expectations are formed and manifested is imperative for efficient policymaking regarding heritage preservation and can also aid in creating mass impact through relevant social education mandates [30]. Extant research shows that individual and collective heritages are indeed important to consumers. However, what is vaguely understood is how consumers come to engage in their heritage and how their collective and individual conceptualisations on heritage can be leveraged to connect their cultural pasts with their future lives [31].

### 2.3. Cultural Heritage and Stakeholders

The role of stakeholder engagement is increasingly emphasised in the preservation and revitalisation of cultural heritage and cultural practices. Cova and Cova [32] underline that modern consumption has graduated from a commercial relationship with the cultural objects to an experience-based connection with the social identities, causes, and associations that culture brings with it. Accordingly, consumers are now divided into four specific clusters—firstly, loyal members of associations and sects, secondly, as participants in informal events such as social gatherings and meetings, thirdly, as practitioners who embed object-related consumption in their daily practices, and fourthly, as sympathisers who agree with the trends and move marginally around the consumption-related engagement (Ibid). Stakeholders can be involved with different cultural heritages and with different cultural associations at the community and individual levels [33]. Research also brings in the concept of stewardship of cultural heritage in diverse ways. While Joyce [34] speaks of the academic involvement for the stewardship of cultural heritage, Burghausen and Balmer [35] involve the management perspective of heritage stewardship as a combination of dispositions such as the sense of self, belongingness, potency, continuance, and responsibility. Here, citizens are positioned as self-governing and responsible stakeholders, responsible for their wellbeing and growth and able to actively participate in the politics of local regions and their sustainable development [36]. Studies on the urban redevelopment in the digital era show that citizens’ empowerment needs to be further enhanced through knowledge enrichment regarding the cultural heritage surrounding them. Tangible assets like built heritage or intangible assets such as local folklore, craftsmanship, music, and citizen-led heritage stewardship can influence social dynamics and decisions regarding heritage management, marketing, and redevelopment [12]. It can be argued that the syn-

ergistic effect borne out of the participation of these varied consumption stakeholders can provide important cues to the governance bodies responsible for the management, protection, and preservation of cultural heritage. There remains much scope for bringing in social action and interventions so that the opinions of communities and people can be integrated into cultural heritage preservation [9].

When viewing the above aspects through a holistic lens, a relationship can be drawn between them to constitute a theoretical framework for the study, as given in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** A culture-based Consumption, Preservation and Engagement (CPE) framework to connect activities related to consumption, preservation, and stakeholder engagement with culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development and its resultant outputs.

### 3. Empirical Context—Indore City and Strategies for Built Heritage

The present study is based on secondary information obtained from various online and printed published sources from governmental, public, and private institutions. All material that explicitly showed the engagement of various stakeholders involved in the cultural preservation of Indore was researched online between the period of January 2019 and September 2020. The main keywords used to access relevant databases were: Indore, cultural heritage, built heritage, consumption of cultural heritage, conservation, preservation, sustainable cities, smart cities, citizen engagement, diversity, and inclusion. Based on the keywords, data was obtained from published material from books, reports, gazettes, and the official websites of organisational stakeholders involved in the preservation of the built heritage of Indore. Information was also obtained from the websites of the Indore Municipal Corporation and Smart Cities Initiative reports available on the open portal. Open coding [37,38] of available data guided the identification of emergent themes, frequently occurring keywords, and strategic approaches used in the examined empirical context. Following the recommendations of Glaser [38], all data was first categorised based on “data purpose”, meaning the purpose for which the data was published at the identified source. Next, each data purpose category was clustered into “sub-categories”, meaning the specific information or incident that the published information indicated. Finally, the clustered data was overlapped to create an understanding of possible strategic approaches employed in the preservation of built heritage in Indore. Validity and credibility of the content analysis and coding was ensured by following the guidance of Harris [39], that highlighted the importance of using relevant, timely, and recent data so that distortions in reporting and analysis can be avoided. The present study has secondary data-based limitations, in that descriptions of the questionnaire instrument or interview guidelines employed by the relevant agencies such as the IMC and Smart City Mission agencies cannot be described due to lack of access to such information on open access.



The following section describes the various initiatives and steps undertaken by the local government to engage stakeholder participation towards culture-based solutions through inclusive and sustainable strategies for the built heritage of Indore.

### 3.1. Indore

Indore is the largest city in the central state of Madhya Pradesh in central India and is geographically situated on the southern edge of the Malwa plateau (see Figure 2). With a total population of approximately two million [40], Indore is home to a multi-cultural environment supported by well-developed infrastructure, top-ranking educational institutions, and a commercial business output of nearly 14 billion USD. Historically, records show that the city was established in the 16th century and served as a significant meeting point between the south of India (Deccan) and the capital in the North (Delhi) for knowledge transfer, business, and cultural exchange. Under the rulership of the Maratha Holkar dynasty, Indore made huge progress in various fields and was accorded the title of the princely state under British rule [41]. Due to its reputation of being an active educational, business, and cultural centre, Indore has always demonstrated a multi-racial, multi-lingual, and multi-cultural milieu that is amply expressed in its buildings, public spaces, habitats, lifestyles, and socio-cultural traditions. Even in contemporary times, the design of Indore shows the co-existence of the central palace called Rajwada (palace) built in the 1800s and other historical buildings such as the town hall, temples, smaller royal mansions, memorial buildings, age-old streets, historic cantonment areas with the newly constructed spaces such as huge commercial markets, modern public and private institutions, entertainment zones, massive residential areas, transportation facilities, and public spaces [42].

The efforts to make Indore a sustainable smart city have been in place since 2012. Some of the positive results are seen through the Clean India mission, a Government of India initiative launched in 2014, in which the city of Indore has been the recipient of the “Cleanest City in India” award among 434 cities of the state and 4237 cities of India for five consecutive years (2014–2020) [43]. The selection was based on the studies of the cleanliness drive surveys (Swachh Sarvekshans), the primary objective of which is to instigate large-scale community and citizen participation to make cleaner regions and cities and to encourage a collaborative action plan of the people with the local governments [43]. Further, Indore was selected in 2017 for the implementation of plans towards making Indore a smart city under the Smart City Mission, launched by the Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India in 2015. The objective of the Smart City Mission is to develop infrastructure and city planning to make optimum usage of smart/digital solutions for a clean and sustainable living environment [44].

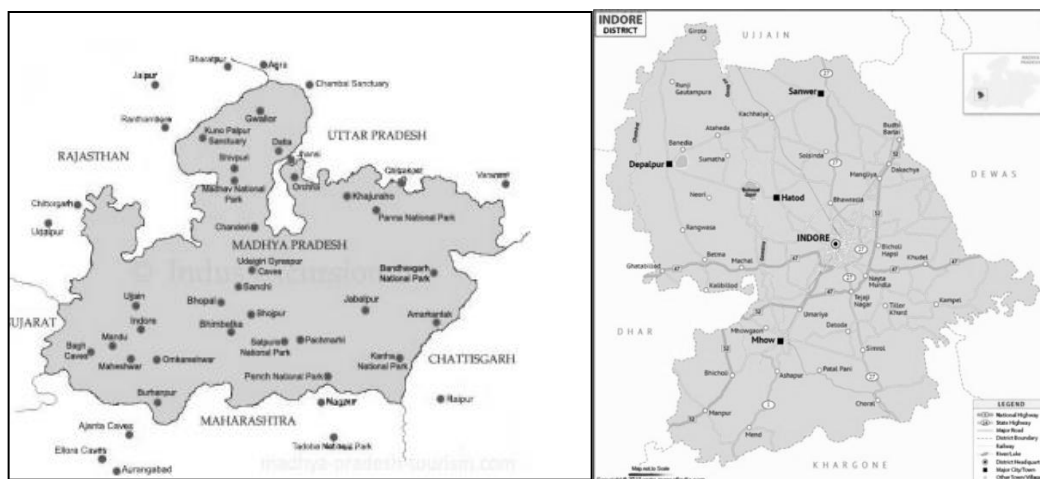


Figure 2. Location of Indore in the state of Madhya Pradesh, India [45] and Indore city [46].

### 3.2. Built Heritage Conservation

The built heritage conservation project of Indore was designed with some key areas as part of its implementation and vision, namely, city identity, cultural and economic heritage, built heritage, and urban city planning. The objectives of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) played an important role in guiding and motivating a strategic plan for the culture-based sustainable development of Indore. Concerning the conservation of culture and built heritage, the Indore Municipal Corporation (IMC) worked primarily on the “sustainable cities and communities” goal (SDG 11, Section 11.4) to focus on the built heritage of Indore, to design initiatives and action plans, and to enable the city planners and governance structure to take appropriate action. The built heritage conservation strategy had the following functionalities: firstly, to protect the built heritage sites of the city, secondly, to transform the existing consumer ecosystem around the built heritage from one of public ignorance and neglect to one of public attention, attraction, and pride, thirdly, to find innovative solutions for the adaptive reuse of the built heritage locations, and fourthly, to create the city identity as an important aspect of Indore’s sustainable development [44,47]. To implement and improve the functionalities, various support agents and processes were initiated. A citizens’ forum comprising members of resident welfare associations from various parts of the city, market associations, and a selected panel of prominent citizens of Indore provided the citizen input to the initiative. Additionally, an advisory forum composed of local and regional politicians and councillors was formed to provide the political and legal angle to the formulation of the strategy [44].

### 3.3. City Identity

The city identity strategy focused on the preservation of local cultural traits and traditions for a revitalized relationship between the past and present. To achieve this temporal relation-building, the IMC devised a citizens’ consultation and citizen collaboration scheme with the local city governance [47]. The citizen consultation and collaboration approach helped to identify and design specific action plans for the agenda of the cultural identity of Indore city. These included proposals for the creation of heritage walks, built heritage conservation, and infrastructural development around natural resources such as the river-side development project [47]. The Indore Heritage walk is an earmarked heritage precinct covering several heritage areas of the city to be connected via pedestrian/walking zones. This project required several sub-projects such as conservation, restoration projects, and adaptive re-use projects to regulate façade development in the congested old areas of the city where most heritage spots are located.

Given the fragility of the built heritage sites and the existing community dwellings around them, specific techniques were identified with the help of experts, consultants, and advisors for heritage conservation. For example, the Malhar Rao Holkar chattri cenotaph conservation involved extensive structural restoration and area redevelopment [45]; the centrally located old palace of Indore, the Rajwada (see Figure 3), was renovated using retrofitting technology [47]; and the Gopal Mandir, a heritage temple built in 1832, was renovated and prepared for adaptive reuse of the heritage premises [48]. These subprojects also included an area-wise development approach that focused on identity and culture, and helped to identify specific zones that could be converted into open public spaces for cultural activities, green buffer interfaces, and recreation areas with earmarked zones for public transport and public parking. Moreover, they provided a clearer understanding of road circuit design and transport management that would better aid the design of the city heritage revitalisation plans [44–46].



Figure 3. Renovation of Rajwada [47] (a) and Gopal Mandir [48] (b).

#### 4. Data Analysis

Based on the reports and analysis of secondary information through coding and clustering, four strategic approaches were identified as prominently applied by the IMC. The emergent strategic approach was implemented for consumer engagement and inclusion for the conservation of cultural heritage in the city of Indore.

##### 4.1. Approach One: Citizen Consultation

Citizen consultation was a strategic initiative drawn on the principles of collaboration and co-creation between the city management and the city residents. The IMC made strategic efforts reaching out to consumers of all demographic and psychographic profiles through door-to-door meetings, public events, and social media outreach, thereby making the strategy inclusive. According to the Smart City Indore presentation [47], the process included important steps such as citizen inclusion and citizen engagement plans and was conducted in several phases.

1. The first phase consisted of setting the agenda and goals. Nearly 250,000 citizens were connected with in a sector-wise manner and were engaged in discussions and decisions regarding the area-wise development to map out priorities and relevant resources.
2. In the second phase, the focus was the finalisation of the area, pan-city, based on citizen's preferred areas for development. In this round, nearly 180,000 citizen interactions were achieved.
3. The third and final round involved approximately 170,000 citizen contacts and the objective was to draft a plan for the Smart City proposal as approved by the citizens.

In the entire exercise, nearly 600,000 citizens were contacted through multiple rounds conducted in the initiative and through door-to-door contacts for enhanced citizen engagement. Points of public contact included the municipality offices, public events, and public initiatives on social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter. Events included contests in residential areas, schools, and offices, physical and electronic polls, and consultation meetings through which the citizen's priority ranking was obtained [47]. As reported by the Smart City report of Indore [47], the project, through various means, was able to acquire 80% coverage of the city's population with 62% male and 38% female participation. The conducted polls were inclusive of all sections of the population, with a 28% representation of young people, followed by 19% working professionals, 19% members of the general public, and 16% housewives as the major demographics, among others. Results showed that most citizens (15%) chose to focus on Indore's culture and heritage for sustainable growth. This was followed by public transport and walkability (14%) and waste management (11%), among others. The second round of polling was conducted to decide area-wise priorities for redevelopment. The results showed that 53% of the



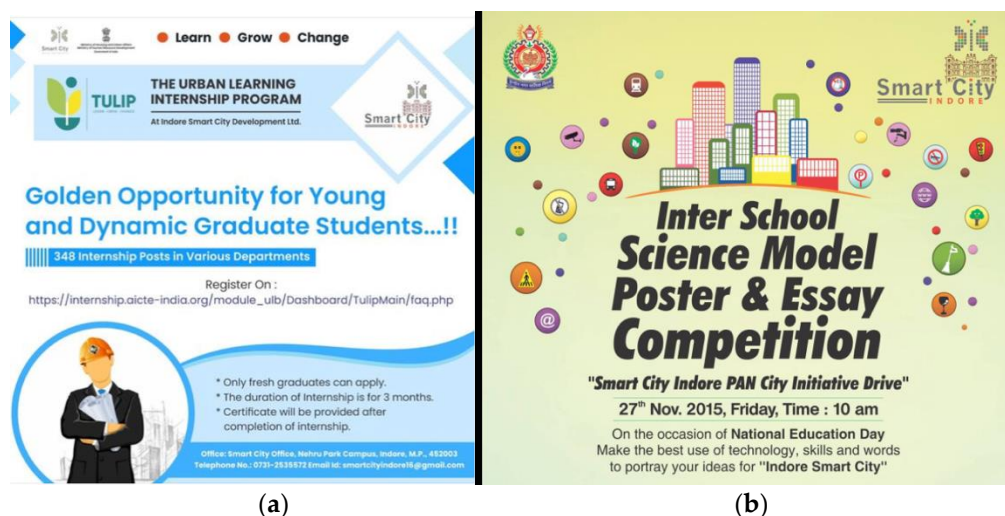
consulted citizens wanted to work on the centrally located iconic landmark Rajwada palace and its nearby areas. The strategic initiative helped to formalise the vision statement, “an ideal world-class smart commercial metropolis that thrives on investment opportunities, incubating business and ideas, rich inheritance, and inclusive development”, and focused on five factors namely inheritance, innovation, inclusion, incubation, and investment as important mainstays for sustainable development [47].

#### *4.2. Approach Two: Partnership with External Funding Agencies*

The state of Madhya Pradesh partnered with an international agency the World Monuments Fund (WMF), a private non-profit organisation for conserving the cultural built heritage assets of the state. The WMF partnered to fund one third of the total costs incurred to restore 37 identified projects in the state [49,50]. The funding covered complete or partial activities regarding the technical and financial support required for the preservation, restoration, and long-term stewardship of cultural heritage [49]. In the current plan, the partnership with the WMF is designed to provide aid to 118 spots of built heritage. Prominent among them are the Gopal Mandir (built in 1832), the Rajwada (the old palace, built in 1766), the Harirao Holkar Chattri (cenotaph built in 1849), the Lal Baug Palace (a new palace, built in 1926), and the Gandhi hall (a public hall built in 1904) [50]. The Madhya Pradesh cultural heritage project [50] further describes how collaboration with the WMF includes processes such as heritage assessment, documentation, planning for conservation projects, implementation of plans, and the monitoring and evaluation of the project. The project monitoring examines the objectives and relevant procedures to protect, conserve, and promote the cultural heritage of the state. The collaboration with external funding agencies aims to secure the investment of financial resources for heritage management and to leverage the cultural heritage for generating a transformative impact on people and communities. This is based on the objectives of the SDG 11, which emphasises the need for efforts to protect, strengthen, and safeguard the cultural and natural heritage of regions and communities in a socially diverse and inclusive manner. Professional guidance was sought for the documentation, data archiving, the planning of the project, and managing the team of architects, renovation experts, labour and craftsmen, site engineers, and consultants necessary for the project [50]. Similar to approach one, approach two was also built on engaging the knowledge of the local people to regenerate the built heritage. To do this, stakeholders and experts invested time and resources to understand the role of local myths, stories, narratives, and practices. The underlying conviction for this study of local narratives was that the innate and absolute expertise around built heritage is imperative, without which any action plan could be inappropriate and dangerous for the site, its surroundings, and its associated communal ecosystem [50].

#### *4.3. Approach Three: Student Engagement and Participation from Educational Institutions*

The cultural heritage conservation project of Indore found support through the participation of school and university students from the Indore district. Various projects regarding the communication of heritage sites and preservation of the local cultural heritage were designed to engage the student population of the city. Some examples are shown in Figure 4. Students visited the heritage sites and discussed corrective steps that could help to keep the site clean as well as attract tourist interest. Each student of the visiting groups pledged to maintain the sites in one way or another and contribute to the sense of belonging and responsibility towards the cultural heritage of their region [51].



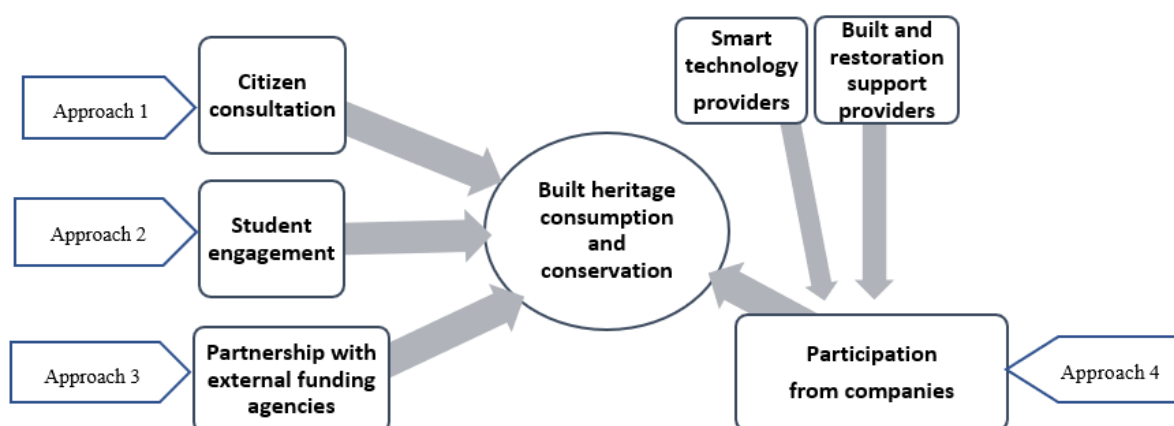
**Figure 4.** (a) Poster inviting applications for student internship positions in the Indore Smart City project [52]. (b) Competitions for engaging school students to engage with the Smart City Mission, Indore [52].

Approach three underlines an effort to engage participation from young citizens and provides a platform for them to contribute to the initiative with a personal touch. It enables students to express their aspirations regarding their home cities. Further, it also involves respective institutions thereby engaging more stakeholders such as the institutional management, teachers, and staff. In doing so, it thereby imbibes a sense of participation, purpose, and responsibility among a diverse group of citizens and enhances the value of citizen participation.

#### 4.4. Approach Four: Participation from Stakeholders/Companies

The cultural heritage conservation project of Indore found support from external stakeholders interested in contributing to local sustainability initiatives like IndiGo, one of India's largest private low-cost airline companies [53]. IndiGo partnered with the World Monuments Fund and the government of Madhya Pradesh to fund the restoration of Lal Baug Palace, a built heritage site in Indore. The Lal Baug Palace was the residential premises of the Holkar dynasty and was built in the European and Italian renaissance revival style in the 19th century. IndiGo partnered with the Indore Municipal Corporation for the interior restoration of the palace. This entailed the structural stabilisation of the palace interiors (e.g., prevention of water dampening and drainage, maintenance of interior structures, maintenance of fixtures and illuminations and aeration systems, etc.) [54]. IndiGo also contributed to the creation of a visitor and information centre to ensure that the cultural heritage and knowledge of the Lal Baug Palace was well disseminated to its tourists and visitors [54]. The initiative of protecting regional and national heritage supported the local governance is finding collaborative support with external stakeholders and also helped to strengthen the efforts towards the preservation of the city's cultural assets.

Based on the above information, it is evident that a diversity-based inclusive approach towards sustainable development was adopted by the Indore Municipal Corporation in collaboration with several stakeholders, as shown in Figure 5. The four diverse approaches form the strategic design of diverse stakeholder engagement and provide clear pathways on how consumer participation and citizen engagement were involved for the preservation of local built heritage.



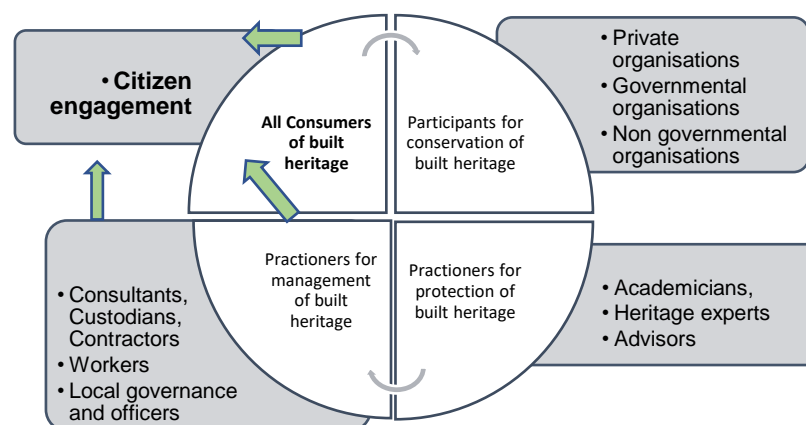
**Figure 5.** Strategic design of diverse stakeholder engagement through varied approaches for built heritage conservation in Indore.

### 5. Analysis of the Strategic Approaches

Culture and culture-based development is recognised as an important aspect of sustainable development that leads to the creation of safe and sustainable cities, provides avenues for gender equality and economic growth, and supports inclusive societies [6]. In line with the role of culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development [16], this study exemplifies how an inclusive, sustainable, and innovative culture-driven approach can support the growth of local cultural heritage using digital and non-digital interfaces. The empirical context of Indore's built heritage conservation provides an in-depth insight of best practices into how developing economies are refurbishing dated procedures, changing socio-political mindsets, and adopting innovative approaches for encouraging culture-based consumerism consciously and sustainably.

The efforts of the Indore Municipal Corporation to safeguard the cultural built heritage is based on the philosophy that “reusing heritage places also amounts to a substantial environmental and financial saving in embodied energy. It avoids the creation of waste and the need for replacement building materials” [48] (p. 7). The various approaches employed for protecting cultural heritage demonstrate a multi-layered, collaborative, and consensus-driven strategy with the citizens and local private and public institutions. It can be said that this culture-driven approach resounds the aspirations of the various identified sustainable development goals (SDGs 17, 11, 8, and 4) [18] for the protection and transformation of cities and communities. The empirical context emphasises the possibilities involved in the design and implementation of sustainable development plans to protect heritage-based ecosystems through social inclusion and diversity management. Analysis of the strategic approaches adopted by the Indore Municipal Corporation points to the use of a multi-layered stakeholder inclusion plan as the main tool to achieve the built heritage conservation. The participants of the built heritage drive comprised local citizens from varied demographic profiles such as students, managers, academicians, advisors, and consultants. Four clusters of participants emerge as critical to the inclusive approach: consumers of built heritage, practitioners for the conservation of built heritage, practitioners for the awareness of built heritage, and practitioners for the management of built heritage. These can be understood as key relationships, shown in Figure 6, that are pivotal to the strategic makeup of the inclusive approach for built heritage preservation.

The clustering of stakeholders falls in line with Cova and Cova [32] who categorise consumers based on their innate relationship with products, services, and consumption-related practices. It is noted that while some stakeholders engage mainly through meetings with the governance bodies and contribute in surveys, discussions, and brainstorming sessions, others engage through their professional position or subjective interests in the built heritage conservation project. The strategy is seen to not only bring together citizens of all functional roles but also ensures that regional diversity is given due representation.



**Figure 6.** Major clusters of the stakeholders involved in the conservation of built heritage in Indore.

In accordance with Gomez-Zapata et al. [29], citizen engagement is seen to happen both subjectively, as individual participants, as well as collectively, for example, through citizen forums. Both subjective and collective engagements enable the local government to generate mass appeal and influence social impact. Citizen engagement is an indication of citizens' internal motivations [22] and innate reasons for subjective value, and experiential benefits serve as motivating factors for participant engagement in such activities [25,26]. It can be safely assumed that both subjective and collective engagement fortified the built heritage preservation project of Indore.

Furthermore, the survey results indicated that most participants prioritised the conservation of cultural and built heritage over other initiatives such as road maintenance, new constructions, smart transport initiatives, etc. They exhibited motivations for heritage connection such as nostalgia [23], emotional involvement [24], subjective values [26], and a yearning to connect with their cultural past [31]. Hence, it appears as logical and relevant to position them as direct and indirect consumers of cultural heritage. Citizen inclusion helped to access consumption-driven ideas and understand their priorities and plans. This approach mirrors the views of McArthur and Hall [26] and Beeho and Prentice [30] where consumer and visitor perspectives are taken as critical sources of knowledge and as guidelines for policymaking and governance. Each cluster of stakeholders has a functional role in strategy formulation and implementation, as is discussed by Cang [33], resulting in a synergistic impact. Community engagement is similar to Cova and Cova [32], who underline that consumption has moved from being purely object-oriented to cause and association-oriented. The IMC conducted an active outreach strategy in public empowerment and knowledge regarding the need to discuss Indore's cultural heritage and its conservation in a serious and concerned manner. This resulted in large amounts of voluntary active participation from citizens, indicating that citizen education and knowledge enrichment had a positive impact. It also created a positive impact on enhancing the sense of collective responsibility [12] and in invoking a sense of heritage stewardship [34–36], encouraging ownership, belongingness, and responsibility for cultural heritage-based resources.

The focus on conservation of the built heritage project is seen to follow the objectives of the SDGs in various ways. The effort of the IMC and the state of Madhya Pradesh is an example of how culture and culture-based sustainable development has been identified as critical and imperative for a sustainable relationship between cultural heritage and citizens. It expresses how a public governance system can create clear opportunities for supporting cultural diversity and inclusive growth [8], enabling communities to engage in resource preservation [9], thereby creating a knowledge-enriched ecosystem for citizens. In particular reference to the Smart Cities Mission, the efforts on cultural sustainability and built heritage protection also work towards revitalised economic growth and an improved quality of life. By placing the community and its people at the core of a developmental framework these efforts seek the convergence of technology and sustainability and



strengthen the foundational elements of city development [44]. It is expected that continued efforts will further create new employment and lend support to local enterprises. In view of the global pandemic due to COVID-19, such an approach can open up more entrepreneurial opportunities for diverse stakeholders who can contribute to cultural sustainability and heritage protection in various ways. Strategies that identify how indigenous art, music, traditions, rituals, and the historic built heritage of a local community can add immensely to the regional cultural and social wealth. This also leads to the establishment and fortification of the city identity and brand positioning of the region. It is expected that the inclusive attitude of citizen consultation will further enhance the benefits for tourism, business, and literary sectors connected to Indore. Consequently, the bridge between the historical and contemporary contexts can be strengthened to further instigate the participation of the local population.

The collaboration between local governances as heritage and culture protectors and citizens as heritage and cultural consumers is imperative to solve societal and habitat-related issues. Such organically derived solutions can function as templates and models for inspiration. The enhanced government–public relationship through various inclusion centric strategies can help the cities and its governance to be more prepared and proactive for future action plans. This can be supported by an enhanced level of trust among the people and a sense of civic responsibility. Further, such partnerships can encourage other organisations to adopt similar best practices for a successful collaboration between the people and the purpose of cultural heritage conservation. Although the activities in Indore regarding the preservation of built heritage are still ongoing, they can be posited as directions and best practices for addressing the identified gap for more knowledge on the issue and contribute to an in-depth understanding of how culture can be leveraged for the sustainable development of cities, regions, and communities [6,7].

## 6. Conclusions

The study of the built heritage preservation of Indore city adds to the knowledge of culture-based sustainable development strategies. It showcases that inclusive approaches can strengthen social cohesivity and thereby foster cultural preservation and integration in the local lifestyle through cultural resource management. It demonstrates how diversity, creativity, and collaborative engagement of people and processes can be leveraged to create a culture-based model for sustainable development. The study identifies four clear approaches via which consumer participation and citizen engagement can be involved for the preservation of local built heritage. Key relationships pivotal to the strategic makeup of the inclusive approach for heritage preservation are stated. Lastly, the present study provides examples of best practices regarding strategic culture-based approaches and their implementation in emerging economies.

Further research is needed for assessing the continued sustainability of the inclusive approach. While complete results regarding the ultimate success of the efforts are unknown yet, a closer examination of stakeholder participation in periodic intervals may reveal previously unidentified parameters relating to social and institutional behaviour. Organisations invest heavily to protect historical evidence of bygone eras and as the time gap between them and the contemporary consumer or stakeholder increases, the built heritage runs the risk of being ignored, neglected, or lost. At the same time, motivation among the governance, supporting institutions, and the community members may also require more support and encouragement at all times. Heritage and culture are irreplaceable assets of a community and region. It is imperative to generate curiosity and concern among local communities to promote a feeling of responsible ownership. More thought on community engagement towards enhancing the intensity of participation and creating socially and morally responsible citizens to the cause of cultural heritage conservation is therefore desirable.

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