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World Heritage on Banknotes

the Next 50

The **'World Heritage Sites on Banknotes- the next 50'** held in the auditorium at UNESCO New Delhi's cluster office on Wednesday, 30th November 2022, was **the first of its kind unique dialogue** on the presentation of World Heritage Sites on banknotes from around the world, furthered by the fascinating discussion on the next 50.

This year **UNESCO celebrates its Golden Anniversary** and this **conference contributed** to the year-long global programmes. The speakers hailed from diverse fields; former ambassadors, banknote designers, cultural educators, Museum curators, travel contributors and youth representative; from different locations in India, Mexico, the United Kingdom, and the United States.



The conference was flagged off with a congratulatory speech by **Mr. Ankush Seth**, Program Specialist-Culture UNESCO, who applauded conference convener, Ms. Rukmini Dahanukar on this initiative and shared the goals and projects of UNESCO for the year and beyond.

The opening session was presented by **Dr. Saryu V. Doshi**, Indian art scholar and founder Director of NGMA (Mumbai). Her crisp and

comprehensive overview on the subject with simple, yet effective solutions to educate, engage and entice students as well as adults in appreciating and conserving heritage sites was truly encouraging.

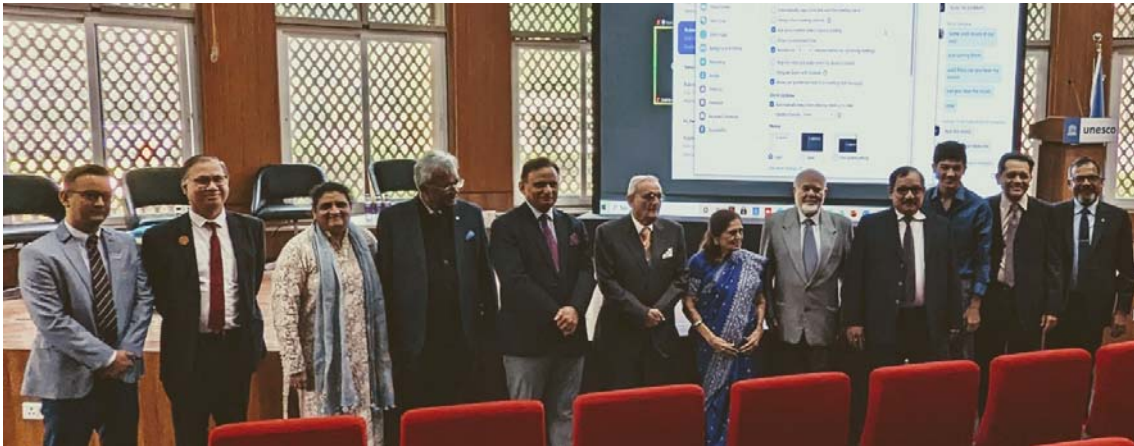
Convener **Ms. Rukmini Dahanukar**, author of 'Money Talks' and independent researcher, began the keynote with her quote, **"Money is not just a medium of exchange but a medium of communication."** She provided a sneak peek into her vast research of the various heritage sites emblazoned rather obviously and sometimes subtly on the banknote monetary imagery gallery that often go unnoticed. Heritage sites being one such subject. Rather surprisingly, her research revealed that almost one out of every four heritage site finds a spot on the global banknotes. The various sites showcased were cultural, natural, mixed, shared, and in danger; all permanently emblazoned for all to see.



The morning session continued on with **Mr. Sudhakar Kaza**, Former Director, Reserve Bank Note Mudran Pvt. Ltd. Who shared banknote design experiences while specifically highlighting the heritage sites, their detailed carvings, and the various symbols of prosperity, positivity and peace scattered across the latest series of Indian banknotes. He proudly stated that the entire design from start to finish was a 'Make-in-India' project while reiterating that only Indian designers could represent their heritage sites in the most inclusive manner.

Mr. Cedrian Lopez-Bosch, independent researcher and banknote collector from Mexico presented online the complete story of Mexico's banknotes and their favouritism towards the various world heritage sites dotted across the nation. His detailed research and well-designed presentation covered all the series and sites, including the latest polymer issues focusing more on the natural world.

Mr. Ashish Chandra from De La Rue introduced the 200-year-old firm that specialises in security printing and has to its credit the largest number of banknotes to be printed across nations. **Mr. Alan Newman**, Global Product Director, presented online from the wee hours of the morning in the United Kingdom; De La Rue's commitment and proprietary security features that were integrated into slick and modern designed banknotes bearing heritage sites.



The afternoon session focussed more on culture and curation, its communication, and its continued conservation with the conversation led by retired Diplomat and former Indian High Commissioner to Mauritius, **Ambassador Anup Mudgal**. His unique story-telling style and experiences with banknotes at international postings added to the essence of the conference. He emphasised the significance and spirit of banknote imagery that goes unnoticed; reiterating the premise of Dahanukar's research, Money Talks.

Dr. Shailendra Bhandare, curator of the money gallery at the Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford, who presented online, added to the cultural communication discussion from an academic and educative viewpoint including interesting perspectives of gender and cross-boundary heritage while also suggesting ways of cultural education and communication.

Ms. Smita Vats, founder of ITIHAAS, revealed her experiences of introducing heritage to children from when they are young. She uses unique study material and emphasises on the approach of inclusion combined with a feeling of ownership and pride towards heritage sites. She suggested printing postcards with banknotes along with support from UNESCO and Money Talks as a partnered venture.

Ms. Amanda McCadams, owner of Global Heritage Travels and content co-creator for Lonely Planet presented online at a very late hour and shared her interests in visiting such sites and her efforts in bringing home the same experiences as a way of commitment to conservation.

The final session was spearheaded by 17-year-old, **Master Rajveer Shah**, a student at Jamnabai Narsee School, Mumbai who represented the youth or rather, the ‘communaholics’. He presented perspectives of the Gen-Z and how we must bridge the gap between history and technology, the glorious past and the promising future. He emphasised on the importance of conserving our heritage through education, awareness and responsibility. Introducing a History & Heritage (H2) week in all schools pan India and using social media to propagate and connect holds the key to preserve and conserve. He also presented a unique perspective on the challenges of ‘**the next 50**’ for heritage with global warming and climate change playing an active role and therefore for example, the global banknotes with snow-capped mountains will become rare collectors’ pieces.

Ms. Rukmini Dahanukar summarised the sessions by connecting the diverse contributions and suggested steps and programs for the future, A travelling exhibition as well as an online immersive digital gallery, postcards, and guidebooks with banknote albums on curated heritage site for adventurous and engaged travellers to increase awareness, a sense of inclusion leading to better sensitivity towards conservation that will pave the path towards the next 50.

The closing remarks were made by **Dr. Armoogum Parsuramen**, former Director UNESCO, New Delhi, and former Minister of Education, Mauritius, who commended all the national as well as international speakers for their diverse contributions. He also congratulated Ms. Rukmini Dahanukar as convener as well as for her own presentation and ideas to take this project forward to UNESCO Paris along with global partners like De La Rue, leaders in the business of banknote design.



The day ended with **Ms. Juhni Han**, Section Head- Culture, UNESCO New Delhi, who joined in to congratulate Dr Armoogum Parsuramen, Ms. Rukmini Dahanukar and all the speakers at this conference and everyone together celebrated the Golden Anniversary of UNESCO (1972-2022) with a cake-cutting ceremony. 🍷