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## HERITAGE AND THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CITY: A STUDY OF GUWAHATI

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### **Abstract:**

Introduction: Heritage is usually defined as what we inherit, what we value or what we want to pass on to the next generations. Heritage which belongs to mankind speaks about our identity, and origin. Today, as expanding cities is a part of the urbanisation processes the heritage resources also merge within the city scape. Objective: Based on the understanding of urban heritage the paper aims at studying about the urban heritage of the North East Indian city of Guwahati in Assam where a specific type of house known as Assam Type House forms the built environment and stand tall despite facing challenges from the present urban developments. Methodology: The methodology of landscape has been used to find out how the houses now belonging to the urban heritage are adapting with the changing environment and are an integral part of the overall urban experience. Findings: Landscape changes and in an expanding city like Guwahati old structures are vulnerable to being demolished. Therefore the aim is to embrace the architectural features of yesteryears which can be reused for economically viable enterprises and accept that conservation of heritage is not only about preventing change but managing it. The paper studies about urban heritage of the North East Indian city of Guwahati in the state of Assam. It highlights about 21st century cities which have developed into highly urbanised centres wherein the tangible heritage exist within the city limits. The methodology of landscape has been used to study a pattern of building style which is known as Assam Type houses and which forms the built environment today. Though these types of houses were the only style of construction in Assam from the last part of the 19th century till the 1970s, they are still predominant within the city of Guwahati and are concentrated in the Uzan Bazar, Chenikuthi and Panbazar areas. The houses in these localities have remained untouched despite rapid urbanisation. It is surprising that when this premier city of North East India is growing horizontally and vertically, these traditional houses are still in existence without modern intervention, oblivious of space and time. The Assam Type houses are built in European pattern adapting the local style. These houses stand tall even today in the backdrop of the multi storeyed urban skyline which symbolises Assamese identity and culture. It can be concluded that landscape can be preserved embracing the change over all the historic period while planning for future change.

**Keywords:** Heritage, Landscape, Urbanisation, Architecture.

### **Introduction:**

Heritage is usually defined as "what we inherit", "what we value", or "what we want to pass on to future generations". Heritage is taken to include everything that people want to save, from clean air to Morris dancing including material culture and nature. It is all pervasive, and concerns everyone (Howard, 2003). Heritage is highly processed through mythology, ideology, nationalism, local pride, romantic ideas or just plain marketing into commodity (Schouten, 1995). It has two broad divisions, cultural and natural heritage. According to the 17th session of the General Conference of UNESCO in 1972 Cultural Heritage include i) monuments - architectural works, sculptures, paintings, inscriptions, cave dwellings, groups of buildings; ii) sites - archaeological sites etc., which are of outstanding universal value, from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view(UNESCO Convention, 1972). As heritage belongs to mankind, it therefore not only belongs to the past, but lives in the present and is also passed onto the future. Tangible heritage has today become a matter of concern as the 21st century has seen the transition of cities to highly developing urbanised centres wherein the tangible heritage exist within the city premises. The erstwhile

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## HISTORY OF THE INDIAN HANDLOOM INDUSTRY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ASSAM

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### Abstract

Handloom or hand-woven fabrics are indigenously produced in every place around the world. These fabrics are associated with each and every cultural groups of the world. In the case of India, these primary products marked India's march into the ancient globalisation through the process of trade and commerce. Ancient Indian Civilisations like the Indus Valley Civilisation, and later dynasties like that of the Kushans, Mauryans, Guptas and the Mughals were well versed in the art of handloom and silk production. Handloom and silk besides being a household item were used by the Royals too. Later during the 19th and early 20th centuries, khadi which is a handloom product was used as a tool for gaining freedom from the English domination as India was politically and economically subdued by the British Colonialists. Gradually Swadeshi, Charkha, and Handloom all became tools which entwined into the story of India's struggle for freedom. The contribution of Assam in the history of the Indian handloom industry is immense. Since time immemorial Assam has been a significant part of the ancient globalisation process and she was taking part in the trade and commerce through the South West Silk Route. The prized possessions of Assamese handloom are muga and eri which are known globally. Weaving got royal patronage during the days of the Ahoms. Besides the indigenous people are engaged in rearing muga and eri cocoons and in weaving clothes which are used for domestic purposes and are marketed too. The paper highlights about the history and heritage of Indian handloom sector amidst the changing scenario of the urban world. It is felt that the handloom and sericulture sector can boost the economy of Assam and India in particular.

**Keywords:** Handloom, Silk route, Swadeshi, Globalisation.

### Introduction

Handloom or hand-woven fabrics are intrinsically associated with mankind's evolution towards civilisation. Ancient civilisations besides having a fair knowledge of handloom and textiles also participated in the weaving activities of traditional handloom for domestic and religious purposes. With the growth and development of society, the growth of dynasties across continents, and the growth of trade and commerce, the importance of handloom and textiles increased globally. Textiles and handloom are part of our day to day life. Different components of textiles are classified as silk, wool, linen, cotton, synthetic, rayon, nylon, and polyesters. Besides there are textiles from animal fibre like fur or skin of animals.

Though the world during the ancient times was not similar like today yet there were wonders set across all the continents. Such wonders apart from monumental beauty was the development of the silk routes, followed by the development of trade and urbanisation throughout the world which