

**Be ‘Grounded’ to soar high: Role of built heritage in soft power;
A case of India**

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India’s rich cultural heritage plays a substantial part in its soft power quotient which has become an important tool in international diplomacy. Heritage promotes inter-cultural dialogue between countries and creates opportunities for sustainable tourism. As architecture is referred to as the ‘Mother of all Arts’, it reflects the state of affairs of other intangible and abstract philosophies of other art forms and culture in a tangible form. Architecture has always been a context driven force, mirroring the social, political, economic and technological aspects of a place. Vernacular or traditional architecture is an indigenous style to build structures that are representative of the history, culture and socio economic context of the region and its people, giving it a strong and distinctive character.

Globalization and fast paced technological advancements have had a massive impact on all spheres of life, including culture and architecture. Its impact on the built environment has also been extensive, especially in the past couple of decades when this pace of change has been the most dramatic. The false and superficial notion of ‘modernity’ and our blind race to somehow achieve it has given rise to an indistinguishable style of architecture across cities and nations, causing loss of soul, identity and authenticity.

The current paper attempts to analyze the concept of soft power and its relationship with the built heritage in the context of India. There is a need to critically analyze this development against our cultural heritage and traditional knowledge system to regulate its impact as a soft power.

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