Dr. Jyotsna Bapat began her career as Cultural/Social Anthropologist, (Master’s degree from Poona University and Ph.D., IIT Mumbai) as a faculty member in the Department of Sociology, University of Bombay. After a decade she moved to Delhi where has specialised in environmental issues related to physical infrastructure projects and their impact on rural and urban communities, working on assignments with institutions such as NCAER, TERI, ECONNECT [Mumbai], and others. Since 2013 she has worked with ICRIER on the 'Heritage City' component of JNNURM –II. She is a member of the National Expert Panel of the Indian Heritage Cities Network (IHCN). Her association with the Centre for Urban Resources and Environment (CURE) has enabled her to focus on environmental and socio-cultural-economic issues in towns and cities. She has been teaching and guiding students in the School of Planning and Architecture and NIIT University. She has over 30 publications in journals and edited books.

Abstract

Rapid urbanisation in India over last 30 years is a reality. The fear is, in this process of urbanisation, what are known as Common Property Natural and Heritage Resources (CPN&HR), lands with no clearly defined ownerships, will be encroached upon and lost forever. Is this a fact are there no saviours for such resources? Dr. Bapat explores this question in her presentation drawing on three case studies on the restoration of lakes, forests and built heritage in the cities of Hyderabad, Mahabaleshwar, and Agra. The case studies illustrate how these resources have been salvaged with sustained team work between unlikely partners. The presentation illustrates how communication discourse, dialogue among seven to eight different social actors, over a short period, has resulted in mutual cooperation and sustainable conservation of these resources. Drawing on the theory of communicative competence by Habermas, Dr. Bapat explains such occurrences and suggests the possibility of protecting CPN&HR resources in a democratic polity through mutual consensus and actions.