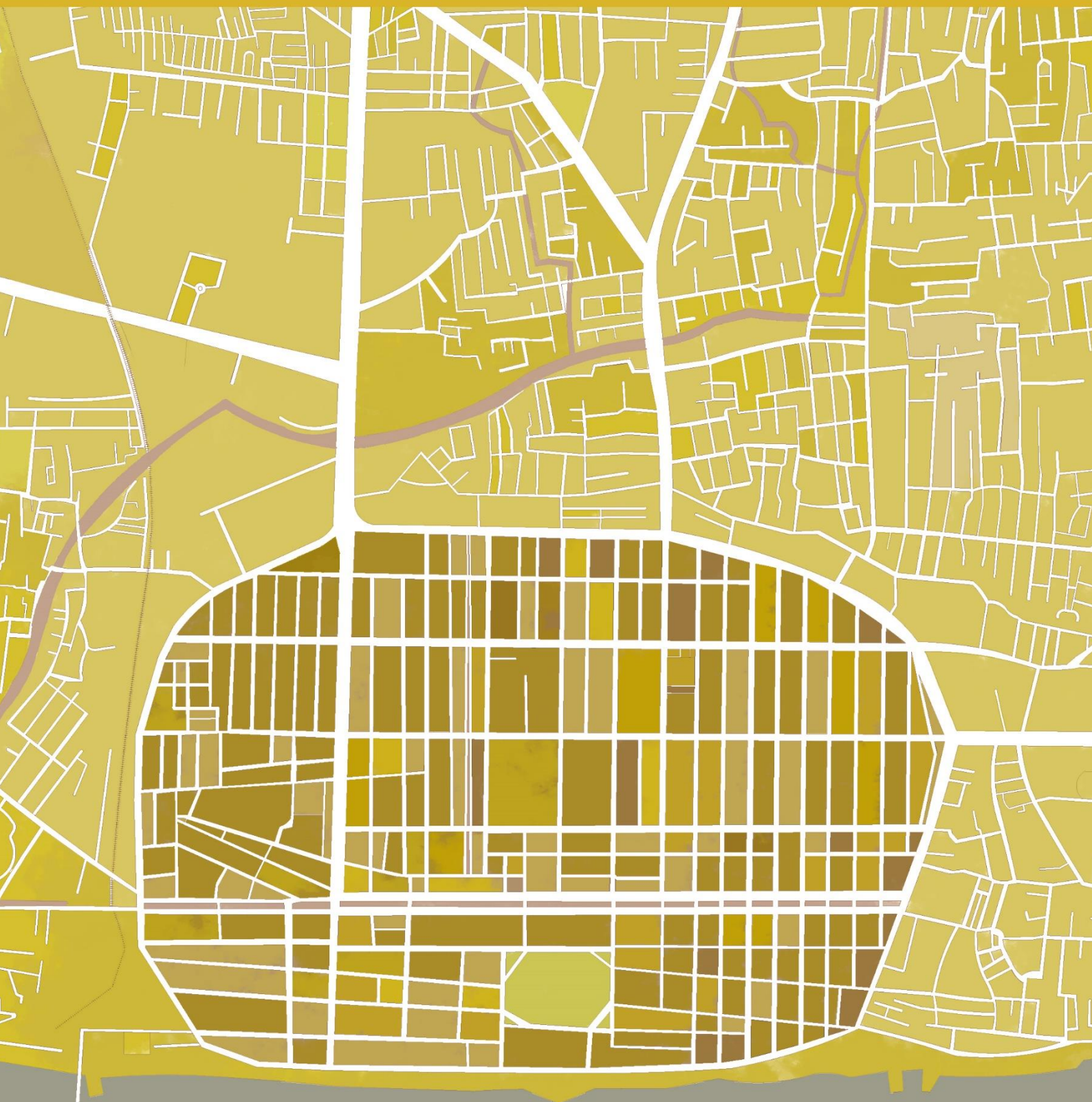


# Urban Heritage, Mass Tourism, Gentrification and Sustainability in the Boulevard town of Pondicherry



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Research funded by Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH)

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*Window in the French town. Image credit: Rajesh, edited by: Author*

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Historic urban environments are the epitome of place and culture. While some represent indigenous cultures, others are the impact of colonial era activity, resulting in diverse forms and patterns of use. Architect Aldo Rossi has referred the city as ‘the locus of collective memory (Rossi, 1982), the historical accretion of human action and a dynamic living environment whose past influences not only the present but also the future where the cultural heritage has provided dynamics to exchange, challenge, innovate & evolve’. (UNESCO, 2016, pg.19)

Such cities attract visitors due to their relevance in terms of heritage, but the recent growth of tourist’s flow and developmental pressures constitute a threat to the conservation of their values. The global scale of tourism is increasingly evident with the spread of hotels, restaurants, retail chains and the soaring hospitality establishments such as AirBnB and Trivago. In the verge of development pressures, the heritage places are responding to commercialisation compromising the heritage and cultural values. Here economy plays a major role, especially in the developing countries, where people want to make the most out of their properties. Also, economy decides the morphology of the historic district creating an imbalance in the urban heritage areas. The focus on economic gain pushing behind the social and environmental values

lead to the degrading quality of life for the local community resulting in gentrification.

Despite their synergistic potential, heritage and tourism is often portrayed as a dipole of conflict and uncompromising values, resulting in negative socio-cultural impacts, such as degradation of historic sites, undesirable cultural transformations, excessive commodification and a trade-off between conservation principles and economic profits (Aas et al., 2005; Austin, 2002; McLean & Straede, 2003; Nyaupane et al., 2006).<sup>1</sup>

In historic cities such as Venice and Barcelona where tourism is the main economy for several decades, the debate has been taken to streets where the residents are hostile because of the negative impacts of tourism.

Based on the UNESCO’s Historic Urban Landscape approach to manage the heritage areas and Sustainable Development goal 11 which is to ‘make cities and human settlements safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable’, this study sets out to explore sustainable strategies for the heritage area of Pondicherry, to mitigate the negative impacts of tourism and commercialisation and balance the needs of the different stakeholders.

### Urban heritage and its significance

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) defines heritage as: heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today and what we pass on to the future generations. In some cities with long histories, the historical city centre served as the centre of

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<sup>1</sup> Dragouni, M. (2019). *Sustainable heritage tourism: Towards a community-led approach*. Phd. University College London

trade, living and entertainment for centuries. It was described as a ‘vibrant, closely interlinked component of its new, enlarged form, performing an essential and distinctive socio-economic role in daily life of its citizens (Giovannani,1998).

Urban heritage plays a fundamental role in enhancing cities identities and in providing a platform for social and economic development. The modern world has taken a long time to recognise the critical importance of preserving the historic areas as an asset for the development of the urban community and as the core of its identity. Although Europe was the first region where urban heritage was included in collective conservation efforts, the idea started spreading to other parts of the world and now has been widely accepted. Globally the role of cultural institutions has been key to fostering urban value and image. In the past, city centres were occupied by the symbols of power and religion. Today, city centres are also defined by cultural institutes: museums, galleries, theatres, academics and memorials.

This global transformation illustrates the importance of culture in urban development at all levels, from defining the core identity of the city to providing a key resource as an important economic sector.<sup>2</sup>

According to Rodwell (2007) , the historical city centre carries two essential qualities: “The socio-cultural values that signify their role in defining sense of place, community belonging and social cohesion and the environmental capital that is represented by their buildings and urban

infrastructure”, it represents the past of the city and has the cultural significance concealed in the buildings and places by shape, size and locality form. Furthermore, urban heritage areas relate to layers of memories between generations where the lifestyle and friendly living environment of the residents cannot be separated from its buildings and places.

The rapid development in historical city centres due to industrialization, modernization and globalization has demanded new spaces around the old centre because of urbanization. Most of the networks in historical centres are compact and designed to fit in with pedestrian and limited use of vehicles; therefore, the lively narrow streets cannot accommodate the need of new infrastructures. The inhabitants change in transport options from walking to driving leads to traffic problems (Lu,2012, p. 8). Therefore, it is important to note that the pace of rapid development in historic centres should be accompanied by the provision of suitable infrastructure balancing the social, economic and environmental impacts of the development.

Inherit (2007, p 15) highlights the potential of heritage as a means of securing sustainable urban regeneration, considering the concept of heritage both in terms of intrinsic historic assets and realising instrumental benefits are understood and valued.

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<sup>2</sup> Culture Urban Future. Global report on culture for sustainable development. (2016). 1st ed. [ebook] Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, pp.19,20. Available at:

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000246291> [Accessed 7 Jan. 2019].

## **Mass tourism, gentrification and its impacts**

Mass tourism and gentrification have become a major threat to the historic urban environments. Mass tourism refers to the participation of large numbers of people in tourism, a general characteristic of developed countries in the twentieth century. It is essentially a qualitative motion, based on the proportion of the population participating in tourism or on the volume of tourist activity. (Burkart and Medlik 1974: 42).

The production of Mass tourism is linked to Fordism, which is large in scale and controlled by tour operators. It is blamed for standardising the product – the package tour – into something flexible and cheap with a predetermined itinerary (Boorstin, 1964; Cohen, 1972; Enoch 1996; Poon, 1993; Rivers, 1972; Shaw and Williams, 2004; Turner and Ash, 1975). The very quality of Mass tourism is to be culturally poor and commoditized because of the type of production and product, and this is seen to lead to the homogenization and standardization of tourists experiences at the expense of individualism (Boorstin, 1964; Poon, 1993; Turner and Ash, 1975).

Mass tourism is accepted to be about delivery of service commodities, neither of which can be inherently blamed for or characteristic of mass tourism alone (Aramberri, 2001, 2010; Sharpley, 2009, 2012). From this perspective, tourists are customers and destinations and local populations, among others are service providers (Aramberri, 2001: 746; Sharpley, 2012: 60)

On the other hand, as Maitland suggests, contemporary tourists seek everyday life, local culture and creative experiences such that they experience the city as residents.

(Ashworth & Page, 2011, p 7). Tourists visiting and experiencing the city like a resident has a positive impact than the tourists who experience the city as a commodity. Franco Pondicherrians and the foreign tourists, especially the French experience the city and appreciate its heritage than the weekenders who rush with their standard checklist of popular destinations.

The classical process of gentrification involves the transformation of a working-class area of a central city into middle class residential and commercial space which changes the social, economic and cultural character of the place. (Beauregard 1980). The term ‘gentrification’ was first coined by the sociologist Ruth Glass in 1964 to describe how the poor areas in London were invaded by the middle class. (Glass 1964, XVIII). In such cases, any district in or near London, however clingy or unfashionable before, is likely to become expensive; and London may quite soon be a city which illustrates the principle of survival of the fittest, who can still afford to work or live there. (Glass 1964, XIX). Therefore, the term was conceived as a “neighbourhood expression of class inequality”. (Lees et al, 2008).

According to Hackworth (2002), the growth of large corporate developers, real estate investment trusts and new networks of mortgage brokers is creating new forms of ‘corporatized gentrification’. As a global urban strategy, gentrification is now densely connected into circuits of global capital and cultural circulation. (Smith, 2002, p 80). Many historic districts experience tourism and commercial gentrification provoked by visitors and so it illustrates how tourism relates to gentrifying process.





*Fig 1.1: Tourists walking in the Piazza San Marco, Venice. Photograph: Kimberley Coole/Getty Images/Lonely Planet Images*



*Fig 1.2: Crowd in the Pondicherry Promenade beach during New year eve in 2018. Image credit: Pondicherry Arun*

Residential displacement driven by tourist-oriented revitalization policies is affecting several neighbourhoods, especially by increasing transformation of rental flats into holiday apartments (Arias-Sans & Quagliari-Domínguez, 2015; Colomb, 2012; Russo & Quagliari-Domínguez, 2014; Stors & Kagermeier, 2015). While tourism gentrification displaces residents to accommodate new spaces and services attracting the tourists, commercial gentrification upgrades and transforms the residential area into spaces for entertainment and consumption for affluent visitors and middle-class residents.

Commercial and tourism gentrification must be regarded, as 'Indirect displacement' (Davidson & Lees, 2010, Marcuse 1985, Slater 2009); as a mechanism of exclusion that constrains the quality of life of the indigenous residents and which can be the cause of final out migration from their place. Tourism and allied services are concentrated in 'tourists bubbles' (Judd, 1999) or in large scale precincts with little connection with normal life in the city.

Gotham (2005) also observes that tourism gentrification changes the retail activity of urban spaces and describes commercial gentrification driven by tourism in New Orleans as 'High class fashion outlets and expensive retail stores have taken over the old Jackson brewery, transforming an old factory into a suburban style shopping mall, designer bars, chain restaurants and tourism oriented souvenir shops have gradually replaced former working class corner cafes and food shops. Indeed, the last corner cafes and local coffee shops are today competing for space with some of the largest corporations in the world. (Gotham, 2005, pp 1111-1112). These authors show

the conflict between the retail chains and the local businesses of the city.

According to Marcuse, displacement is usually understood as a 'housing related involuntary residential dislocation' (1985, p 205), and the important point is that the amount of displacees may be larger than what the data generally shows. The concept of displacement pressure refers to the lack of affordable facilities and to the destruction of social networks suffered by the residents during and after transformations of the neighbourhoods where they live. The important point is that as the area becomes 'less and less liveable, then the pressure of displacement already is severe. Its actuality is only a matter of time'. The pressure of displacement can eventually lead to residents moving from the neighbourhood and so its impacts must be regarded on a long-term basis. (Marcuse 1985:207). While 'direct displacement' refers to the out migration from the neighbourhood or the moment of eviction, 'indirect displacement' is a long-term process that result in a set of pressures that makes it progressively difficult for low income residents to remain overtime.

As a result, Davidson (2008,2009) and Davidson and Lees (2010) suggest that the pressure of indirect displacement lead residents to experience what they call 'Loss of place', a forced dispossession and dislocation from their places that leads them to a form of displacement into a new colonised social context. According to Cocola Gant, commercial upgrading is the main cause that changes the nature and uses of the area and, therefore, the pressures that affect the life of the neighbourhood are caused by its transformation into a space for entertainment and consumption for affluent users. A process in which the decision to leave a neighbourhood might be motivated



by ‘loss of place’ (Davidson & Lees, 2010, Davidson, 2008,2009) rather than the incapacity to afford the accommodation.

### **Sustainable development goals for historic environments**

According to the Brundtland report, ‘Sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’.

Following the above definition, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 2000 were developed in the year 2015. The MDGs consisted of eight goals which is to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women. In the year 2015, further improvements were made through Habitat III consultations for sustainable development goals to be achieved by 2030. The Sustainable development goals (SDG) 2030 agenda was adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, which provides a blue print for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. The Sustainable Development Goals 2030 consists of 17 goals in which UNESCO directly contributes to 9 goals ranging from eradicating poverty, good health and well-being, gender equality, decent work and economic growth, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, peace, justice and strong institution and partnership for goals. Based on a strong appeal from national and local

stakeholders, the 2030 agenda included the role of culture as an enabler of sustainable development across the SDGs<sup>3</sup>.

Culture contributes as a driver to human and socio-economic development, quality education, social inclusion, environmental sustainability and peaceful societies. According to the sustainable development goals 11, which is to ‘make cities and settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable’ where cities are liveable, inclusive, consume less resources and minimise the impact of human activities (Bibri & Krogstie, 2017). The goal 11, target 11.4 is to ‘strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the worlds cultural and natural heritage’ which clearly proposes on managing change in cities with culture and heritage as a lever for development (UNESCO, 2016, p 17).

The inclusion of culture in this goal offers a unique opportunity to link policy areas that have not always been aligned and advanced at different speeds. (UNESCO, 2016, p 25). Goal 11 clearly indicates the need for inter relation of other sectors and impacts they can have on sustainable development, which must be implemented by developing local urban policies and programmes.

Historic urban areas are among the most abundant and diverse manifestations of our common cultural heritage. In recent decades, there has been a shift from ‘monumental’ concept of heritage to one that encapsulates a broader and holistic notion of heritage, with its tangible and intangible qualities. The modern concept of

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<sup>3</sup> Centre, U. (2019). *World Heritage and Sustainable Development*. [online]

Whc.unesco.org. Available at: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/sustainabledevelopment/> [Accessed 17 Apr. 2019].

urban heritage considers the historic layering of cultural and natural values and attributes with a purview that extends beyond the notion of ‘historic centres’ or ‘ensemble’ to include the broader urban context and its geographical setting. It also recognises that the city is not static, but subject to dynamic forces across economic, social and cultural spheres. This is the message issued by the UNESCO Historic Urban Landscape, adopted in 2011, a milestone text that responds to the need to frame urban heritage conservation within social and human development process. (UNESCO, p 24, 2016).

### **UNESCO’s Historic Urban Landscape approach**

The recommendation on Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach was adopted by UNESCO’s general conference on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2011. The HUL approach by UNESCO moves beyond the preservation of the physical environment and focusses the entire human environment with all its tangible and intangible qualities. It seeks to increase the sustainability of planning and design interventions by considering the existing built environment, intangible heritage, cultural diversity, socio economic and environmental factors along with local community values. The tool is a soft law to be implemented by member states on a voluntary basis.

Four tools were developed as a part of the process involving different stakeholders. They are

- Civic engagement tools
- Knowledge and Planning tools
- Regulatory systems
- Financial tools

**Civic engagement tools** involve the diverse stakeholders where they are empowered to safeguard their heritage and promote sustainable development.

#### **Knowledge and Planning tools**

It helps to protect the integrity and authenticity of urban heritage. These tools include documentation and mapping of cultural and natural characteristics.

#### **Regulatory systems**

Legislative and regulatory systems should be developed aimed at conservation and management of tangible and intangible attributes of the urban heritage including their social, environmental and cultural values.

#### **Financial systems**

Along with government and global funding agencies, micro- credits and other flexible financing should be generated to support local enterprise as well as manage the historic urban landscape sustainably.

The recommendation was intended as a ‘point of departure’ for conversations around planning, heritage, history, culture, development and the overall management of the city (UNESCO, 2015,11). World heritage sites are recognised for their Outstanding Universal Value and plays an important role in tourism, identity and pride for the city or country (UNESCO, 2012). However, designation also poses challenges in dealing with urbanisation, globalisation, local developments and international relationship between cities (Bandarin and Van Oers, 2012).

Until HUL’s unique approach was established, UNESCO’s interest in preservation meant that urbanisation was a potential threat to historic areas and there was little discussion about how heritage can

be represented in the future of the city. The HUL approach provides direction and sense of hope to heritage preservationists, historians, planners and members of the community to formally integrate the heritage and histories of a city into changing modern city that exists and into the future. It shows UNESCO's attempt to reconsider the role of heritage in cities and role of UNESCO in modern cities<sup>4</sup>.

Ballarat, Ecuador, Rawalpindi, Levuka, Varanasi, Hyderabad and Ajmer-Pushkar are the pilot cities in the Asia Pacific region that has successfully implemented the HUL approach.

**Box 1**

**TARGETS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 11:  
MAKE CITIES INCLUSIVE, SAFE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE**

1. By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services, and upgrade slums
2. By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons
3. By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries
4. Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage
5. By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations
6. By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management
7. By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities
8. Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning
9. By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels
10. Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials

Source: United Nations, 2015

**Fig 1.3: Targets of Sustainable Development Goals 2030 Goal 11. Box 1. Source: United Nations 2015**

<sup>4</sup> Pursuing a Historic Urban Landscape Approach to Heritage in Edmonton. (2019). [ebook] Edmonton: City-Region Studies Centre and the Edmonton Heritage Council. Available at:

<https://edmontonheritage.ca/wp-content/uploads/HUL-Evolving-Report-V1-3.pdf> [Accessed 17 Apr. 2019].

## Chapter 2

### Pondicherry – An Historic Urban Environment

Pondicherry, a small town in the South-Eastern part of India, is a former French colony. Until the Europeans arrived, it was a small village consisting mostly of straw huts, and a few brick houses, populated primarily by fishermen, weavers and trading castes. The French occupied Pondicherry in 1674 until 1693 under the command of Francois Martin.

During this period, the French managed to set up a factory to build fort, magazines and stores to attract craftsmen and succeeded. On September 1693, Pondicherry fell into the hands of the Dutch and remained five and half years in their possession (until March 1699), who prepared a comprehensive plan for a grid patterned settlement. It consisted of large rectangular blocks of houses separated by straight streets, intersecting at right angles: a simple structure which corresponded to spatial and functional distribution of the different Indian communities. The Dutch planned the town not only to attract the artisans and merchants, who left the town at the beginning of the Dutch siege, but also to attract new settlers to take part in the trading interests of the Dutch East India company.

The Dutch are also at the origin of the separation between Ville noire and Ville Blanc (Black Town and White Town) which is today known as Tamil town and French Town. But the symbolic separation

by the canal was not apparent during that period. When the French regained the town in 1699 through the treaty of Ryswick in 1697, the Dutch design was partly implemented in the Northern side.

During the French rule, the Tamil town was further classified into Hindu, Muslim and Christian quarters. The Hindu quarters grew around the temples (Perumal Kovil, Calatheeswaran Kovil and Iswaran Kovil) that were present even before the French rule and the streets around were named after them. The Christian quarter grew around Immaculate Conception Cathedral and the Muslim quarter developed around the Qutpa mosque. The grid iron plan of the Dutch was not implemented in the Muslim quarter since the Muslims wanted their lanes to orient towards the mosque. Hence the Muslim quarter remained different from the rest of the town. Each street in the Boulevard town was occupied by different communities ranging from farmers, businessmen, grocers, jewellers, oil merchants, craftsmen, weavers, toddy manufacturers, fishermen, dancers, potters, laundrymen etc. <sup>5</sup>

It was only during the French rule, the Uppar river that drained into the backwaters of Bay of Bengal was channelized up to the Northern end of the Boulevard as a storm water drain, which became the Grand Canal separating the French and Tamil quarters. In 1742, the simple comparison of the urban settlement of Pondicherry with the nearby Madras reveals how much the French succeeded in making Pondicherry, the capital of South India.

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<sup>5</sup> Malangin Raphael, 2015. Pondicherry that was once French India. Pondicherry.

The French constructed Fort Louis surrounded by a moat from the Uppar river to protect the factory from adversarial attacks. By 1755, the entire town was fortified by a moat, which in 1820 was destroyed by the English during the war. Due to financial constraints after the war, the moat was not rebuilt which became lanes on all four sides, at which point, for the first time, the town was referred to as Boulevard.<sup>6</sup>

Boulevard town being the historic core of Pondicherry has inherited significant cultural heritage from different communities and stands as a pertinent model with hidden layers of history. The built heritage can be categorised into three different distinct architectural styles: French, Tamil and Franco Tamil.

French buildings are characterised by high compound walls, elaborate gates, garden courtyards, colonnaded galleries, voluminous rooms, high arched openings and wooden balconies. French adopted flat roofs instead of pitched roofs due to the influence of local climate and construction techniques. While the French buildings were designed to take full advantage of the cool sea breeze through its large windows, Tamil buildings were shady but ventilated with courtyards inside. Tamil buildings are mainly characterised by Thalvaram (street verandah with platform and lean to roof which protect the building from direct sun and rain allowing people to walk from one place to another without getting drenched), Thinnai (a semi-public seating space for visitors), Muttram (internal courtyards) and feature a combination of flat and pitched

roofs. The Tamil streets were called 'Talking streets' because of their intimate scale and nature which can also be found in Kumbakonam, Mylapore, Chidambaram and Srirangam.

The third distinct style are the Franco Tamil buildings which is a blend of Tamil and French architecture styles. The local wealthy businessmen and higher officials working in the French government built their houses with French architectural features to show their stature. While the ground floor was a typical vernacular Tamil building with Thinnai, Thalvaram and Muttram, the first floor was built with French architectural features such as colonnaded arcades, louvered windows and ornate columns which gave a unique style to Pondicherry.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Deloche, J. (2004). Origins of the urban development of Pondicherry according to the 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch plans. Pondicherry: Institut Francais de Pondicherry.

<sup>7</sup> Architectural heritage of Pondicherry. (2001). Pondicherry: Asia Urbs Programme-Pondicherry.







**Fig 2.1:** Pondicherry with her surrounding villages and rivers 20<sup>th</sup> November 1694. Within these limits, the Dutch worked out a greater urban project. They thought that not only the Indian artisans and merchants, who had left the place at the beginning the siege, would return, but also the new settlers would be attracted by the opportunities offered to them by the company. They therefore planned a new town on the western side of the establishment.

**Fig 2.3:** By 1699, the French started establishing the plan of the Dutch. The fort was surrounded by a moat from the river Uppar and a factory was set up inside the fort. By 1705, the fort was expanded, and the Boulevard town started expanding. By 1755, the French fortified the town on all sides by a moat to protect from their enemies. The Uppar river was channelised

to the Northern Boulevard which distinguished the town as French town and Tamil town. By 1820, the moat was destroyed by the English during the war which created a lane on all four sides that looked like a Boulevard. Thus, the town got its name as Boulevard town. Image credit **Fig 2.1,2.3:** Outline traced from the book “Origins of the urban development of Pondicherry according to 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch plans” and presentation done by author

**Fig 2.2:** Different quarters of the Boulevard town. Image credit: Illustrated by author, partly based on map provided by INTACH Pondicherry and Google maps. (2018).Google maps[Online] available at <https://www.google.co.in/maps/@11.9320926,79.8299337,15.22z> [Accesssed 22<sup>nd</sup> Oct.2018].



Fig 2.2

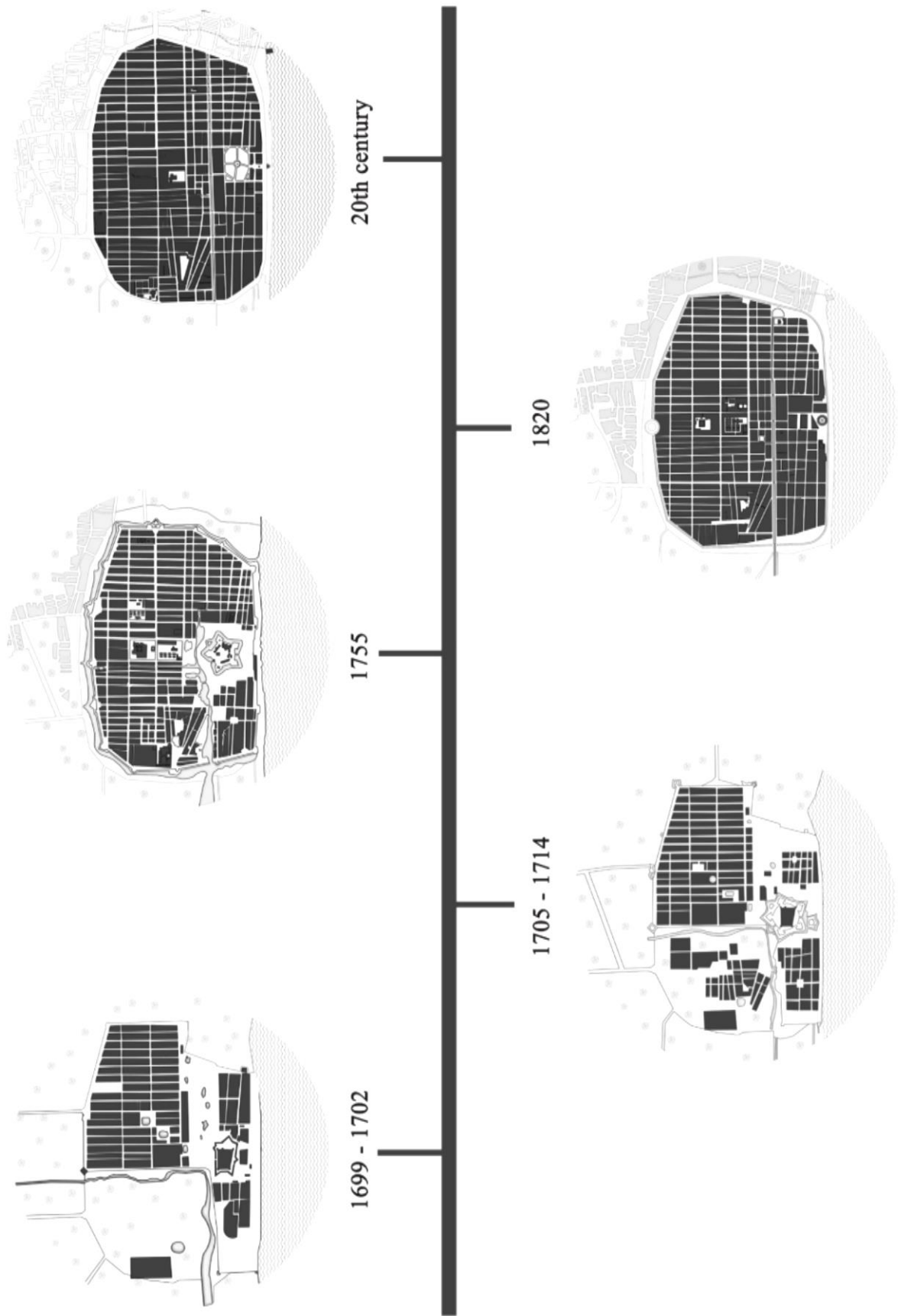


Fig 2.3

## Transformation of the historic town

Today, the Boulevard town is the main commercial area and is groaning under the weight of the tourists. As per the comprehensive plan of the French, Goubert Market in Nehru Street was the only designated commercial area that was constructed to cater the needs of the Boulevard town. But slowly from the early 1960's, the street started getting populated with new retailers ranging from clothing, boutiques and sweet shops.

Being a Union Territory, Pondicherry enjoyed few tax relaxations, compared to the states.<sup>8</sup> Hence people from the neighbouring states flocked to the town to purchase goods and materials. The location of the old market became a strong reason for developing commercials in the area.

After the implementation of Uniform Sales Tax throughout the country in the year 2000, the influx of purchasers considerably reduced but people kept flocking to the historic area from the nearby villages and

towns since Pondicherry was still a main attraction. The commercials extended to the neighbouring streets of the market with warehouses and wholesale shops.

According to the CII (Confederation of Indian Industry), though there were lot of industries mushrooming at that period, the growth rate of the manufacturing sector was fluctuating significantly. The service sector, over the years, grew faster than the manufacturing sector. Hence the Pondicherry government decided to bank on Tourism and Information technology to make up for the revenue loss.<sup>9</sup>

Tourism in Pondy dates to several years but it has been in the main agenda only for the past two decades. There are two types of tourism in Pondicherry: spiritual and liquor. While a larger group of people came to visit Aurobindo Ashram and the temples, another group of people exclusively visited Pondicherry for liquor, since it was less expensive and widely available than the neighbouring states.

Year	Domestic Tourists	Foreign Tourists	Total	Growth
2017	15,31,972	1,31,407	16,63,379	-
2016	13,31,972	1,17,437	15,15,726	-
2015	12,97,192	1,06,153	14,03,345	(+) 10.38%
2014	11,88,093	83,291	12,71,384	(+) 11.14%
2013	1,068,184	61,516	11,29,700	(+) 9.18%
2012	9,81,714	52,931	10,34,645	(+) 8.88%
2011	8,97,986	52,298	9,50,284	(+) 7.15%
2010	8,35,872	50,964	8,86,836	(-) 2.03%

*Fig 2.4: Statistical data of tourism growth in Pondicherry. Source: Department of Tourism, Pondicherry*

<sup>8</sup> Mahalingam,S(2000). For a new sales tax regime. The Hindu, [online]. Available at: <https://frontline.thehindu.com/static/html/fl1702/17020270.htm> [Accessed Jan 7. 2019]

<sup>9</sup> Ramakrishnan N, Balaji R,' Pondicherry at the cross roads', The Hindu Business line (19 July 2002): <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2002/07/19/stories/2002071900300900.htm>

The neighbouring state Tamil Nadu prohibited liquor at several periods which attracted people to the union territory. The French ruled Pondicherry was known for both IMFL (Indian made foreign liquor), arrack and toddy shops. Hence lot of people from Tamil Nadu visited the borders of Pondicherry to buy liquor since the British rule.

Today, Pondicherry has become a full-fledged tourist destination. The influx of tourists has steadily increased for the past 10 years. The younger generation, working in corporate sectors, from the nearby metropolitan cities, flock to the town in the weekends.

The long coastline, beautiful colonial buildings, reasonably priced liquor and accommodation have attracted a constantly growing crowd of weekenders. Pondicherry is slowly evolving into a Goa of the South east India.

From the 2017 statistics released by the Tourism Department, the number of visitors to Pondicherry was 16.6 lakhs which was an increase of 9.74% than the previous year. As a result, the Puducherry government wanted to fully utilize the potential and make the weekend destination to a week-long destination and has targeted to increase the tourist's arrivals to 25 lakhs by 2022.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Lal, A. (2018). *Awakening of Puducherry*. [online] Destination Reporter. Available at:

<https://destinationreporterindia.com/2018/04/11/awakening-of-puducherry/> [Accessed 15 Nov. 2018].

## Chapter 3

### Methods, methodology and field research

To understand the current pressures in the Boulevard town, qualitative and mixed methods case study was used. With the target of SDGs 2036 and the UNESCO historic urban landscape approach for historic environments, it becomes important to study the current transformations in the area through different stakeholder's perspective to implement the goals locally and manage the heritage area for the future generations.

To examine the above raised points, demographic analysis, building use survey, land use mapping and hotels, bars and restaurants mapping were done to understand the growth pattern in the historic area. Secondly, following the study on the changes in the Boulevard town, semi structured interviews were conducted with residents, tourists and heritage building

owners and thirdly, existing plans and policies were analysed for the future proposal. Thus, this study addresses three main objectives, 1) Analyse the impacts of commercialisation and tourism in the heritage area and the changing land use, 2) understand the problems of stakeholders (residents, tourists and heritage building owners), 3) Analyse the gaps in the current projects, plans, policies and regulations for the heritage area.

### Demographic analysis and building use survey

The streets that have encountered extensive transformation over the years and are still transforming were chosen as the study area. These streets are ideal examples that represent the character of each quarter in the Boulevard town. Below is the list of streets studied for the analysis.

Street Name	Quarter	Town
Vysial street	Hindu Quarter	Tamil town
Nehru Street	Hindu Quarter	Tamil town
Vellala street	Hindu Quarter	Tamil town
Cazy street	Muslim Quarter	Tamil town
St. Therese street	Christian Quarter	Tamil town
Rue Labourdonnais	-	French town
Rue Romain Rolland	-	French town
Rue Suffren	-	French town



## **Short description of the study area**

### **Vysial Street**

According to the French plan, the streets were allocated for each caste and were named after them. Vysial street was named after the caste Vysial. Vysials were merchants and had trade links with South Eastern countries such as Burma and Vietnam. Their wealth was greatly displayed in their buildings. The buildings were predominantly ground floor with partial first floor and were influenced by French and Chettinad architecture style. The facades of about 20 houses were restored to their former glory under the Asia Urbs program in 2003. Pondicherry won UNESCO Asia Pacific Heritage Award for cultural heritage for restoration of this street. Last year, 4 heritage buildings were demolished in this street. One building has turned into a mixed-use building, two of them are proposed to be commercial and one is vacant.

### **Vellala Street**

Historically, Vellala Street was allocated for the farmers. But today very few Vellala's are living in the street unlike Vysial street where predominant of the residents still belong to the Vysial community. Vellala Street is located next to Rangapillai street which is one of the main commercial streets in the Boulevard town and is currently undergoing major changes.

The street started changing after 1995 when the buildings were rented as warehouses for the nearby market. Franco Pondicherrians started renting their place to warehouses and commercials which spread to the entire stretch in the early 2000's. Last year, 3 residential buildings were sold by the natives and all of them turned out to be commercials. Two of these buildings

became warehouses and one turned into retail textile showroom.

### **Cazy Street**

Cazy street is a calm residential street in the Muslim quarters. Originally known as Kajiar veedhi, the street is known as Cazy in French. Kaji was an Islamic scholarly person who is accustomed with tenets of Islam, the street was named after him. The Muslim quarter is still intact from the commercials and tourism activity, but the street has lost its old charm of lined heritage buildings. Apartments and large residences have replaced the heritage buildings of the street. The street has lot of small-scale home businesses run by the residents for several decades and has one restaurant which is the only commercial in the street.

### **St. Therese Street**

St Therese street is in the Christian quarter of the Tamil Town. The street was named as St. Therese street after Mother Teresa stayed in the convent in this street during her visit to Pondicherry. The street is occupied by Christians and missionaries. Two schools: Immaculate Heart of Mary's and Petit Seminaire higher secondary schools and two sister's convents are located here. This street is steadily transforming to a commercial street especially after the entry of Pothys, a regional retail showroom of Tamil Nadu, at the junction of St. Therese and Anna Salai. The street has 3 restaurants, 2 fast food joints, two hotels and 4 bars.

### **Nehru Street**

Previously known through the name of the French governor Dupleix, the street was named as Jawaharlal Nehru Street after the independence. This is the main commercial spine of Pondicherry. Goubert Market, the historic market of Pondicherry is in this



stretch. The location of the market is the main reason for the street to gentrify. The street started commercialising from the early 1970's. This street is the first gentrified street of the Boulevard town and has been a major influence in gentrifying the surrounding streets.

### **French quarter**

While Tamil town was allocated based on castes, French town was allocated for different categories of people: Monsieur (French man), Madame (French woman), Famille Francais (French family) and Veuve (widow). Interestingly, even Tamils lived in the Northern part of the French town near the canal. Most of the residents were working in the French government. <sup>11</sup>

Rue Suffren, Rue Labourdonais and Rue Romain Rolland were studied for the research. The streets were named after French personnel who contributed to the French government significantly.

At present, French quarter is the major attraction for the tourists due to the European resemblance. Apart from this, institutions, convents and main Government buildings are located here. The Southern part of the French quarter was studied since it is rapidly changing to accommodate touristic amenities such as hotels, restaurants and home stays. The Northern part of the French quarter are predominantly ashram buildings which is the main reason for the unchanged building use pattern.

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<sup>11</sup> Deloche, J. (2004). Origins of the urban development of Pondicherry according to the 17<sup>th</sup>

century Dutch plans. Pondicherry: Institut Francais de Pondicherry.



*Fig 3.1: Demarcation of the study area. Image credit: Author*

## **Gentrification in Boulevard town**

From the demographic and building use survey taken from eight streets in different quarters of the Boulevard town, it is evident that the area is drastically succumbing to the developmental pressures threatening the tangible and the intangible heritage of Pondicherry. The survey also explores the gentrification happening in the Boulevard town.

Boulevard town, being the main attraction for the tourists and purchasers of goods, is groaning under the weight of ever-increasing number of tourism amenities and the commercial vendors. The residents are now constantly encountering the pressure of traffic, overcrowded public spaces and degrading quality of life that risks pushing the locals out of the town causing gentrification.

“There is no active communication in the street. Residences have become islands amid commercials and hence the community bonding has reduced. But the peer pressure has increased to visit newly opened restaurants and malls. The town is not our’ s anymore.” said a resident in Chetty street.

From the demographic survey, it is found that 74% of the participants were 50+ years while 20% were between 35-50 years and 6% were between 20-35 years.

Among the participants, 43% of the residents were doing business, 33% were retired, 18% were working in private sector and 6% were working in the government sector.

Predominantly, 76% of the residents were living in their ancestral property while 24%

bought the property after 1980’s. The survey finds that most of the residents were living in the Boulevard area for more than three generations. The occupancy status in these 8 streets shows that buildings which are occupied only by owners (15%) has reduced while the buildings fully rented (18%) for commercial purposes has increased. Alongside, there are considerable number of buildings (10%) where part of the building is occupied by the owner and the rest are rented. While doing the residents perception survey, one of the residents living in Rangapillai street revealed that they would shortly sell the property and shift to another area due to the degrading quality of life.

Though there is a shift in the occupancy of the Tamil town where the residents are renting or selling their buildings for commercial purposes and are moving to other parts of the town, still the buildings in the Tamil town are predominantly owned by Pondicherrians. Ownership changes can be traced in the French town where the heritage buildings are bought by people from neighbouring states such as Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra. These buildings are often restored into a heritage hotel or a restaurant.

Currently, the Boulevard town is predominantly occupied by old people. The future of the Boulevard town lies in the hands of the next generation. The younger generation has moved to the metropolitan cities for work and flood back to their hometown only during the weekends and festival times, thereby losing their daily connectivity to the place. From the survey, it is found that 46% of the younger generation are working, 33% are studying

and 21 % are home makers. But the interesting data is that 48% are living in the same building, 40% are living outside Pondicherry. 9% are residing outside the Boulevard town and 3% are living in other streets inside the historic area. This shows that 49% of the young population do not live in the Boulevard town.

The older generation who live in the Boulevard are no longer active in pursuing for control measures that will check, streamline and manage this haphazard development, which is ultimately troubling the local community severely.

“Since we are old, we are adjusting with all the mess around here.” said a resident in Sangardasse Street.

Before any physical impact of gentrification is perceived, social impact will be sensed where the local people lose connection and feel socially excluded from the place.

During the conversation with the residents, most of them said that their children may not stay in the Boulevard town in the future since they don't have enough opportunities in the town. Though this cannot be taken as definitive answer but still the shift of the younger generation to metropolitan cities certainly influences the growth of the historic area.

“We were planning to demolish our old building and build a new residence. But our children wanted to build a mixed-use building” told a resident in Vysial street.

Today, the building has been rented for a financier and a tailor shop. The elderly couple are living in the third-floor lacking

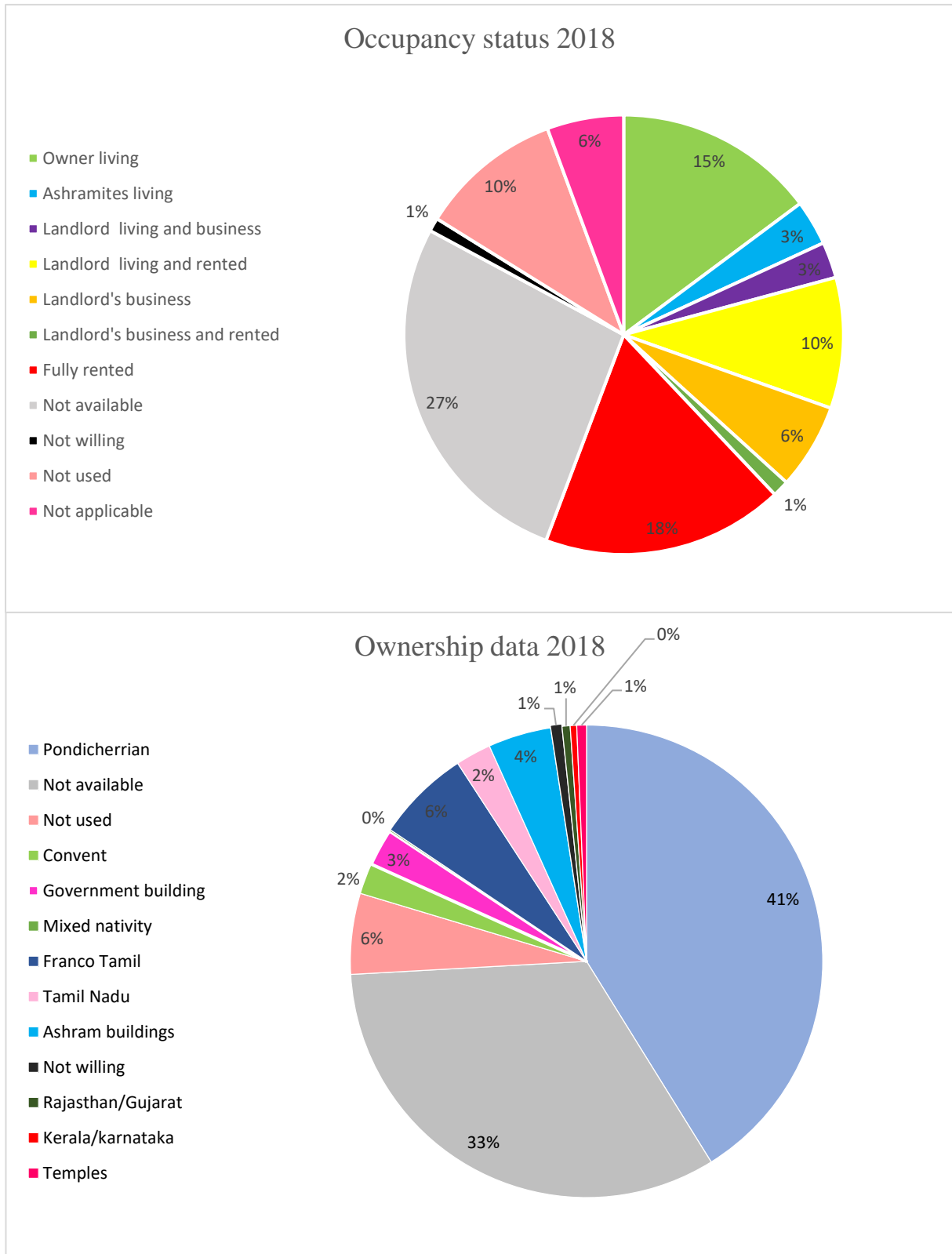
contact with their neighbours. Their children are working in the metropolitan cities and visit them occasionally.

Gentrification in touristic historic areas begin when the residents leave their native place to gain more economy through renting or selling their property due to increased real estate value. From the building use survey, it is found that 18 % of the buildings have been fully rented, mostly for commercial purposes which is the first sign of gentrification.

In the year 2018, 19 buildings were demolished in the study area in which 10 buildings were heritage buildings. Out of 19 buildings, 6 buildings emerged as commercial, one turned into mixed use and another one into residential. The remaining plots are still vacant. The ratio of building use (6 commercial: 1 mixed use: 1 residential) changes describes the pattern of growth in the Boulevard town.

In the main commercial stretch, Nehru Street, many local shops have been replaced by national and international brands which is another sign of gentrification. Today, 14% of the shops are owned by retail brands and the numbers are growing. In this context, it is commercial gentrification where the local shops are replaced by posh brands.

“I am going to close my shop and rent it instead. It is becoming very difficult to sustain the business here” said a retail shop owner in Nehru Street. Today as he said, the building is being refurbished to pave way for a retail brand.



**Fig 3.2:** Pie chart of ownership and occupancy data in the study area. Image credit: Author

Though the streets were picked from different quarters, all the streets have one character in common. I.e.: Restaurants, hotels and bars. Every street has touristic amenities which has changed the town socially, economically and environmentally.

New themed restaurants have sprung throughout the Boulevard town to cater the tourists. While the cafes and restaurants in the French town are highly expensive, Tamil town has a wide range of options which are affordable for the tourists and the locals.

Like Tamil town, French town cannot be explored by the locals like any other tourists. The café's and restaurants in the French town are expensive and the prices are in par with Europe or UK. A coffee ranges between Rs.150- Rs.200 and a sandwich between Rs.200-Rs.250 which cannot be afforded by a resident. Indirectly, the local community is kept away from these places which is another sign of gentrification.

Boulevard town has a mix of both residential and touristic amenities. Here, a local grocery shop or a fruit shop is not converted to a restaurant or any other touristic amenity like in Venice or Barcelona. The issue is different here. Here, the gentrification is induced because of trying to fit the commercial needs of Pondicherry whilst accommodating the tourist's requirements.

## **Conclusion**

The leisure led regeneration of Pondicherry and the international recognition of the city has positioned it as one of the leading

tourist's destination in India. In this context, the changes in the historic core was studied closely with the detailed analysis of eight streets in different quarters. From the study, it is understood that gentrification is evolving in the town. The fact that the tourism amenities are spread in all the streets, new developments predominantly being commercial, increase of national and international brands replacing the local businesses and the decrease in the ownership occupancy shows that the town is gentrifying. In the forthcoming section, I will discuss the current land use in the Boulevard town and the emerging issues.



## **Existing Building Use pattern**

Boulevard town designed to be a residential area transformed into a mixed-use area in the recent years and is now quickly changing into a commercial area to accommodate the touristic and commercial needs of the town. Currently, the town is accommodating more than required commercials that are overwhelming the town and the stakeholders. Over the years with tourism becoming the main economy of Pondicherry, the town is undergoing a clear transition in the land use pattern. For example: Many residential buildings in the Boulevard town are converted into warehouses, retail, home stays, hotels and restaurants. These changes have given the area dynamic character and liveliness to the town. However, the extensive change has also caused many problems.

With increasing real estate developmental pressure, the precinct is in dire need of efficient management plan for upgradation and maintenance. Below I have described the existing land use pattern which was collected as a part of the research.

### **Residential use**

Streets from Petit Canal to the South Boulevard in the Muslim and Christian quarters are predominantly residential with commercial establishments located randomly. The Muslim quarter remains residential because of the close-knit nature of the community while the Christian quarter is slowly commercialising due to developmental pressure and the increasing land value of the town, thereby instigating the Franco Pondicherrians to sell their properties which is then developed as commercials. Though many of the owners

are Franco-Pondicherrians in the Muslim quarters as well, the buildings are rented for residential purposes unlike the rest of the town where most of the buildings are rented for commercial activities.

Building use from Saint Therese Street to S.V Patel Salai in the Christian and Hindu quarter are largely mixed use which is where the developmental pressure is high. The residential buildings in the Tamil town are predominantly individual residences without any setback. In recent years, apartments are being built with stilt parking. These buildings are three stories high with large grill gates often disconnected from the neighbourhood. Most of the newly constructed residences are poorly ventilated because of lack of courtyards and open spaces.

Building use in the French quarter is quite unique due to its European and Ashram influence which has become a major tourist's attraction. All the major government buildings are in the heart of the French town. Northern part of the French quarter is largely residential because of the Ashram buildings while the Southern part is filled with restaurants, hotels, cafes and bars to accommodate the tourist's requirements.

The pedestrian pathways are encroached both by commercial vendors and residents. The commercial vendors encroach to display their materials and sign boards while the residents encroach mainly to park their vehicles and to ensure safety and privacy outside their home, leaving no space for the pedestrians to walk.

The commercial outlets, warehouses and vehicles have dominated the street while

the residents have lost their place for the commercial driven development. Though there are no pedestrian pathways in the Boulevard town, the residential area is relatively better because of unchanged land use.

The developmental pressures arise due to the change of designated land use and the problems are high in areas which have multiple users.

### **Commercial Use**

Commercial establishments such as shops, hotels and restaurants are spread throughout the Boulevard town. But the main commercial streets are Jawahar Lal Nehru Street, Ambalathadayar Madam Street and Rangapillai Street vertically and Chinna Suburaya Pillai Street, Bharathi Street, Mahatma Gandhi road and Mission street horizontally.

### **Hotels and restaurants**

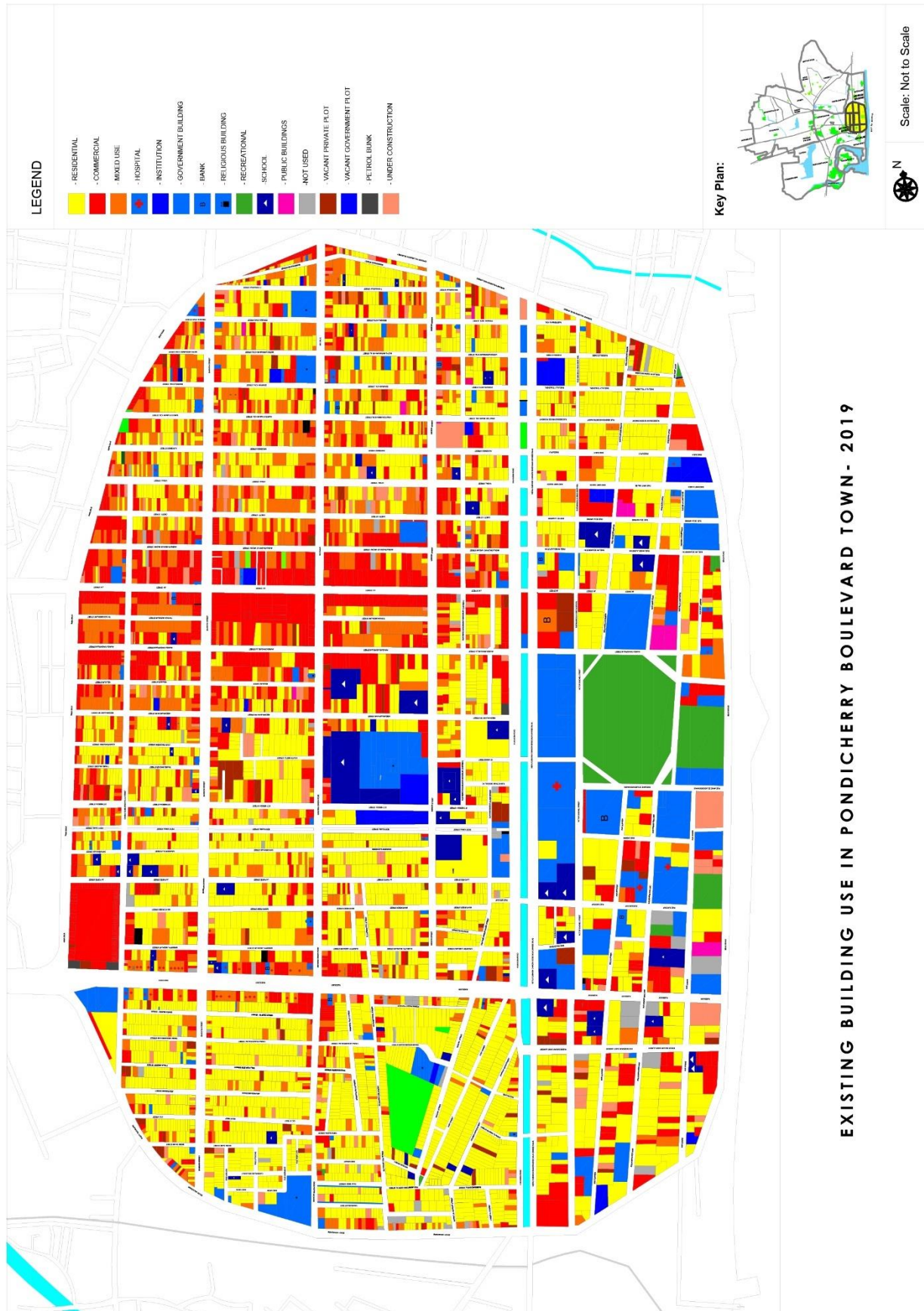
Large numbers of heritage hotels and restaurants are in the French quarter while the Tamil town has high number of low budget hotels and restaurants. From the mapping, it is identified that the town has approximately 191 restaurants and fast food shops, 137 hotels mostly with bars and 14 resto pubs. South Indian cuisine in the Tamil town and French and Continental cuisine in the French town adds to the unique blend of the cultural heritage of Pondicherry. But in recent times, pizza shops and lately waffle shops are proliferating throughout the town. While the French town is known for resto pubs, Tamil town is known for its low-cost alcohol shops.

### **Shopping**

Jawahar Lal Nehru Street is the main commercial spine of the precinct where one can see a wonderful mix of shopping establishments. These ranges from historic market, large clothing stores, branded showrooms and boutiques frequented by the locals. Franco Tamils who visit their home town once in a year do their shopping in the street but in recent years, the crowd is diverting to the nearby metropolitan city Chennai. The street is not so famous among tourists and is not a major tourist attraction. Nowadays, the street is used as a transit to the Boulevard town. Besides the formalised shopping, the pavements in Nehru Street are filled with hawkers. Apart from this, commercials are sprawling throughout Pondicherry which has split the shopping crowd to different areas. The Government of Pondicherry rents Crafts bazaar, a commercial space in Gandhi Thidal near the beach for commercial activities which has attracted the tourists and the locals alike.

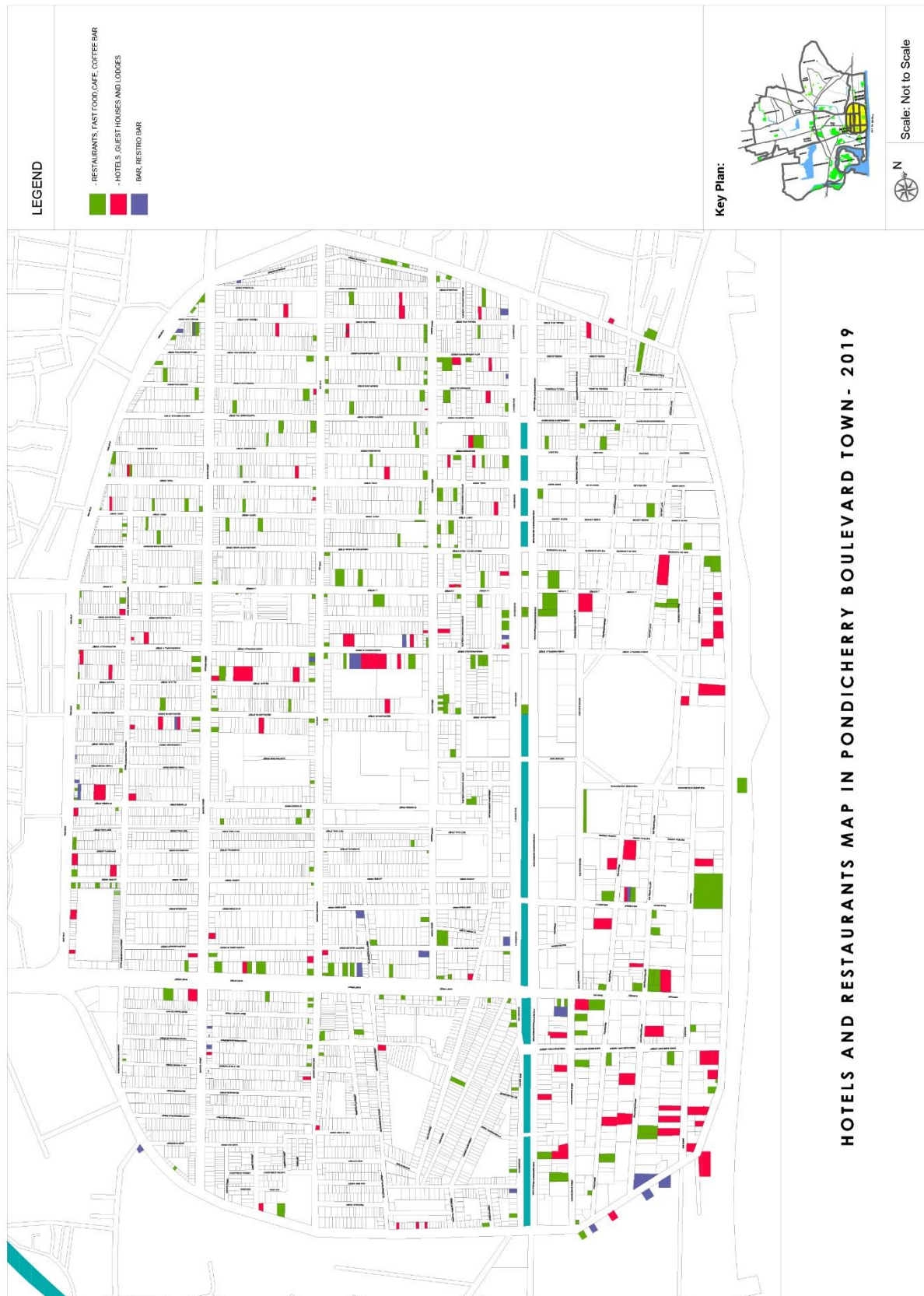
### **Institutional buildings**

Boulevard town is filled with important institutional buildings. These include Ashram buildings, church buildings, schools, Pondicherry museum and administrative buildings. Predominant of the administrative buildings, Ashram and church buildings are in the French town while some schools and convents are in the Tamil town.



*Fig 3.3: Building use of the Boulevard town was done as a part of the research. Image credit: INTACH Pondicherry interns and author*





*Fig 3.4: Hotels & restaurants map of the Boulevard town was done as a part of the research. Image credit: INTACH Pondicherry interns and author*

## Religious buildings

There are many religious buildings in the Boulevard town. Infact, the layout itself was planned as Hindu quarter, Muslim quarter and Christian Quarter as explained in the history. These include Vedapureeswarar temple, Sri Varadaraja Perumal temple and Kanniga Parameswari temple in the Hindu quarter. The Hindu quarter also has many smaller temples scattered throughout the area. Kutpa mosque, Ahamdaiyaan mosque and Meerapalli in the Muslim quarter and Notre Dame Church, Cathedral Church and Sacred Heart Basilica in the Christian Quarter are important religious buildings in the area.

## Heritage Buildings

Boulevard town is known for its distinct Tamil and French architectural styles. Heritage buildings are classified into three grades: Grade I buildings generally form important landmarks in the precinct, Grade II A and Grade II B are buildings of local importance possessing special architectural and aesthetic merit than heritage Grade I. Grade III buildings are buildings that possess architectural, aesthetic or sociological interest not as much as Grade II but they determine the character of the locality.

As per the listing of INTACH Pondicherry, Boulevard town had 1,807 heritage buildings. In 2005, it reduced to 1,173 buildings and by 2008, few more buildings were added to the list increasing the total to 1,184. However, in 2010, after changing the listing classification as per the recommendation of the Ministry of Urban Development, the number was pruned to

980 buildings.

In 2018, the number of heritage buildings are only 488. [Source: Heritage buildings listing book, Unpublished, INTACH Pondicherry].

The concept of heritage in the Boulevard town has two sides to it: one is the well conserved French heritage, which attracts a lot of tourists with its European vibe, and the other is the quickly disappearing Tamil heritage. The French buildings are better conserved due to several reasons:

- The residents in the French town are aware and proud of their heritage.
- Predominant of the buildings in the French town belong to Ashram and hence conserved.
- The rest of the owners have converted them into hotels, restaurants and boutiques to attract tourists and make money.

The frequent posts in local Facebook pages mostly depicts and glorifies French town as Pondicherry. The French heritage is hailed and preserved whereas the Tamil heritage is succumbing to the developmental pressure. While the French town has become the main cultural attraction for tourists, the Tamil town has become the service area with low cost food and accommodation options.

The heritage buildings in the Tamil town are demolished under the following reasons.

- Financial constraints to conserve the building
- Asset partition
- Growing needs of the family

- Lack of awareness about heritage buildings
- Safety reasons

Though the Pondicherry government and INTACH Pondicherry are doing a commendable job in restoring the heritage buildings, there has been very less focus on urban conservation and management.

The Pondicherry government has added 21 government owned buildings to the protected heritage buildings list and it has also set up a State Level Heritage Conservation Committee (SLHCAC) to protect and conserve the cultural heritage of the town. The SLHCAC committee drafted a set of new heritage regulations under the Town and Country planning bye-laws, which is the first step towards conserving the heritage of the town. But still these newly drafted regulations do not define the benefits that the heritage building owners will receive by protecting their heritage assets, which is a drawback as heritage regulations can be successful only if they are sympathetic to both the parties. Though the SLHCAC exists, it is not yet activated which is also one of the main reasons for the loss of heritage buildings.

### **Public Spaces**

There is shortage of public open spaces in the precinct. Bharathi park in the French town and Botanical garden in the periphery of Boulevard town are the only green space. There is a small green space in the Muslim quarter but is not open to the public. Apart from the two public gardens, the promenade beach serves as an important recreation space all through the day.

Boulevard town is in dire need of

upgradation of public spaces. There are no pedestrian pathways and proper street furniture's, even though the town is flooded with tourists in the weekends. The public spaces are in worst condition because of lack of design-based solution, lack of maintenance and balance between the needs of the stakeholders.

The streets also lack trees especially in the commercial and mixed-use streets since the trees are considered to hide the signboards and displays of the commercials.

Apart from the two-public gardens within the precinct. Anna Thidal in the west of the Boulevard is an open space where exhibitions and other fares take place in the town. But most of the times, the space is unused.

### **Parking**

To understand the daily users of the historic town, commercial establishments were studied in detail. Approximately 2213 employees are working in the study area. 88% of employees come from outside the Boulevard town while 12% stay inside the Boulevard. 74 % of the employees commute through two-wheeler, 19% use public transport, 4% commute by bicycle and 3% come by walk. Alongside, 87% of the retail shop owners commute by two-wheeler, 9% by car, 2% by walk and 1 % by bus and cycle. From the survey, it is found that 43% of the shops load and unload the goods daily, 31% do it weekly, 23% do it monthly and 3% annually. Loading and unloading of goods daily coupled with extensive parking on either side is the main reason for traffic congestion in the town.



Another main problem is the lack of organisation as far as parking and traffic are concerned. Although the main commercial streets such as Jawahar Lal Nehru Street (J.N Street), Ambalathadayar Madam Street and Rangapillai Street are one-way, irregular parking and increasing number of vehicles reduce the road for movement. the Old jail in J.N Street is used for parking, but due to lack of management and maintenance, it is not used efficiently. According to the Smart city plan of Pondicherry, old jail in J.N Street is proposed to be a multilevel parking which will invite more vehicles to the town.

### **Existing Streetscape**

The streetscapes in the Boulevard town are chaotic due to varied users. Though the streetscape in the French town are beautiful than the Tamil town, the newly added pedestrian lights on the pavement in the French town are obstructing the pedestrians to walk on the pavement. The pavements too are not maintained well forcing the pedestrians to walk on the road. While the French town is gearing up for many beautification schemes, Tamil town lacks upgradation and maintenance of the streetscape. Despite many organisations especially the restaurants and hotels want to upgrade the area, and some have even added planters, paving and signage based on the needs has clearly added to the chaos. Hence it is essential that any proposal for the area must unify the precinct and be maintained by setting up strategies that holds the streets together and improve the quality of life for the people.

**Fig 3.5:** Protesters, traffic jam, vehicle parking and pedestrian pavement encroachment in J.N Street.

Image credit:

<http://bobbacaps.blogspot.com/2013/06/jun-4-13-alaska-city-of-anchorage.html>

**Fig 3.6:** National and international retail brands taking over the market in Nehru Street, the main commercial stretch of Pondicherry. Image credit: Sharan Pillai, 2018





**Fig 3.7:** Before demolition-2004. Restored heritage façade under the Asia Urbs program in 2004 by INTACH Pondicherry. Image credit: INTACH. **Fig 3.8:** After demolition-2018. Three heritage buildings which were part of the Asia Urbs program were demolished in the Tamil Town.

Owner of two heritage buildings revealed that a G+3 building will be constructed and will be rented out for commercial purposes. Another heritage building turned into a mixed-use building, a shop in the ground floor and residence in the first floor. Image credit: Sharan Pillai





**Fig 3.9:** Heritage building being demolished because of asset partition.  
Image credit: Sharan Pillai



**Fig 3.10:** Commercial establishments occupy the ground floor of buildings, while the first floor is occupied by residents. Image credit: Author





*Fig 3.11: Loading and unloading of goods in big trucks in the Boulevard town. This has resulted in 1. Traffic congestion and*

*pollution.2. Discouraged the growth of trees in the streets. Image credit: Author*





**Fig 3.12:** The French quarter of the Boulevard town has become a Disneyland for tourists with its European vibe. Image credit: [http://www.tripsandbooks.com/2014/11/pondicherry-architectural-split\\_8.html](http://www.tripsandbooks.com/2014/11/pondicherry-architectural-split_8.html)

**Fig 3.13:** Pizza shops in the same street in Tamil Quarter. Pizza shops have proliferated in the last five years, while the local creole cuisine, a blend of Tamil and French cooking styles is fast disappearing. Image credit: Author





*Fig 3.14: Pedestrian pathways encroached by both residents and commercial establishments with plantation, fencing, ramps and steps – citing safety from occupation of ‘strangers’, and to allow*

*entry of vehicles into building premises by the residents while the commercial establishments display their materials and sign boards to attract the customers. Image credit: Author*





**Fig 3.15:** *In the absence of effective public transit connectivity, there is a heavy reliance on two-wheelers. This has led to*

*1. Severe traffic congestion within the Boulevard Town 2. Encroachment of pedestrian footpaths for parking. Image credit: Author*





*Fig 3.16: Street filled with vehicles because of two-wheeler rentals. Image credit: Author. Fig 3.17: Traditionally Thalvarams were constructed to provide continuous shaded*

*walkways for pedestrians and to protect the building from sun and rain. Today predominant of the residents fence the pavement for privacy and safety reasons. Image credit: Author*



## Chapter 4

### Residents perception

Boulevard town slowly turning into a touristic commercial town has created pressure for the residents in all aspects of life. So, when the entire area, where everyone knew each other, and where life was calm with beautiful heritage buildings started to vanish to give birth to commercials, it was evident that the town has entered an out of context sprawl.

The purpose of this survey is to understand and assess resident's perception towards tourism and commercialisation which is impacting their quality of life. It is important to comprehend that Pondicherry's tourism is dependent not only on the natural, cultural and culinary resources, but also on the public's goodwill. The friendliness of the residents towards tourists is essential for a successful tourist's destination.

Since the tourist's spot being a mixed residential area, an open dialogue and cooperation with the residents is required to identify and mitigate the negative impacts of tourism.

#### Method

A questionnaire was developed with considerable study on literature and previous research. Initially, in the month of May and June, resident's perception was collected randomly from different streets often from known and referred people. The random streets were Badar Sahib street, Sangardasse street, Thiagaraja street, Vysial street, Vellala street, Rangapillai street, Moracin street, Aurobindo street and Suffren street. Later more resident's perception was collected from Vysial street, Suffren street, Labourdonnais street, Romain Rolland street, Nehru street, St.

Therese street, Vellala street and Kazy street while doing the Building Use survey. The total number of participants for the resident's perception survey was 116.

The responses are summarised in the following sections of the report in a series of charts and graphs. The reader is encouraged to study each of these charts as not all insights are expressed in the report narrative.

#### Description of respondents

Approximately 51%, one in two residents are residing in the Boulevard town for more than five generations. Predominant of the participants were male (56%), followed by female (39%) and in some places it was a group discussion where the entire family participated in the survey.

When asked do you want the Boulevard town to be designated as a heritage area, 77 % of the residents responded positively. This shows that they are proud about their place and are happy to display their heritage to the world. The rest hesitated due to the stringent rules and regulations that might come along with the heritage tag.

Most of the residents (94%) have never participated in the local government programmes and surveys. 54% of the respondents were aware that Pondicherry is going to be developed as a 'Global Tourist Destination' under the Smart city scheme.

#### Residents impression on tourism

Predominant of the residents (84%) were not involved in tourism directly and indirectly. From the survey, it is found that 49 % perceived tourism as an opportunity, 17 % felt it as threat and 34% were neutral. This shows the grey shades of tourism

where half of the response is favourable, and the other half is more delicate.

The assessment of the data finds that 60% of the people are already feeling the heat of commercialization and tourism pressure in the area.

Though 40% of the people told that we don't feel any pressure, many residents opened different issues that they face which were in alignment with the commercial and tourism pressure which shows that predominant of the people are feeling the heat of the current developments.

### **Social Impacts**

Social Impact has no single, universally accepted definition. However, its content and subject matter consist of distinguishable components that consistently appear when the SIA is implemented. According to the **International Association for Impact Assessment**, "Social impact assessment includes the processes of analysing, monitoring and managing the intended and unintended social consequences, with positive and negative, of planned interventions and any social change processes invoked by those interventions". Social impacts of urban plans refer to various factors such as quality of housing, local services and living environment, experienced health and security, people's way of life, gentrification or segregation, conditions of transportation etc. <sup>12</sup>

Here, I have discussed the social impacts of tourism and commercialization in terms of business trend, quality of life and

displacement.

"Tourist's come and ask whether they can stay at our home for a night since they couldn't find accommodation" said a resident in Ambalathadayar Madam street.

Last year, many tourists stayed in the Bharathi park without getting accommodation during the Easter holidays. With the increasing need for accommodation the government wanted to proliferate the number of hotels in the town. But trying to fit all the hotels and restaurants in the Boulevard town has resulted in commercial and tourism pressure.

The assessment of the data finds that 41% of the residents are happy that Pondicherry is growing as a tourist's destination. Though 42% have agreed that city environment is comfortable and peaceful to live in the Boulevard, 46% have strongly agreed that tourism and commercialization are disrupting their quality of lives.

Unlike Venice and Barcelona, where tourism is the main economy for several decades, Pondicherry is a growing tourist destination. Almost half of the population is already feeling the heat of the pressure. This shows the need to take appropriate steps to strike a balance between the residents and tourists.

The analysis shows that there is very little social connection between the residents and the tourists. Half of the participants felt that they don't have anything to do with tourists.

When asked whether the architectural heritage of the town is being protected because of tourism, the highest number of people told neutral in terms of protecting

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<sup>12</sup> The Sustainable City III, N. Marchettini, C. A. Brebbia, E. Tiezzi & L. C. Wadhwa (Editors) © 2004 WIT Press, www.witpress.com, ISBN 1-85312-720-5



the heritage of the town. Many residents felt the need to protect the heritage buildings in Pondicherry. The residents expressed their anger that Mairie building, one of the important landmarks of the Boulevard town collapsed due to neglect.

Though the town is facing numerous pressures because of tourism and commercialisation, considering the opportunities, 12% and 41% strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they are happy to share the infrastructure with the tourists equally. This shows the warm and welcoming nature of the residents.

More than the increasing number of tourists, the residents were worried about the quality of tourists coming to Pondicherry. They perceive that domestic tourists were degrading the quality of life in the neighbourhood.

Below are the narratives of the residents about tourism, commercialization and change in their neighbourhood.

“We can’t accept illegal atrocities and nuisance in the name of tourism”. (Padma Priya, 41)

“Foreign tourists visit Pondicherry to know about our culture and heritage, but domestic tourists are visiting Pondy for cheap liquor and this is not healthy tourism. We can’t accept any more commercialisation”. (Mahadevan, 70)

“Tourists come to Pondicherry for cheap liquor. Pondicherry is not pedestrian friendly. Electric shuttles should be introduced. Pondicherry should grow as a tourist destination only if the growth is sustainable. Commercials should be kept out of heritage town. New year celebrations are the worst in Pondicherry. Tourist’s

drink make noise and create menace in the late night during the New year eve. Since liquor is the main source of income of Pondicherry, no changes can be expected”. (Andre Vairon, 35)

“Some tourists show a racist attitude to the staffs” said a restaurant owner.

For some residents, the cultural changes caused by tourism is the major threat. One of the residents said that she even warned the tourists for their attire. Though residents warning the tourists about their personal choices is intimidating, the background of Pondicherry needs to be analysed. Unlike Goa, Pondicherry is a small conservative town and hence the appalling changes for the past few years have annoyed the residents.

Extensive commercialisation is disintegrating the urban fabric and communal value in the heritage area. The loss of communal value induces displacement pressure. This is related to the fact that residents are secluded from the neighbourhood and support that social networks provide. As authors note (Bridge, 2002: Fullilove, 2016), a neighbourhood provides practical relations which contribute to the security, wellbeing and survival. Problems arise when these relations are broken. This view is shared by some of the residents.

“Nowadays, children couldn’t play in the streets since the streets are filled with vehicles and there is no safety. Lots of new people have occupied the street and there are only three or four known families”. (Kumutham B, 36)

“During weekends, tourists park in front of our gate and we cannot come outside. Weekends have turned as nightmare”. (Dr. Kiran, 62)

“Pedestrians are not all respected. Tourism is fine if it is managed well. Pondicherry does not have good public transport system. During the French period, Boulevard town was maintained as a residential area. But current unplanned development is creating a lot of threat”. (Vaidyanathan, 69)

“The neighbourhood is giving me an isolated feeling. I couldn’t connect with my neighbourhood anymore. The haphazard vehicular movement have caused an unsafe neighbourhood and it is frightening to go out alone. (Marayanasamy, 73)

Along with the built fabric, social fabric plays an important role in sustaining a neighbourhood. Community networks are a basic thing and loss of community life ultimately adds to the loss of place causing displacement.

### **Environmental Impacts**

According to United Nations Environment Program (UNEP),” Environmental sustainability means conserving and managing resources, especially those that are not renewable or precious in terms of life support. It requires action to minimize pollution of air, land, water, biological diversity and natural heritage”.

While tourism can bring in employment, enterprise development, support conservation of tangible and intangible cultural resources, it can equally bring adverse effects by degrading the physical environment and disruption to wildlife. It can exert pressure on host communities, compete for the use of resources, notably land and water and be a significant contributor to local and global pollution.

Here I have discussed environmental impacts in seven broad categories.

- Solid Waste Management
- Air pollution
- Vandalism
- Noise pollution
- Traffic congestion
- Social spaces
- Trees

After the Swacch Bharath scheme, 55% of the residents agreed that solid waste management is good in the Boulevard area. Still the residents in the St. Therese street and Rangapillai street complained that huge amount of garbage is dumped in the streets by the commercials and there is no restriction for the commercials to dispose their garbage. Since the garbage is collected only during the early mornings and late nights, the garbage thrown away by the commercials in between lies throughout the day, creating nuisance for the residents.

Predominant residents agreed that the air pollution, noise pollution and traffic congestion are high in the Boulevard. Many of the residents felt traffic rules should be enforced strictly.

The main environmental impact that most of the residents complained was traffic congestion. 65% of the residents felt that traffic congestion is very high in the Boulevard town because of tourists.

Tourists using unsustainable transport options such as renting two wheelers and using cars in the heritage area and loading and unloading of goods by the commercials are the main reasons for traffic congestion in the heart of the town.

“Tourists vehicles are creating traffic and menace in the town as they don’t know about the routes here. Events in the

Promenade beach during the weekends are too noisy”. (Sridharan, 62)

“Traffic is the main problem. Due to many whole sale traders, big lorries block the whole street and are creating congestion”. (Kamalam, 52)

There is no restriction for vehicular honking resulting in unnecessary honking in the town. Noise pollution is mainly caused by vehicles and commercials such as restaurants, fast food and plywood shops. Most of the fast food shops in the town use the pavement for cooking, creating smoke and noise. Plywood shops use the pavement to cut their materials, resulting in high decibel of noise in the neighbourhood. Hence the Boulevard town experiences noise throughout the day.

Though air pollution is considerably less than the cities nearby, 76% of the residents felt that air pollution is high in the town. This is primarily because of constant vehicular movement in the streets.

As far as vandalism is concerned, 64% of the residents agreed that vandalism is very low in Pondicherry. But residents in the French town complained about chain snatching and harassment mainly because these streets lack enough lighting and are deserted after 9 pm.

“I was harassed twice in the same street when I was closing my shop around 9 PM. There are no cameras or a better support system for the protection of women. Therefore, nowadays I am closing my shop by 7 PM itself” said a shop owner in Suffren Street.

58% of the residents felt that trees are not maintained well in the neighbourhood. Trees are obstructing the view of the display boards of the commercials. Hence

most of the trees are cut or are not allowed to grow.

Most residents felt neutral in terms of maintenance of the social spaces. While tourists’ areas such as French town and Promenade beach are very clean, the old market and the surrounding streets need more maintenance.

Below are the narratives of the residents on the environmental impacts of tourism and commercialisation.

“Big Lorries are disturbing our life, we couldn’t take our vehicles out. Loading and unloading should be strictly regularised” said a resident in Vellala street.

“Late night music and disco’s in the nearby hotels are disturbing our sleep. A new hotel is being developed in the opposite plot. We are very much worried about the disturbances it would create” said a resident in Suffren Street.

Many residents complained about alcoholics causing disturbance in the neighbourhood.

“Tourists and locals are drinking in the pavement and inside the cars. There is no safety near our residence and we stopped going out in the weekends” said a resident in Canteen street.

“Trees are cut by the commercials so that lorries can get inside the streets. Trees are not maintained and checked periodically. When smart meters are made compulsory, why are trees not made compulsory in all the streets?” asked a shop owner in Nehru street.

One of the major environmental issue in the

town is sewage running in the storm water drains in the street. This is not caused by the tourists but the residents themselves. Many residents have still not connected their sewage to underground drainage system. This drainage openly flows in the Grand Canal and has the potential to cause an epidemic.

“Franco Pondicherrians (Pondicherrians who live in France) don’t maintain their buildings and also don’t connect their buildings to underground drainage system even after many notices.”. (Veeneethra, 24)

Many commercials such as fast food shops, restaurants and lodges let the waste in the storm water drain which adds to the chaos in the heritage area.

### **Economic impacts**

United Nations of Environment and Development defines economic sustainability as “Generating prosperity at different levels of society and addressing the cost effectiveness of all economic activity. Crucially it is about the viability of enterprises and activities and their ability to be maintained in the long term”.

While the positive economic impacts are increased expenditure, creation of employment, increase in labour supply and increase in standard of living, the negative impacts are increase of real estate, failure to attract tourists, inadequate capital and lack of alternative investments. Tourism creates job opportunities, but majority of the jobs are tertiary jobs. Hence it doesn’t dramatically improve the standard of living in the town which is reflected in the survey.

Considering the growth of tourism

amenities in the Boulevard town, the survey was conducted to understand how much the residents are benefited through tourism.

84% of the residents told that their income is not dependent on tourism. But predominant residents strongly agreed that the business trend has changed in Pondicherry.

56% and 16% have strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that tourism has increased their income. 86% of the residents felt that tourism has increased the cost of living in the Boulevard town.

73% of the residents strongly agreed that tax revenue generated by tourism is not benefitting the residents.

“The timings of the business in the area has changed. Previously, the business timings were 9 00 am – 2 00 pm and 4 00 pm – 9 00 pm. But nowadays, the shops open by 10 30 in the morning and close by 10 30 in the night. More commercials have led to more competition.” (Santhaseelan, 30).

New conceptual and themed restaurants are popping every month in the heritage area. But many of these restaurants shut down after a short period of time due to unproportionate economy. Pondicherry being a weekend tourist’s destination, most restaurants are inactive during the week days and are active only during the weekends. Abundant restaurants, especially the ones opened in the residential areas couldn’t cope with the competitive market and are closed after a period. In the same place, another new restaurant is opened which is shut down after few months and the cycle continues. This shows that not every place in the Boulevard town brings in

economy. Some are better to be left as residential to maintain the sustainability and integrity of the area.

“Tourism has increased the cost of living in the Boulevard. The rents have gone high and restaurants are expensive than the metropolitan city Chennai.” told a resident in Gorimedu.

### **Conclusion**

Several conclusions can be drawn from this study. Though there are lot of issues in the area, residents in the Boulevard town showed great attachment to the place. They were proud about being a Pondicherrian and 98% people strongly agreed that they have an emotional attachment to the place.

First, several issues have been evaluated as a problem area and chief among them are traffic congestion, noise pollution, open sewage, disconnected neighbourhood, increasing prices and proliferating commercials.

Second, predominant residents (82%) felt that there are enough commercials and hence commercial growth should be restricted in the Boulevard town.

With this said, more than 60 % of the residents perceive that tourism and commercialisation are disrupting the quality of life in the neighbourhood.

Third, although tourism is causing lot of issues, many residents expressed support for tourism. But 53% of the residents felt that existing tourist's population is abundant and increasing the number of tourists will only aggravate the issues in the town.

Overall, the residents perceived tourism as an opportunity and are ready to welcome tourists. But they also felt the need for healthy tourism, sensitive developments and better management of the area.

These results inform us the process to prioritize a series of problems that needs a sustainable strategy. Community network and bonding are major components to conserve the heritage area for the future generations. Therefore, constant effort is required to manage and where possible mitigate the negative impacts of tourism that will protect the residents from displacement.

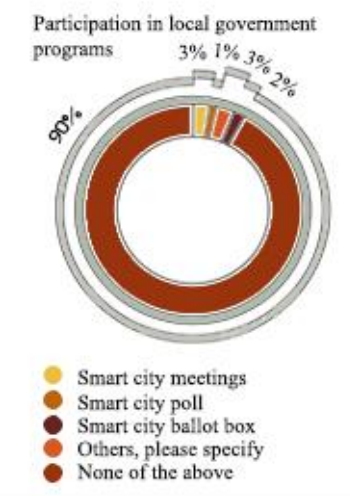
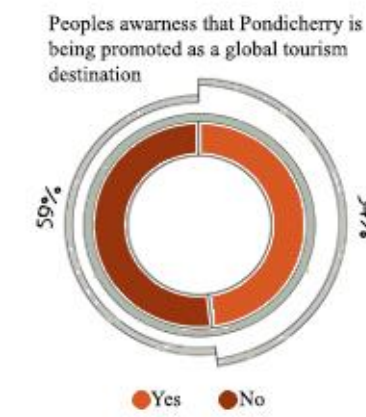
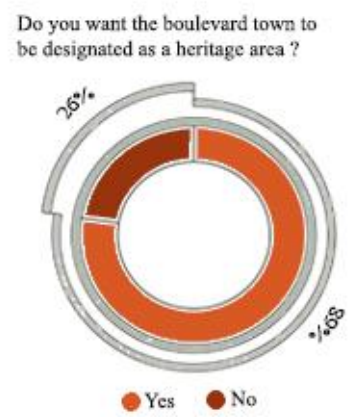
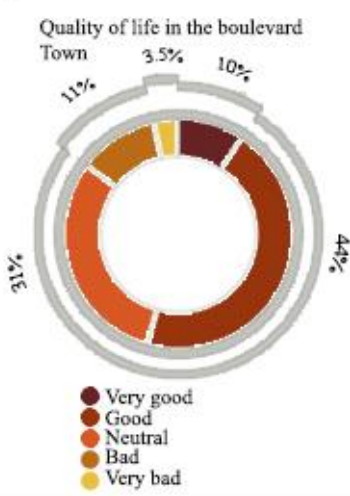
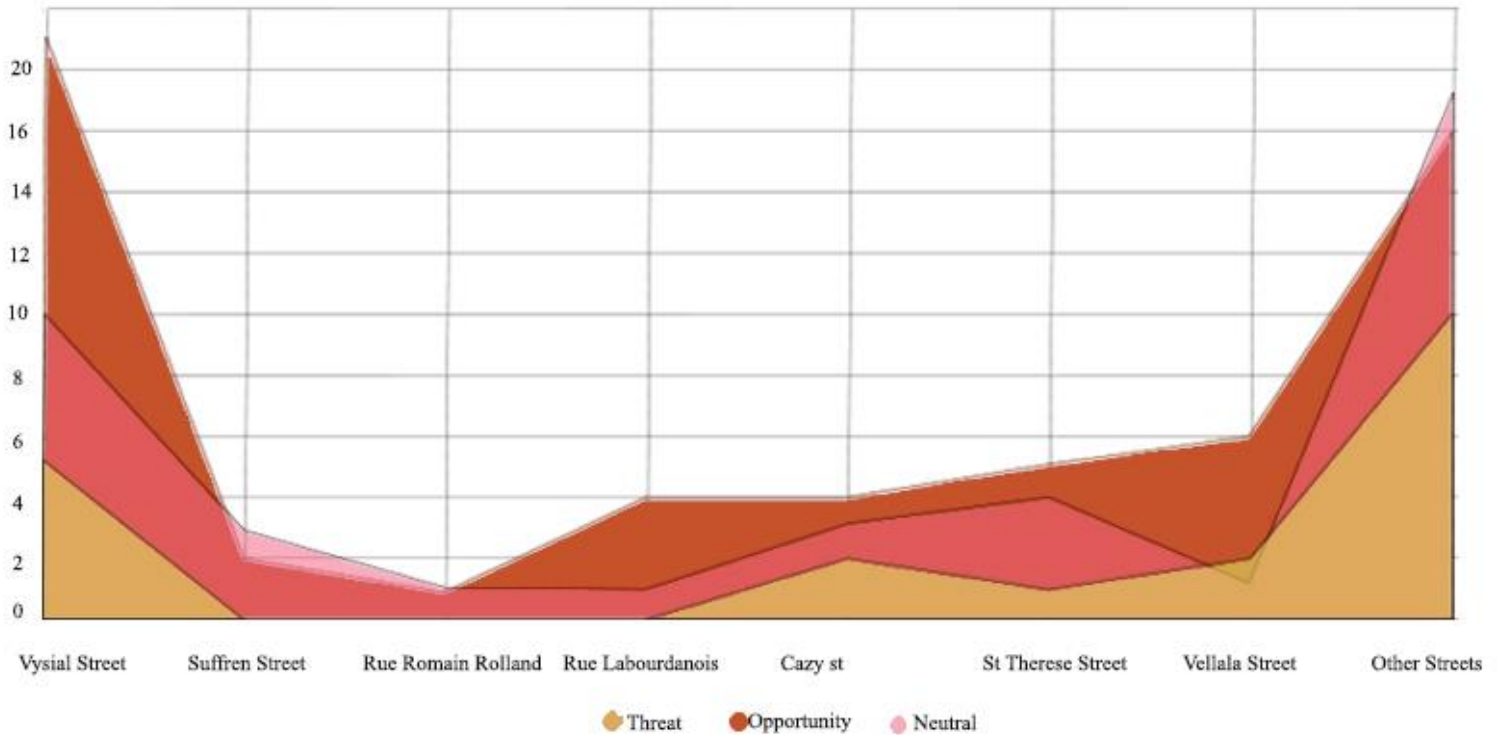


Fig 4.1: Residents perception tourism,  
Image credit: Author

### RESIDENTS PERCEPTION ON TOURISM

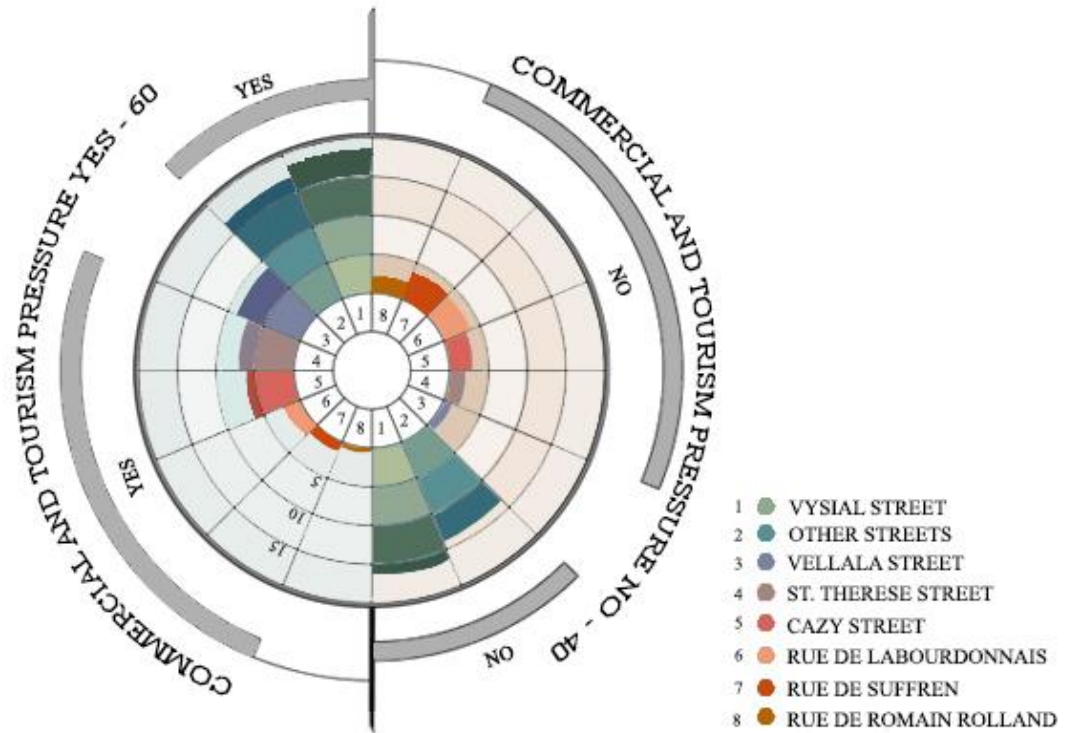
A residents perception was conducted with the residents of the boulevard area of pondicherry to undertand their perception of the current developments especially commercialization and tourism and its impact on their daily lives.

How do you view Tourism?

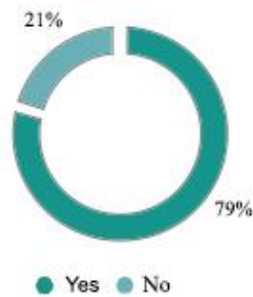


**Fig 4.2:** Commercial and tourism pressure in the area, Image credit: Pooja Srinivasan, Author

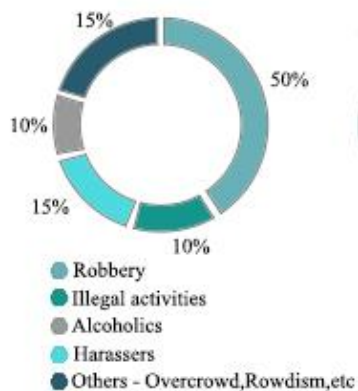
COMMERCIALIZATION AND TOURISM PRESSURE IN THE AREA



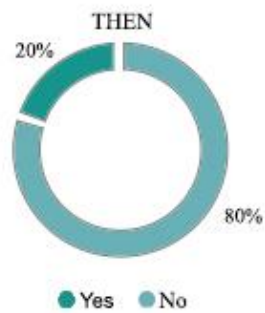
SAFETY IN THE AREA



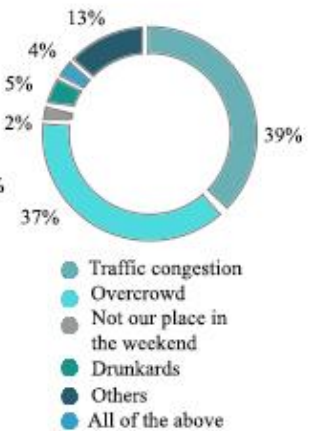
REASONS FOR UNSAFENESS



WEEKEND OUTINGS



REASON FOR AVOIDING WEEKENDS



**Fig 4.3: Social Impact, Image credit: Sharan Pillai, Author**

### SOCIAL IMPACT



**Fig 4.4: Environmental Impact, Image**  
credit: Author

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The environmental impact in the Boulevard town was studied based on seven different categories. Each category is represented by different colours. The shade and the size of the circle increases as the voice of the people increase in each statement.

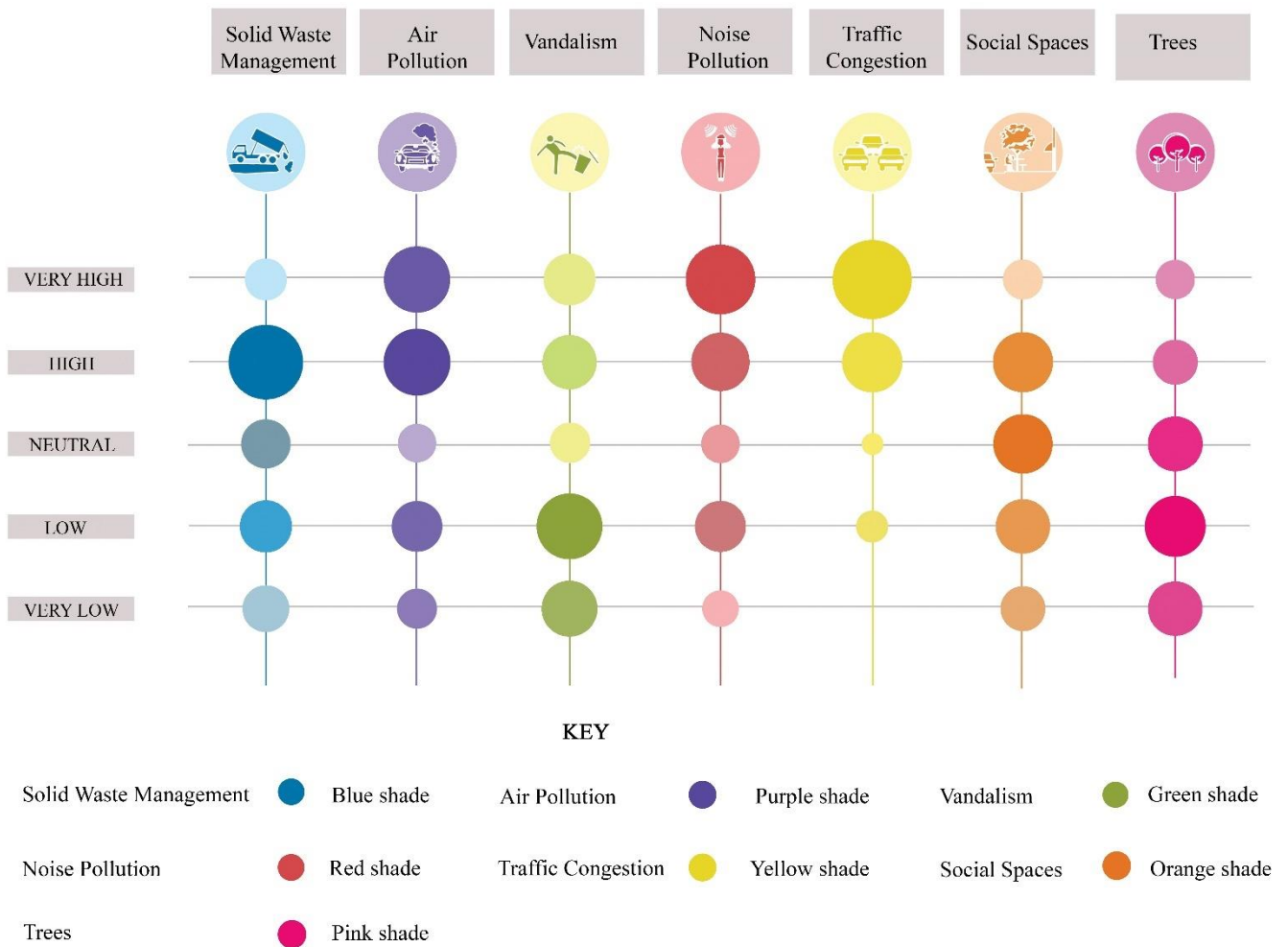
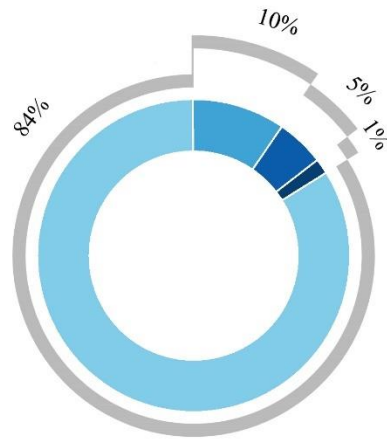


Fig 4.5: Economic Impact, Image credit: Achuthan, Author

### ECONOMIC IMPACT



● Directly 10% ● Indirectly 5% ● Both 1% ● None of the above 84%

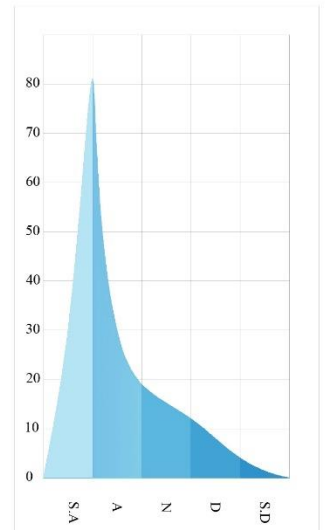
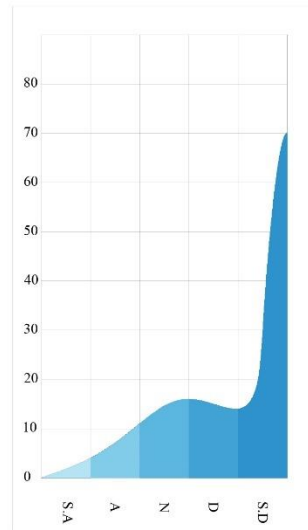
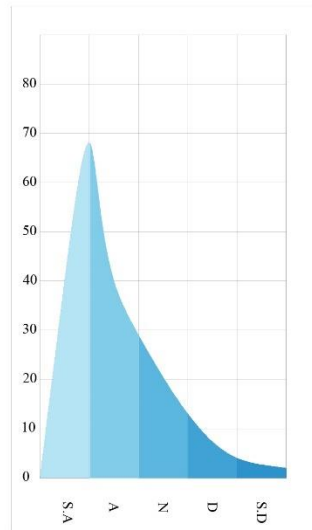
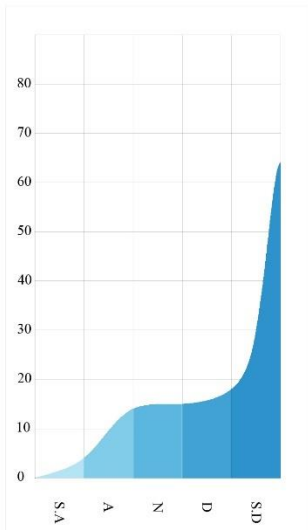
Residents benefitting through tourism

Tourism has increased my income

Tourism has changed the business trend in the Boulevard

Tax generated by tourism benefits the locals

Tourism has increased the cost of living in Boulevard



● strongly agree ● agree ● neutral ● disagree ● strongly disagree



## Tourist's perception

### Introduction

Heritage is the leverage of tourism in Pondicherry, but heritage tourism has still not become the mainstream tourism. Despite tourists visiting the heritage town, the intention to explore the heritage of the local community is very less. Instead the interest to visit beaches, parks, boat house and other leisure areas are high. This is mainly because here heritage is very private than public and there is very less awareness about the multicultural heritage of Pondicherry other than the French buildings. There are very few heritage buildings that are open to public, the rest are hotels, government administrative buildings, private residences or belong to the ashram community. During the survey, foreign tourists showed great interest in exploring the heritage of Pondicherry than the domestic tourists. Since domestic tourists make up to 92% (Source: Puducherry Tourism Statistics) of the tourist population, it is explicit that cultural heritage of Pondicherry has not reached the masses. Hence the survey explores the prospect of heritage tourism in Pondicherry.

### Method

Tourists perception survey was conducted in the month of January 2019 in the heritage town of Pondicherry. Two main tourist's attractions: Promenade beach and Bharathi Park were selected as the survey locations since one can notice all kinds of tourists there. Twenty-five domestic tourists and twenty-five foreign tourists were surveyed for the research.

The aim of the survey was

1. To find the purpose of travel, period of stay and the kind of trip.

2. To find the intended places of visit and understand whether they were aware of the cultural heritage of Pondicherry.

3. To understand tourist's interest in heritage tourism.

4. To understand the tourist's perception about the locals.

5. To rate the infrastructure facilities and environmental impacts in the town.

### Description of respondents

Most participants were youngsters: 59% were aged between 18 – 30, 17% were between 31-40 and 24% were more than 40. Foreign tourists were from France, Spain, UK, Canada and Australia while the domestic tourists were from Chennai, Bangalore, Mumbai, Delhi and Secunderabad.

Foreign tourists who participated in the survey had varied backgrounds: retired old tourists who were in a group, financial advisor, journalist, librarian and entrepreneurs. Whereas domestic tourists had a similar background, a larger share of participants were working in MNC's or were students. Alongside a retired army personnel, a professor and a journalist participated in the survey. Predominant tourists are coming to Pondicherry for a leisure trip with friends or as lone travellers while only 25 % are coming with family. Fifty percent of foreign tourists have already visited the place while other fifty percent were visiting for the first time. Whereas 67% of the domestic tourists were first time visitors.

### Tourists impression on destination

When asked "Which places are you planning to visit?", foreign tourists planned to visit the heritage area, Auroville and beaches while domestic tourists planned to visit the beaches, Ashram, boat house, botanical garden, museum and French town. Both foreign and domestic tourists



showed interest in visiting the heritage town, but domestic tourist showed less interest in exploring the cultural heritage. Instead, French town became a selfie and a photoshoot spot.

58% of the tourists were planning to stay for two days while 21% planned to stay for a week and other 21% planned to stay for a month. Foreign tourists were planning to stay for a week or a month while domestic tourists were planning to stay only for two days.

Totally, 67% of the tourists were repetitive visitors. Most tourists (70%) were staying in hotels in which 43 % were staying in heritage hotels in the Boulevard town.

Overall, tourists felt safe in the town. But some tourists, especially women travellers felt unsafe because of alcoholics, harassers and robbery.

“Few alcoholics tried to take pictures of us” said few tourists from Mumbai.

In recent years, young women have started travelling in groups and as lone travellers. Hence the safety of women has become a significant need in tourist areas. There is 75% rise in women solo travellers from tier 1 cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Chennai. Hence creating safe tourist destination for women is the need of the hour.

Tourists liked the French town than the Tamil town due to its European vibe. They also felt that the locals were very warm and welcoming.

Preference to stay in the Boulevard town was high among both foreign and domestic tourists.

“Basically, it is very easy to travel to all the places when staying in the heart of the town” told a tourist from Bangalore.

When asked whether you have visited any heritage building, “We have not visited any heritage building but we want to visit the museum today, but the museum is closed” told few tourists on January 26.

Many tourists showed great interest to explore the heritage of the town but were not aware of the places to visit. The tourist’s bureau in the Promenade beach too does not provide heritage trail map to explore heritage destinations. Instead provides advertisement brochures and promotes private tourism businesses. Lack of appropriate marketing plays a huge role in boosting heritage tourism destinations.

Boulevard town has several museums such as Pondicherry museum, Bharathiar museum, Bharathidasan museum, Subbaya museum, etc. But only Pondicherry museum is frequented by the tourists. Location, promotion, attractive collections and objects have captured the attention of the tourists.

“Approximately 600 tourists visit during the weekdays and 3000 tourists visit during the weekend” said an official in the museum.

The other three museums are rarely visited and hence does not contribute to the socio-cultural and economy of the place. This is mainly because the exhibits are in local language and are not upgraded to attract tourist.

From the environmental impact assessment, traffic congestion and noise pollution were rated very high in the Boulevard town.

“Compared to Bangalore, there is no traffic congestion here. But the vehicular movement is very haphazard and there are no proper signages to direct the tourists” said a tourist from IT sector.

“Honking is too loud and is spoiling the experience of the place” asserted a tourist from France.

“The ambience of Pondicherry is exceptional, especially because of the heritage side. For me it is a place “Suspended on time”. Also, the locals of Pondicherry are very warm and kind” said a foreign tourist.

While parking facilities were rated poor, auto rickshaws and walk were the predominant mode of transport of the tourists. 23% hired motorbikes and 10% used cars. There was a general feedback that auto fares were high while motorbike hiring was flexible and cheap. Most tourists told they were ready to change to sustainable mode of transport if available.

46% of the tourists perceived that accommodation facilities were excellent, 26% rated good, 17% rated average and 2% rated poor and fair. Most tourists felt that food services were good and economical.

A large share of tourists wished to see the Boulevard town with consistent sidewalks, less honking noise, organised transport and less pollution.

“A tourist bureau at the bus stand would be of great help” said a domestic tourist. Some foreign tourists put forth ideas to preserve the heritage of the town. “Socio cultural associations can rent these heritage buildings at a nominal rate and can use them efficiently” said a tourist from France.

“Bad state of Tamil heritage buildings. Anarchic buildings should be limited, and heritage buildings should be preserved. More communication with the local community is required to conserve the heritage buildings”, said another foreign tourist.

## Conclusion

The study focusses on tourist’s perception about the town and its heritage. According to the survey, it is found that heritage tourism has still not become the main attraction for domestic tourists. Many domestic tourists did not have an itinerary and were the visiting the place as an adventure. Overall, tourists had a positive perception about Pondicherry and were willing to explore its heritage, unlike the residents who had a negative perception about the tourists. The survey finds that lack of management plan and effective tourism policies are the reasons for the negative impacts of tourism. Heritage tourism strategy is required to use heritage buildings productively and boost heritage tourism in the town. Tourism directly and indirectly brings economy to the region and has the potential to transform the area dramatically. Hence SDG’s play an important role in the tourism sector and should be incorporated in the tourism policy for sustainable tourism.

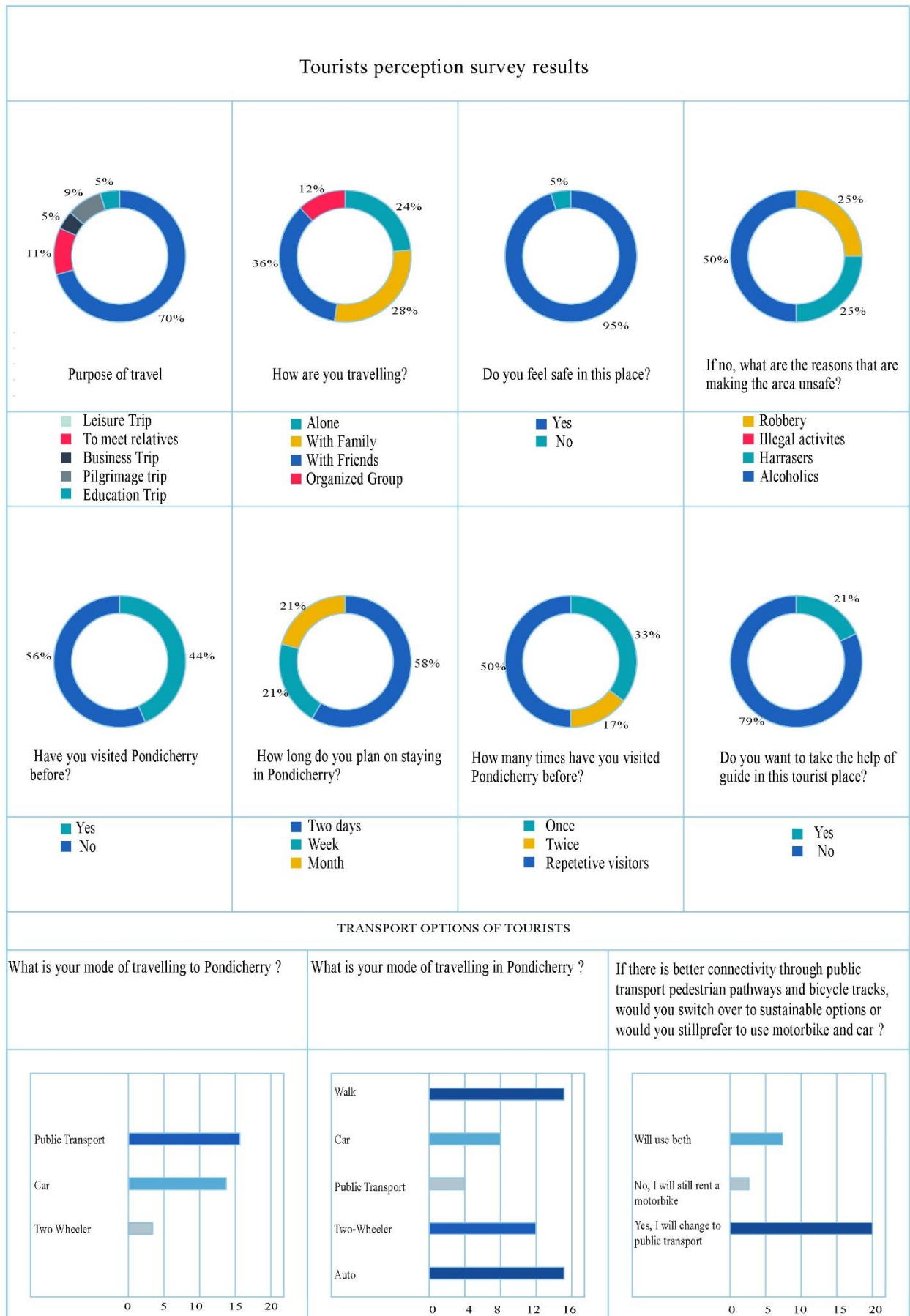


Fig 4.6: Tourists perception survey, Image credit: Somesh, Author

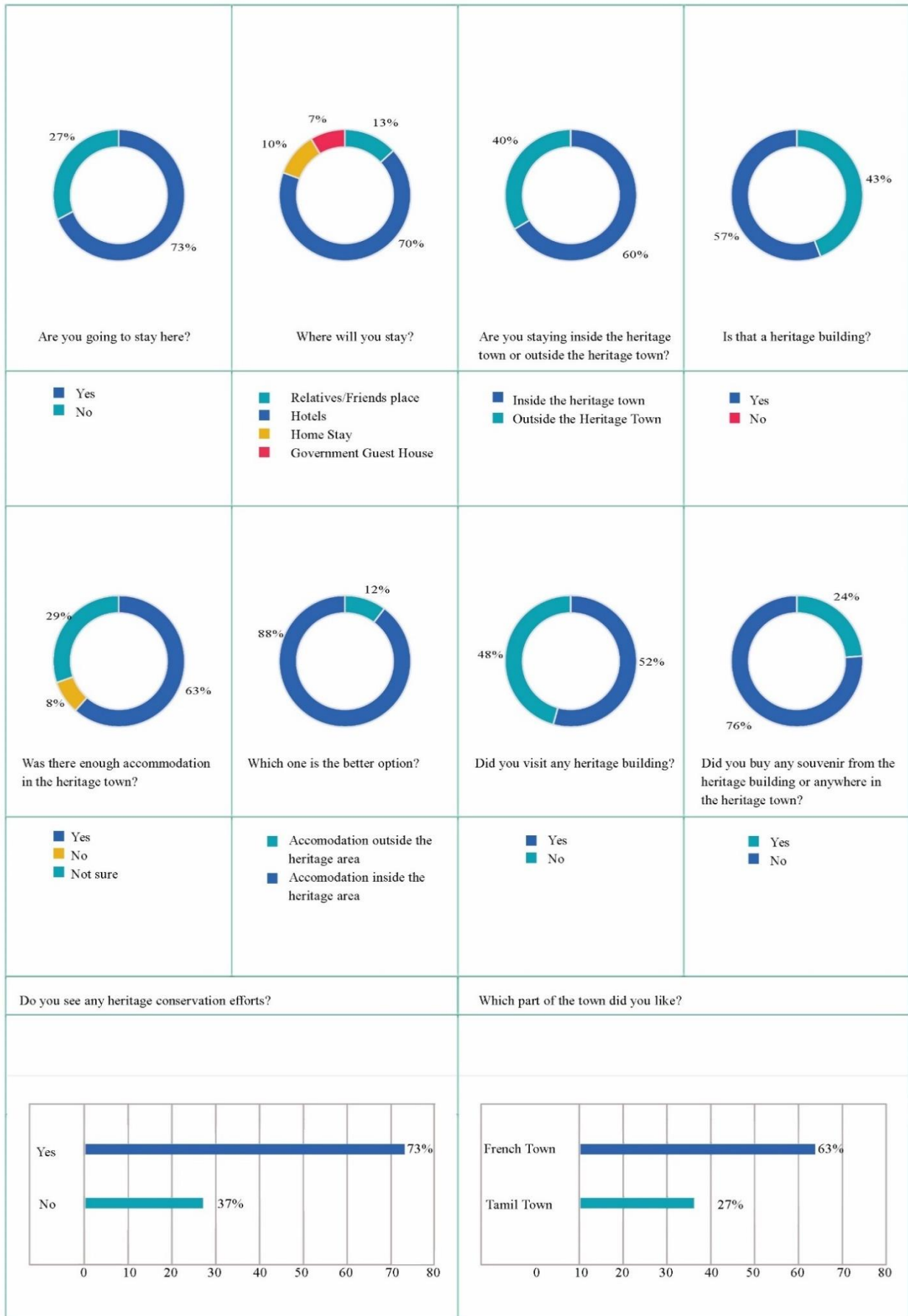


Fig 4.7: Tourists perception survey, Image credit: Somesh, Author



## **Heritage building owner's perception**

### **Introduction**

According to UNESCO's Historic Urban Landscape approach, civic engagement plays an important role in the conservation process. For heritage conservation and tourism to be successful, a sustainable effort is required by the local community and various stakeholders. Therefore, positive perception and awareness among the heritage building owners play an important role in conserving and managing the historic environments. Previously, heritage perception survey was conducted by INTACH Pondicherry for the Pondicherry municipality in 2003 for the Asia Urbs programme. After 16 years of gap, again the survey was conducted with an upgraded questionnaire, specifically concentrating on tourism. The survey results are compared between two periods to understand the changes in the attitude of the heritage building owners. The survey also finds the setbacks in conserving the heritage buildings and seeks to identify the possibilities of heritage building owners participation in cultural heritage tourism.

### **Methodology**

This qualitative survey was conducted in the month of January 2019. The sampling chosen was stratified random sampling. Respondents were heritage building owners living in the Boulevard town for generations. Due to time constraints and limitations in accessibility, only 35 heritage building owners were interviewed. Very few interviews were conducted in the French town for several reasons: most of

the buildings were already part of heritage tourism, some were locked since the owners were Franco Pondicherrians and predominant lot belonged to the ashram community. The respondents were chosen in all quarters equally in the Tamil town where heritage buildings are highly under threat which shows the contradicting scenario of conservation when compared to the French town in Pondicherry.

The main purpose of the survey was to evaluate the perception and awareness of the heritage building owners towards conservation and their inclination in cultural heritage tourism.

The aim of the survey was

- To find the importance of heritage preservation for the heritage building owners.
- To find the advantages and disadvantages of owning a heritage building.
- To understand the gaps in heritage conservation in Pondicherry.
- To identify the heritage building owners interest in heritage tourism.

### **Description of respondents**

Based on the survey, number of male respondents were higher than the female respondents. All the respondents were living in the Boulevard town for at least two generations. The interviewees were between 40 – 75 years of age. In terms of occupation of the interviewees, 31% were retired, 25% were doing business, 22% were working in private sector and 22% were home makers.



### **Heritage building owners perception on heritage conservation and cultural heritage tourism**

Most of the respondents (69%) were happy that their building is in the heritage building list 2019 listed by INTACH Pondicherry. But predominant owners (68%) acknowledged that very less importance is given to preserve the heritage buildings by the heritage building owners while 11 % accepted that less importance is given and 21 % felt moderate importance is given for heritage conversation.

Climatic aspects, emotional attachment and pride were found to be advantages of heritage buildings while maintenance difficulty and structural issues were found to be major disadvantages.

Asset partition and financial constraints were identified to be the main reasons for the demolition of heritage buildings.

“We are three brothers; hence we want to divide the plot into three. We have planned to demolish the building in two months”. (Kirubananda Gupta, 70)

40% of heritage building owners support conserving the heritage building through techniques such as adaptive reuse, while 35% were neutral about the idea because of financial constraints and the extensive time taken to restore a heritage building than the time taken to build a conventional building. Importantly, 25 % were negative about adaptive reuse.

Comparing with the previous survey, there is a large gap in people supporting the adaptive reuse. Previously, 65% of the owners supported adaptive reuse, but today

only 40% are supporting the idea. This is clearly a set-back for heritage conservation in Pondicherry.

“We are not getting right kind of materials in the market. Very few contractors have knowledge on heritage buildings and they are very expensive”. (Madavadasse, 75)

90% of the owners were not aware that INTACH Pondicherry provides guidance for heritage building owners to conserve their building and provides free façade design for owners who decide to demolish their heritage building.

Since 2005, INTACH Pondicherry provides free façade design for the heritage building owners who are obstinate in demolishing their building so that at least the streetscape is maintained. From the PPA records, approximately 640 buildings have received free façade design. But very few owners have executed it in their buildings. Out of context elevations, mostly coupled with Alco panels and glass have become the norm in the heritage area.

When asked about the future aspirations for the building, 19 % of the owners were planning to demolish their building later this year, 29% were planning to demolish in the future and 52% did not have any plans to demolish the building, at least not in the near future.

Predominant residents were not sure whether they want to be part of ancestral home owner association which would help heritage building owners to conserve heritage buildings, build a better network with other owners and represent their concerns to the government. In the previous survey too, residents showed little interest

to work as a community where 60% of the participants did not show any willingness to spend their time in organising local heritage groups.

95% of the respondents supported the proposal of special regulations for the heritage area to mitigate the negative impacts of tourism and commercialisation.

Majority of the owners (80%) believed that heritage tourism can bring in a lot of economy to the town. In the previous survey, only 59% believed that heritage tourism can boost the economy of the town. This shows a stark difference about the owner's awareness on heritage tourism.

Despite the awareness among the owners, only 59% were ready to be a part of heritage tourism, 23% were not sure and 18% did not want to be a part of it. Though 59% were ready to be part of heritage tourism, 67% out of them were not ready to rent their building for tourists stay or community activity. There were lot of inhibitions among heritage building owners to rent their building for home stays. There was a general notion that predominant tourists come to Pondicherry due to low price of IMFL (Indian Made Foreign Liquor) and hence it is not safe to let their building for tourists stay.

“We are ready to rent one room for heritage tourism but would only want family tourist to visit our place”. (Raju, 55)

“I don't prefer converting my home to home stay for tourists. But I would rather consider restoring my other property which is also a heritage building to a heritage hotel, but only if it is affordable”. (Ameen, 50)

“We might rent our place, but it depends on the future generation”. (Selvanathan, 70)

## **Conclusion**

Heritage conservation is given very less importance by the owners as opposed to the previous survey. To again create awareness, heritage building owners should be met in person for an effective result. Technical assistance, design assistance, incentives and abatements should be provided to encourage owners to conserve their building. Heritage tourism is not perceived positively by the owners because of the negative perception about the tourists and tourism in Pondicherry. Hence, heritage tourism should be discussed with the owners, mitigate the negative perception of tourism, address their needs and encourage them to be a part of it. To conserve heritage buildings, boost heritage tourism and to manage the heritage area, a dedicated team should be formed which consistently works on the above-mentioned tasks.

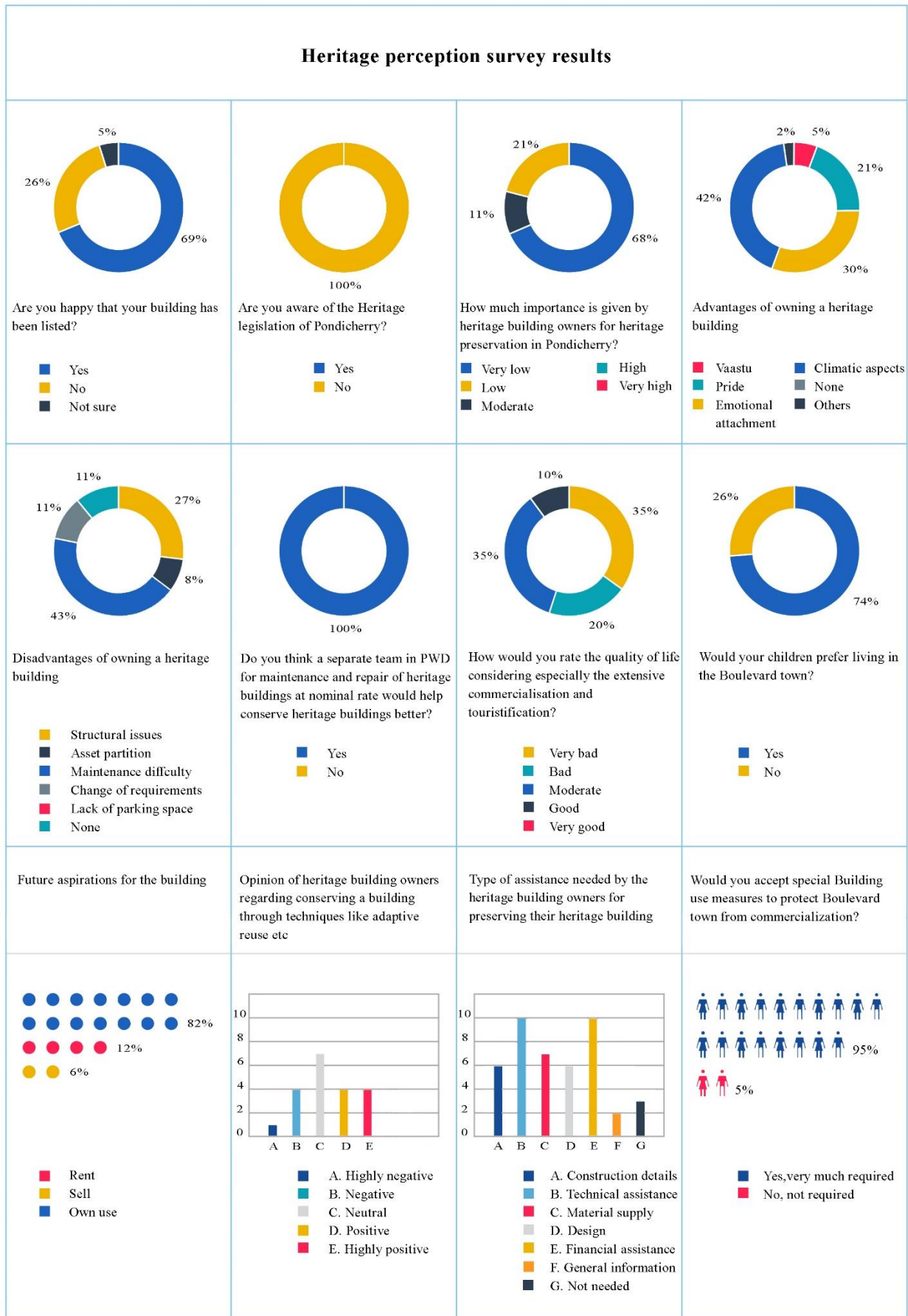
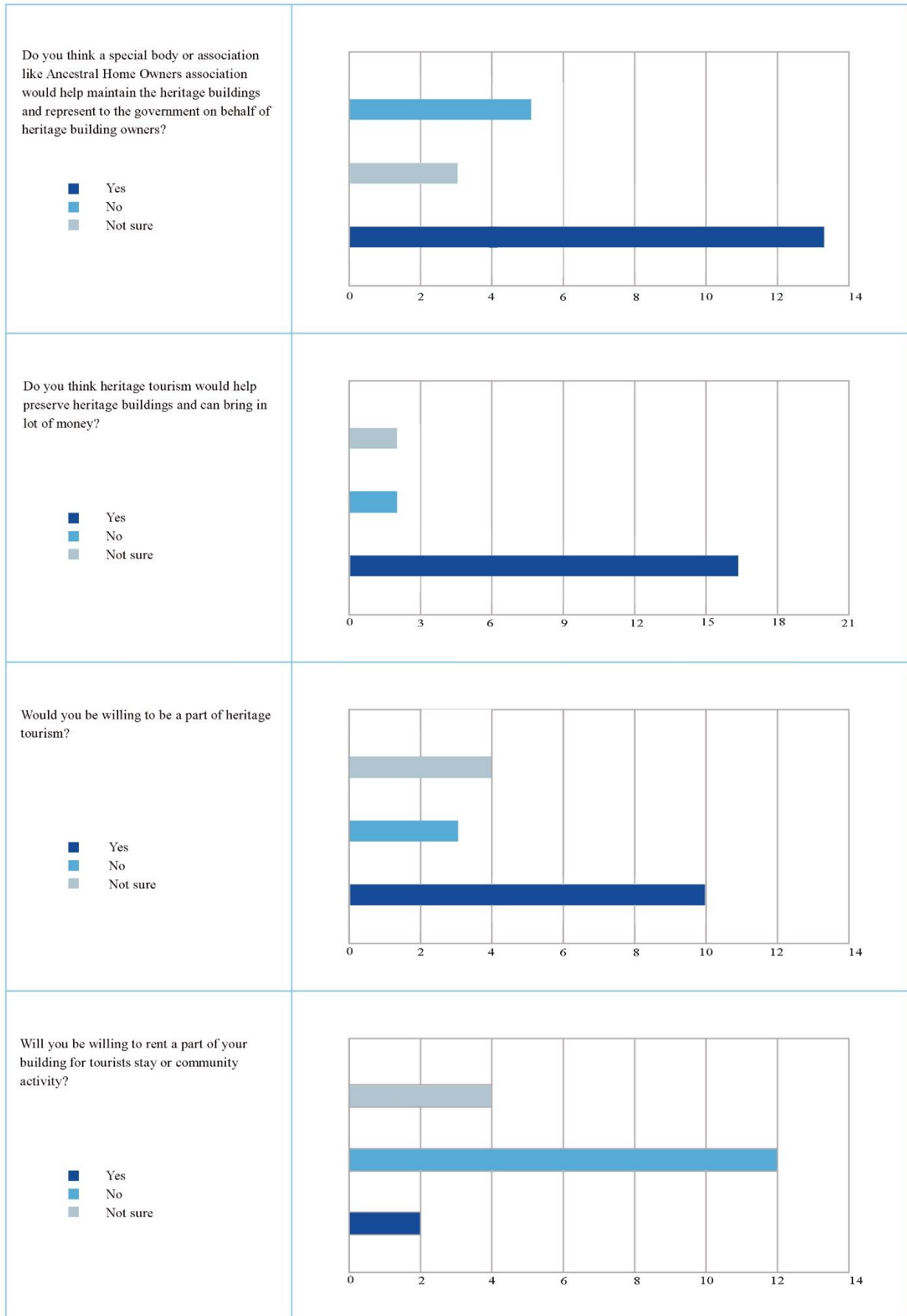


Fig 4.9: Heritage perception survey, Image credit: Author



**Fig 4.10: Heritage perception survey, Image credit: Author**

## Analysis of projects, plans and policies

### Introduction

In this chapter, Smart city projects, draft CDP 2036, draft tourism policy and heritage regulations are analysed to understand the gaps and contradictions in the proposals and address them in the strategy. To understand the issues, semi structured interviews were conducted with various stakeholders with open-ended questions. Anonymous interviewees from a wide spectrum accepted to take part in the research ranging from government officials to real estate developers. Most interviews lasted for an hour, except for few which ended due to time constraints and some were longer due to particularly engaging conversations.

### List of interviewees

Interviewee number	Role	Organisation
1	Chief Engineer (Planning and Implementation)	Puducherry Smart City Development Limited.
2	Director	Tourism Department
3	Manager	Tourism Department
4	Head of the department	Department of Tourism studies, Pondicherry University
5	Convener	INTACH Pondicherry
6	Urban Planner	French Institute of Pondicherry
7	Architect, Urban designer	Managing Trustee, Urban Design Collective, practicing architect and researcher
8	Document writer and real estate developer	Real estate consultancy
9	Real estate developer	Real Estate consultancy



## Pondicherry – A Smart City

When the Prime minister announced a competition to create 100 smart cities in India, Pondicherry was the first city to submit the nomination for Stage 1 of the ‘City Challenge’ competition in less than a month of launch of the Smart city mission. Oulgaret was proposed as a green field area, along with pan city initiatives such as city surveillance, public safety and smart solid waste management. But the proposal did not make it to the final list since it focused only on green field development. Hence the Puducherry municipality got selected instead with the mission to develop Puducherry with tourism and heritage, which made to the Smart city list because of its focus on urban regeneration.

The main agenda of the Smart city program in the Union territory is to make Pondicherry ‘A Global Tourist Destination’. Urban regeneration projects such as revitalization of Grand Canal, pedestrianization of Nehru street, restoration of government owned heritage buildings and the extension of beaches are some of the projects that would place Pondicherry in the top bucket list for tourists in the coming years.

The town is quickly adapting to tourist’s requirements with trendy cafes, restaurants and hotels in every nook and corner of the Boulevard. The Boulevard town is transforming into a cultural and commercial industry than a cultural heritage site.

## Smart city projects in the Boulevard town

<b>Tourism projects</b>	<b>Area</b>
Reconstruction of Mairie building	French town
Extension of Beach promenade	French town
Improvement of streetscapes in the heritage area	French town
Urban entertainment village at Old port	French town
Improvement of historic temples and churches	French town and Tamil town
Modernization of existing museum, virtual reality of history of Puducherry at museum	French town
Tourist amenities: Signage, Information kiosks, heritage/audio guided tour etc.	Boulevard town
Grand Canal development	French town and Tamil town
Redevelopment of Anna Thidal near the Anna square	Tamil town
Restoration and maintenance of Government heritage buildings	French town  Tamil town
Pedestrianisation of J.N Street	

<b>Education</b>	Area
Restoration and digitization of heritage education institutions	Tamil town and French town
<b>Economy and Trade</b>	Area
Development and improvement of market – Goubert Market	Tamil town
Development of Old jail complex to multilevel parking	Tamil town
<b>Transportation</b>	Area
Public transportation – E bus stops and smart buses	Boulevard town
Feeder system – E Rickshaws	Boulevard town
Iconic cycle track	Boulevard town

Proposals for energy, water supply, smart metering, sanitation, solid waste and storm water management are for the entire ABD area. Based on this, the interview was conducted, and every interview was started with a contextual open-ended question such as

- What do you think would be the future of the Boulevard town?
- What is your opinion of Tourism in Pondy?
- How will the smart city projects impact the lives of the residents in the Boulevard town?

Interviewee 1 revealed that “Smart city projects such as multi-level parking in J. N

street, development of Goubert market with parking and traffic management would reduce the congestion in the area. The increase of hotels and restaurants in the Boulevard town cannot be restricted. We are already in shortage of rooms. Therefore, increasing hotels and restaurants will boost the economy. Once beaches are developed, Boulevard town will naturally decongest”.

“Boulevard town will become more touristic and one can expect lots of restaurants and hotels in the future. But smart city projects would split the crowd and would reduce the congestion in the heart of the city” asserted Interviewee 2.

Pressure in the Boulevard town will decrease only if neighbouring areas are developed. If the Boulevard town is to accommodate more number of hotels and restaurants, how will it decongest the inner core?

“Yes, Mass Tourism has become a major issue all over the world. Now is the time to focus on “Sustainable and Responsible tourism”. The commercial and tourism pressure are because of place based value and is not only because of tourism. Carrying capacity assessment and effective strategies are required for better management of the area” said Interviewee 4.

From the smart city detailed project report, it is found that out of 16 projects, 7 projects are proposed in the French town, 3 projects in the Tamil town and 6 projects for the whole of the Boulevard area. However, only four projects have been started and all the four are in the French town.

Reconstruction of Marie building, Urban entertainment village at Old port,

improvement of streetscapes in the heritage area and restoration and maintenance of Government heritage buildings are the ongoing projects.

For several years, French town has been receiving major attention. Very few projects such as Bharathiar museum, Subbaiah museum and Bharathi Dasan museum have been completed in the Tamil town while the list of completed projects in the French town is long.

This is primarily because French town is a tourist attraction while Tamil town is considered like any other town in the country despite its rich cultural heritage.

Development of Goubert Market, multilevel parking in Old jail and redevelopment of Anna square are some of the projects proposed in the Tamil town. Though redevelopment of Goubert Market and Anna Square are required projects, multilevel parking in the old jail is still controversial.

Interviewee 5 said that “A beautiful heritage building has been demolished to build a multi-level parking. The multilevel parking in the heart of the town is only going to aggravate the issues instead of solving it”.

“Proposals were not analysed into detail when applying for the Smart city competition. The appointed Project management consultant will do a feasibility study and then the project will be executed accordingly” said Interviewee 1.

Before studying the project in detail, the old jail which is an integral part of heritage town has been demolished. Restoration was

never considered for the proposal. Restoration of old jail would not only have restored the history of Pondicherry but would have been a major tourist attraction.

The fact remains that the Boulevard town was designed for a small population and the streets were designed to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists. But today, each household owns at least two motorcycles. Pondicherrians use very less public transport since the area is small and using public transport as the mode of transportation is looked down upon and one’s social standing are highly associated. The tourists too do not have better options other than renting a two-wheeler to explore the city since the public transport consumes a lot of time to get around. This has increased the number of two-wheeler rentals in the Boulevard town. The streets are filled with parked vehicles, leaving very little space for people to move. Hence the multi-level parking will attract more vehicles to the heart of the town and potentially might not improve the environment.

For Pondicherry, the question of right parking ratio needs to be identified carefully. Smart city projects should discourage increased automobile use, but instead promote travel on foot, bicycle and public transport. Though E – Rickshaws, iconic cycle track and smart buses have been proposed, the projects are yet to execute.

One of the key components in the Smart city proposals was to decongest the heritage area: Extension of Promenade beach on either side and relocating the Government buildings in the Boulevard town to Swadeshi mill, which is half a kilometre

from the Boulevard town are some of the projects proposed to disintegrate the crowd from the city centre. Though the Promenade beach has not been extended, Dubrayapet beach which is away from the centre has been developed and now it is serving as new attraction for the tourists. But this long-term project of shifting all the administrative buildings outside the Boulevard town is still a vision.

Revitalization of Grand Canal, one of the iconic projects of Smart city proposals has been through several utopian proposals. The French government has showed great interest to rejuvenate the Grand Canal into a Tourist spot.

“The plan is to pedestrianize on both sides, creating shopping opportunities, beautification, façade improvement, mobility and finally turning into an ecological corridor from the city to the mangroves” said the Consulate General of France.

Under the Smart city project, beautification of Grand Canal is an ongoing project under the improvement of streetscapes. “One side will be pedestrianised and other side will be used for parking. New trees will be planted, and the pavements will be improved” said Interviewee 3.

While the Pondicherry Smart City Development Limited (PSCDL) and Agence Francaise Development (AFD) have an ambitious vision for the Grand Canal. The Department of tourism is also working on the same area in a different scheme. Lack of coordination between the departments has resulted in overwork of the same area.

Despite the Smart city projects focussing on decongestion, their proposals are indifferent to it. The focus on tourism development has pushed the residents needs behind. The common factor between the Smart city proposals and the draft CDP 2036 are that both the proposals have given very less importance to improve the quality of life of the residents.

### **Draft Comprehensive Development Proposal 2036**

According to the draft comprehensive development plan 2036, the French town remains the same without any changes, but the Tamil town has been proposed as a mixed commercial area without stating what kind of uses are allowed and not allowed in the area. The floor area ratio has been raised from 250 to 300 and permissible height is increased from 17 m to 20 m in the main commercial streets. The draft also states that French town as heritage zone while Tamil town is completely ignored. The needs of the town, especially that of the residents are not considered in the draft instead the Boulevard town is perceived only as an opportunity to boost the economy. The CDP 2036 also states that it aims to decongest the historic area by introduction of open spaces, decentralization of commercial activities while maintaining the inherent heritage. It also recommends new commercial centres in other areas to reduce the dependency in the Boulevard town. Boulevard town being the heart of Pondicherry is a congested area due to the concentration of large number of commercial activities, public facilities, administration offices and population leading to high degree of congestion. Hence



the CDP 2036 is contradictory to what it has identified and what it has proposed.

“Tourism in Pondicherry started booming only 15 years ago. People visited Pondicherry on their way to Chidambaram from Mahabalipuram. Projects such as Beach and Bharathi park revitalization coupled with adaptive reuse of heritage buildings attracted the tourists. This made Pondicherry a sure stop destination. Heritage conservation instigated tourism in Pondicherry. As far as conserving the heritage of Pondicherry, heritage regulations are in place since last year. But now the grave concern is the draft comprehensive development plan 2036 which has proposed the entire Tamil town to a mixed commercial area” said Interviewee 5.

“Mixed commercial zone, in simple terms means that a shopping mall or night club can be built in a residential street and the residents can do nothing about it. Our neighbourhood is already reeling under pressure of unauthorised commercial development and encroachments and the accompanying loss of quality of life. This proposal will worsen the situation” asserted Interviewee 6.

Acknowledging the commercial pressure, the real estate developer revealed that the “Residents are shifting from the Boulevard town. Previously, the plots were sold because of asset partition or financial reasons. But nowadays, people have started selling their residence because of the degrading quality of life in the Boulevard”.

“One can sell a plot of 1800 sq. ft in the Boulevard town and can buy 10,000 sq. ft in the outskirts of the town. At a ratio of 10, 5 people invest from Tamil Nadu, 2 from Pondicherry, 2 from Bangalore and 1 from

West Bengal. Heritage buildings are sold predominantly. All the plots that were sold in the last five years have turned into hotel, restaurant or textile shop” told the document writer and real estate developer.

In some European countries like Venice and Barcelona where tourism has been the main economy for several decades, gentrification has been taking place largely. Shops which sold daily needs for residents turned into souvenir shops for tourists. Many residents have rented out their apartments to tourists at much higher prices than they would get renting long term to students, workers and families. Hence apartments for local people has become scarce. The dwindling number of jobs other than tourism and the increase of price on food, transportation and housing has discouraged residents to live there. Today, the debate has been taken to streets and there is significant social mobilization taking place, with very belligerent positions against tourism. Slogans such as ‘Go back tourists’ and ‘Your luxury trip, my daily misery’ are filled in the walls of the streets.

The commercial and tourism gentrification are the symptoms of the scarcity of quality urbanism where the residents, commercial outlet owners, tourism officials, NGO’s and other government officials come together to protect the urban heritage area for the future generations. The driving force behind gentrification is the large process of jagged reurbanisation which is propelled by large scale public and private investment through urban regeneration projects to develop more retails, boutiques and hotels. All this, taken together, points to the biggest, most crucial task ahead: creating a more inclusive Boulevard town that can balance the needs of all the stakeholders.

## Heritage regulation of Pondicherry

Heritage regulation of Pondicherry was notified in the year 2018 by the Town and Country Planning department which is the first step towards conserving the heritage of Pondicherry but like any other policy, it has its own pitfalls which would detain the conservation process.

Heritage buildings in the Boulevard town are neglected by the owners under two circumstances.

1. The owner is a Franco Pondicherrian and visits Pondicherry once in a year, thereby locking the building for rest of the year which deteriorates the building slowly.
2. The owner has a different plan for the building such as demolishing the building under two reasons.
  1. Asset Partition
  2. Developing the property to a commercial or an apartment.

Hence the heritage buildings are intentionally locked to deteriorate and are demolished citing safety reasons. Till date, there is no declaration of listed heritage buildings, which is a major drawback for conserving the heritage. Unless the heritage buildings are declared, demolition of heritage buildings cannot be stopped.

By solely making the owners responsible for the repair and maintenance increases the possibility of deterioration of heritage buildings. It increases the financial and technical burden for the heritage building owners and penalising the owners for not maintaining the buildings would only create an aversion towards conservation.

Hence the proposed heritage cell within the Pondicherry municipality should create awareness programs and should advise owners to benefit economically through conservation. Adaptive reuse should be made as a norm for heritage buildings. The heritage cell should also take the responsibility of the function of heritage buildings such that the buildings are used efficiently and periodically check the buildings for better upkeep.

The incentive use for heritage buildings to convert into a commercial/ hotel should be reconsidered. From the resident's perception survey, the residents complained about two major issues.

1. Tourists disturbing the locality after drinking which has created an unsafe place for the residents and
2. Hotels, retail and restaurants are bringing in lot of crowd to the street which is disturbing their quality of life.

These two issues were overwhelmingly voiced by the residents of the Boulevard town in the survey. Hence the building use should be determined based on the character of the street without disturbing the quality of life of the residents. Therefore, Tax incentives, subsidised loans and Transfer of development rights can help preserve heritage buildings instead of a commercial license in a residential area. Below are the alternate incentive options that can be beneficial to the owners,

### Property tax abatements

This approach needs a full or partial reduction, freezing or deferment of property tax or rates. Access to property tax abatement schemes can be based on a requirement to undertake conservation work or can be an automatic entitlement for all eligible properties. They are usually 'as

of right' incentives rather than fully discretionary ones.

If the building has been restored to a residence, owners can receive 100% reduction of property tax for next 10 years.

While commercials can receive 100% reduction for the first 5 years and a 50 % reduction for a further five years.

The mixed use which is predominant in Pondicherry can receive a reduction of 100% for the first five years and a 75% reduction for a further five years.

### **Subsidised loans**

The Pondicherry tourism department can constitute Heritage Tourism Committee which can financially help the owners to restore the heritage buildings provided a part of the building is open to the public for specified number of days each year or a part of the building can be used for tourism activity. This can be done based on the interests of the owner.

### **Transfer of development rights**

Planning authorities can provide an incentive for heritage conservation through transfer of development rights. An owner of a heritage property can sell unused development rights to a developer of another site. Subject to other planning requirements, this may enable the developer to construct a larger building on the recipient site than would normally be allowed. This might help save more heritage buildings in the Boulevard town.

These incentives can help the heritage building owners preserve their buildings.

### **Heritage agreements**

The owners can receive the incentives through the heritage agreement. A heritage agreement is a legally-binding contract

intended to ensure the long-term conservation of heritage places. The agreements are generally signed in perpetuity and are therefore binding on current and future owners. The agreement will set out approaches to restoring and/or managing the property and may provide the owner with access to incentives such as rate remissions, land tax reductions grant or planning concessions.

Create a heritage buildings database that can be accessed by Land registration department, PPA, Town and Country Planning department and INTACH such that any change in the heritage building mainly ownership change is known to all the concerned departments and organisations.

The new investor should be made aware of the Heritage Legislation, Building bye laws and the regulations of the Boulevard town before registration.

### **Draft Tourism policy**

The existing draft policy was proposed in the year 2018. The current focus of the tourism department is "Wellness, Culture and Spirituality". According the report, domestic tourists occupy 92.12 % share of the total tourist's footfall in 2017. It has increased from 8.28 lakhs tourist's footfall in 2008 to 15.31 lakhs in 2017. For the very first-time foreign tourists crossed 1lakh in the year 2015. The vision of Puducherry tourism policy 2017 is "To transform the union territory of Puducherry from a weekend destination to a weeklong destination". The main focus of the policy is to bring in more economy to the town by extending the stay of the tourists. It has proposed to achieve this by six strategies

- Positioning/ Reorientation
- Product offerings and support
- Connectivity and infrastructure

- Reach
- People
- Governance

Positioning tourism as the priority sector is one of the key goals of the policy with the leverage on the rich international routes of Pondicherry. The policy focusses on “Sustainable and responsible” development where it aims to provide clean drinking water, manage wastes and keep destinations clean. The policy also clearly states the need to balance the long-term conservation and management of natural resources and community engagement. It also focusses on the safety of the women tourists and provide tourists a quality experience. And thus, make the weekend destination to a week-long destination. The policy concentrates on product offerings and support in which several themes have been identified

- Eco and water tourism
- Water and entertainment tourism
- Wellness tourism
- Spiritual and religious tourism
- Heritage tourism and
- Mice tourism

Under heritage tourism, the proposal is to convert heritage buildings to hotels, resorts, home stay and museums. Provide financial assistance for preserving heritage buildings and engage private sector for operations and maintenance. The policy also emphasizes on connectivity and infrastructure which includes roads, hotels, toilets, drinking water, signage and public infrastructure. Promoting through advertisements in social media, web portal and mobile app and proposes capacity building and skill development. Under the governance, the policy proposes a tourism infrastructure board to implement and coordinate with various bodies and

agencies for setting up tourism projects. It also puts forth to strengthen the existing Puducherry Tourism Development Corporation to upgrade and lease out the non- profitable units to private sector and augmenting the tour packages by including more activities. Puducherry tourism policy implementation committee is proposed to implement the strategies formulated in the policy. Under the tourism policy, the heritage tourism can be expanded from public buildings to private buildings since predominant of heritage buildings are private.

Despite private buildings being not as significant as public buildings, they are the fragments of the heritage of Pondicherry that collectively contribute to the cultural heritage of the town. Therefore, incentivising the private heritage building owners and encouraging them to be part of heritage tourism would be fruitful in the long run. Some of the important points to consider boosting heritage tourism are:

- 1) Reinforcing responsible tourism and studying the carrying capacity of the historic town to aid visitor management.
- 2) Supporting heritage festivals and other cultural events
- 3) Extensive promotion, supporting infrastructure and incentives such as “tour pass” to heritage sites at nominal rate would improve the visitation to the heritage sites.

From the surveys, it is understood that the residents in the heritage area are highly pressurised by extensive tourism and commercialisation. Hence, it is highly important to manage tourism without muddling the lives of the residents which has not been addressed in the policy.



## **Sustainable Heritage Tourism Strategy**

### **Vision 2030**

Through strong conservation ethics, promotion of cultural heritage and active participation of the local community, Pondicherry will be recognised as a “Global Heritage Tourism Destination” that boosts the economy of the region sustainably. By 2030, Pondicherry will be a family friendly heritage tourism destination which is safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable for the residents and the tourists.

### **Recommendations**

The research and planning process resulted in Vision 2030 statement, three goals ,12 strategies are proposed in this plan.

Briefly the goals are,

#### **Goal 1: Understand, Preserve and Protect**

Understand the contribution of cultural heritage to the community, economy and environment. Preserve and protect Pondicherry’s cultural heritage assets for present and future generations.

#### **Focus of strategies and tactics**

Constitute Heritage Tourism Committee and Heritage Cell to conserve, restore and maintain the heritage area of Pondicherry. Ensure effective preservation policies and practices are included through planning regulations, heritage regulations and Building bye laws. Protect the integrity of the local community and engage them actively in the conservation process. Identify operational and preservation needs for cultural heritage assets to prioritise funding requests.

#### **Goal 2: Promote, Expand and Celebrate**

Promote, Expand and Celebrate Pondicherry’ s cultural heritage.

#### **Focus of strategies and tactics**

Promote heritage places and enhance visitor experience. Coordinate and encourage heritage building owners to host the tourists. Expand museums and cultural heritage sites with new high-quality products; increase visibility through signage and infrastructure improvements; market assets and products. Celebrate heritage, raise awareness and create a strong connection between people and heritage.

#### **Goal 3: Collaborate, Fund and Manage**

Partner with funding agencies and establish a management and funding structure to implement the strategic plan.

#### **Focus of strategies and tactics**

Implement the strategic plan through Heritage Tourism Committee and Heritage cell, thereby advancing cultural heritage tourism priorities in the plan. Develop and administer a sustainable

and diversified funding model. Partner with similar heritage places and share knowledge and expertise to manage the area.

### **Documenting the impact**

To determine the accomplishment of the strategy, documenting and assessing the impact based on sustainability parameters is proposed. Sustainability parameters such as social, environmental and economic impacts should be documented periodically for the success of heritage tourism. Feedbacks from residents, tourists and other stakeholders will help improve and sustain heritage tourism.

Though Pondicherry has an interesting cross-cultural history, the cultural heritage has still not effectively reached the tourists. While different factors contribute for heritage tourism not being popular among domestic tourists, four reasons have surfaced and are relevant here.

- Uninteresting museums and less number of visitor ready heritage sites.
- Most of the heritage buildings are privately owned and the government owned buildings are used for various administrative purposes. Heritage buildings that are converted into cafes, restaurants and hotels are expensive which is a setback for heritage tourism.
- Inefficient use of museums such as reduced hours of operation and sites not open during peak visitation periods and especially public holidays. (Tourists complained that Pondicherry museum was not opened on January 26 during the Tourists perception survey). Bharathiar museum, Bharathi Dasan Museum and Subbiah museum are not efficiently used for heritage tourism.
- Lack of promotion, new exhibits, programs, activities and marketing.

This strategic plan addresses the need for Heritage tourism committee and Heritage Cell to collaborate in key ways, which may help to preserve heritage and create economy for the region. Expanding and restoring heritage buildings, enhancing heritage tourism products such as heritage trails, thematic tours, promoting creole cuisine (blend of Tamil and French cuisine), building on events to create greater experience and promote Pondicherry's cultural heritage experience.

Though Pondicherry is known for liquor tourism and is a weekend getaway destination, heritage tourism has the potential to make a weekend tourism destination to a week-long destination. Therefore, channelizing tourism and promoting Pondicherry as family friendly tourist's destination as suggested by the residents of Pondicherry is the need of the hour.

### **Pondicherry SWOT analysis**

#### **Strengths**

- Important and diverse history starting from Pallava period to the French rule.
- Strong and distinct Tamil and French cultural heritage
- Easy Accessibility and walkability
- Local elected representatives support to make Pondicherry' A Global tourist' s destination'.

## **Weaknesses**

- Lack of awareness of Pondicherry's heritage assets.
- Lack of heritage brand and integrated marketing efforts
- Lack of coordination among different departments and stakeholders
- Perceived transportation and parking problems.
- Lack of wayfinding and signage
- Insufficient budget
- Degrading quality of life in the heritage area

## **Opportunities**

- Potential for increased visitation and make Pondicherry known through its heritage
- Potential for resident engagement and economic opportunity
- Potential for conserving more heritage assets
- Potential to expand heritage experience in the historic core

## **Threats**

- Economic fluctuations might impact travel to Pondicherry
- Rains and Cyclones during the New Year eve which is the peak tourism period might potentially create a big loss
- Negative perception about Pondicherry because of liquor tourism
- Negative perception about tourists among locals.
- Displacement of local people.
- Inadequate funding

## **Mission**

To grow and sustain cultural heritage tourism in Pondicherry with collaborative initiatives and innovative public-private partnerships, thereby preserving the heritage for the future generations.

A wide array of possibilities was refined into 3 major goals

- Understand, Preserve and Protect
- Promote, Expand and Celebrate
- Collaborate, Fund and Manage

Before presenting them by section, it is important to reinforce some comprehensive points

1. Pondicherry has an excellent foundation of heritage assets ranging from Chola temples, Arikamedu archaeological site to French and Tamil heritage. Along with this, ongoing projects such as Cultural complex, museums and other tourist's sites would boost heritage tourism in Pondicherry. Packaging and promoting these attractions are a major priority in moving forward. Successful marketing will result in new visitors, extended stay, spending and rise in visitation.
2. Preserving, protecting and maintaining cultural heritage sites are critical to long term sustainability.

3. The successful implementation of this plan needs a strong leadership and coordination between various stakeholders such as Heritage Tourism Committee, Puducherry Planning Authority, Town and Country Planning, Public works department, Local administration department, Pondicherry Heritage Cell, Art and Culture department, NGO's and businesses.
4. Residents play significant role in the success of heritage tourism. Collaborating and coordinating with the local community will help sustain heritage tourism.
5. The management structure must be sequenced until funding and leadership are consistently available.

## **Proposal 1**

### **Pondicherry Heritage Cell**

As far as State Level Heritage conservation and advisory committee (SLHCAC) is concerned, its role is to advice the Member Secretary on conservation matters and in development of the heritage area. But the SLHCAC committee does not work on a daily basis but on requirement basis such as to discuss on development applications on the heritage area, to implement the guidelines or to improve the regulations. To conserve the heritage area, a dedicated cell is required to protect, preserve and maintain Pondicherry's cultural heritage of the town. This cell should be constituted within the Pondicherry municipality. Below are the proposed roles and responsibilities of the heritage cell.

#### **Role of the heritage cell**

The primary role of the heritage cell is to provide expert advice and support to the municipality and the heritage building owners in achieving the maximum possible conservation, protect the integrity of the local community and effectively manage the area for the future generations.

The heritage cell shall comprise of

- Conservation architects
- Urban Planners
- Structural engineers
- Building surveyors and inspectors
- Professional draftsmen and photographer
- IT and GIS personnel
- Records and Archival officer
- Public relation/ awareness officer
- Publication unit/ information Dissemination
- Capacity building coordinator.

Below are the strategies and action plan for the Heritage cell based on the four tools of Historic Urban Landscape approach of UNESCO such as Knowledge and Planning tools, Civic Engagement, Regulatory Systems and Financial tools. The strategies are proposed under three goals. A) Understand, Preserve and Protect, B) Promote, Expand and Celebrate, C) Collaborate, Fund and Manage.



<b>Pondicherry Heritage Cell</b>	
<b>Goal 1: Understand, Preserve and Protect</b>	
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Action</b>
<p>Understand and preserve cultural heritage through Knowledge and Planning tools</p>	<p><b>Knowledge and Planning tools</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Extensive documentation, surveys and mapping of the cultural heritage of Pondicherry.</li> <li>2. Maintain a database of listed buildings with ownership status and history.</li> <li>3. Develop heritage gaps master plan and continue to undertake heritage studies to protect the places of significance of Pondicherry.</li> <li>4. Tie up with universities and other research institutes to do research on the heritage and current developments in the historic area.</li> <li>5. Make a memorandum of understanding with similar heritage areas and share knowledge and planning tools.</li> <li>6. Establish a website for the heritage cell.</li> <li>7. Derive design guidelines to maintain the heritage character of the place.</li> <li>8. Conduct workshops and training programs on traditional materials and craftsmanship to local craftsmen and contractors.</li> </ol>
<p>Create awareness about the cultural heritage of the place and protect the heritage buildings from demolition through civic engagement.</p>	<p><b>Civic engagement</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide free consultation on heritage matters for owners and residents.</li> <li>2. Educate community on heritage issues and raise awareness of the value of heritage places</li> <li>3. Explain relevant heritage legislation and policies.</li> <li>4. Provide assistance with funding sources and application.</li> </ol>

<b>Pondicherry Heritage Cell</b>	
<b>Goal 1: Understand, Preserve and Protect</b>	
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Action</b>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Conduct participatory planning workshops with the residents, commercial establishment owners, heritage building owners and the NGO's for better upkeep of the area and boost heritage tourism.</li> <li>6. Conduct annual heritage events and encourage the local community through awards of excellence in creative adaptive reuse of heritage places, sympathetic new design in historic areas, conservation of places, collections and stories, heritage related skills, innovation and outstanding contribution to heritage</li> </ol>
<p>Ensure that effective preservation policies and regulations are included in the Comprehensive Development Plan 2036 and manage the area through effective regulatory systems.</p>	<p><b>Regulatory systems</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Provide advice to municipality to deliver good heritage outcomes for the area and Government owned heritage buildings.</li> <li>2 Provide expert advice on development applications, especially the land use considering the extensive commercialisation and threatening gentrification.</li> <li>3 Provide advice to Town and Country Planning Department and Puducherry Planning Authority on heritage regulations and policies.</li> <li>4 Derive a strategic plan to conserve and manage the historic buildings and precincts.</li> <li>5 Periodically monitor and ensure the efficient function of heritage buildings.</li> </ol>

<b>Pondicherry Heritage Cell</b>	
<b>Goal 2.: Promote, Expand and Celebrate</b>	
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Action</b>
<p>Promote and celebrate the heritage of Pondicherry with the stakeholders.</p> <p>Expand the notion of cultural heritage.</p>	<p>7. Celebrate Pondicherry Heritage Festival with the residents and local businesses, thereby boosting the sense of pride among the locals and attract tourism. Foster partnerships with stakeholders to develop cultural heritage experiences involving multiple locations</p> <p>8. Explore the hidden layers of heritage, conserve and promote it.</p>
<b>Goal 3: Collaborate, Fund and Manage</b>	
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Action</b>
<p>Collaborate with various stakeholders to raise funds to maintain the heritage area.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Financial tools</b></p> <p>1. Make a memorandum of understanding with banks and corporates for funding to restore heritage buildings.</p> <p>2. Effectively raise funds through annual heritage festival.</p>
<p>By 2020, establish a dedicated team leader and strengthen staffing and partners as required.</p>	<p>1. Sustain Pondicherry Heritage Cell through a formalized dedicated staff, a partnership entity, funding and program of work. Assess and refine the reporting relationship, communications and coordination among partner organisations and staff.</p>

## **Proposal 2**

### **Pondicherry Heritage Tourism Committee**

**To preserve and maintain cultural heritage sites and to promote sustainable heritage tourism, a heritage tourism committee should be constituted within the tourism department.**

#### **Role of Pondicherry Heritage Tourism Committee**

The role of Pondicherry Heritage Tourism Committee (PHTC) is to promote and maintain the cultural heritage of the town and provide inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and ensure responsible consumption and production.

The Heritage Tourism Committee shall comprise of

- Secretary, Department of Tourism
- Director, Department of Tourism
- Heritage Tourism Manager
- Heritage Tourism Product Developer
- Director, Art and Culture
- Hospitality group owners
- Heritage building owners
- Head of the Department, Department of Tourism Studies, Pondicherry University
- INTACH Pondicherry and related NGO's

**Below are the strategies and action plan for the Proposed Heritage Tourism Committee based on the three main goals.**

<b>Pondicherry Heritage Tourism Committee</b>	
<b>Goal 1.: Understand, Preserve and Protect</b>	
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Action</b>
<p>Ensure that effective tourism policies and regulations are included in the Comprehensive Development Plan 2036. Preserve and protect the heritage area in coordination with the heritage cell. Create a safe heritage tourist's destination for residents and the tourists.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continuously monitor and assess the outcome of heritage tourism to analyse the gaps in the heritage tourism and address them in the policies and action plan.</li> <li>2. Encourage heritage building owners to restore their building for tourism by providing subsidised loans. Open house days and events can be conducted in coordination with owner.</li> <li>3. Coordinate with the heritage cell and make a baseline assessment of heritage buildings which are used for heritage tourism and ensure their sustainability and preservation needs to assure consistent access for visitors.</li> <li>4. Ensure that tourism sites and related amenities such as hotels and restaurants do not disturb the quality of life of the residents.</li> <li>5. Ensure that tourism amenities are not located in the residential area of the neighbourhood.</li> <li>6. Ensure safety of children and women in tourist's sites.</li> <li>7. Encourage tourists to use sustainable transport options.</li> </ol>



<b>Goal 2.: Promote, Expand and Celebrate</b>	
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Action</b>
<p>Promote Pondicherry’s distinctive, authentic cultural heritage through innovative and engaging visitor experiences.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Celebrate Pondicherry Heritage Festival partnering with the Heritage Cell and engage with the residents and local businesses, thereby boosting the sense of pride among the locals and attracting tourism. Foster partnerships with stakeholders to develop cultural heritage experiences involving multiple locations.</li> <li>2. Draw on best practices to develop a visitor readiness scoring system for Pondicherry’s cultural heritage sites and implement through Heritage Tourism Committee.</li> <li>3. Conduct an annual review to determine visitor readiness and areas for improvement at cultural heritage sites. Establish a mentoring program providing technical assistance to sites for improvements identified through the review process. Encourage sites to use online registration, ticketing and onsite purchases. Create brochures and information materials for instruction and reference.</li> </ol>
<p>Add new high-quality cultural heritage tourism products and services available to visitors.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Leverage the impact of Pondicherry’s heritage through museums, heritage trail, culinary trail, open house events to extend visitors stay and spending. Develop new experiences to expand on the strength of heritage.</li> <li>2. Create a multisite attraction pass to provide value added for visitor.</li> </ol>

<b>Goal 2.: Promote, Expand and Celebrate</b>	
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Action</b>
Increase the visibility of Pondicherry’s cultural heritage sites, events and activities via signage, infrastructure improvements and web presence.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish and monitor criteria to define and categorise cultural and heritage tourism sites, events and tours – along with contributing restaurant, hotels and services.</li> <li>2. Plan, design and install new interpretive signage for cultural heritage tourism, ensuring heritage tourism is reflected in any new directional signage to instruct pedestrians, motorists and motor coaches on access to cultural heritage sites and events.</li> </ol>
Market Pondicherry’s cultural heritage assets and products to increase visitation.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop an annual comprehensive calendar of heritage tours, programs and activities for every year.</li> <li>2. Use all social and traditional media platforms to expand awareness of Pondicherry’s cultural heritage tourism program and events.</li> <li>3. Conduct workshops for tour guides and tour operators to familiarise and update on cultural heritage tourism.</li> </ol>
<b>Goal 3: Collaborate, fund and manage</b>	
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Action</b>
Compile and assess a comprehensive list of operational and preservation needs for cultural and heritage assets to prioritise funding requests.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Manage heritage tourism sites and prioritise the list of heritage buildings that needs immediate attention and procure funding accordingly.</li> </ol>
Build a Pondicherry convention and visitor centre in the historic core to help advance cultural heritage tourism priorities established in the strategic plan.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pondicherry Convention and Visitor Centre will promote heritage tourism through videos, brochures, guidebooks and tours.</li> </ol>

<b>Goal 3: Collaborate, fund and manage</b>	
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Action</b>
Establish Pondicherry Heritage Tourism Committee to serve as a central coordinating body to implement the plan.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engage all key partners including Art and Culture department, Heritage building owners, Heritage Cell, Local businesses, resident community, tourism and hospitality industry, Public works department, Puducherry Planning Authority, Town and Country Planning Department, Local administrative department and the government. Formalize partner contributions in a written agreement. Determine roles and responsibilities to coordinate efforts. Establish an operating system to communicate regularly with partners, market and manage the evaluation of activities.</li> </ol>
Establish a Memorandum of Understanding with banks, corporates and other funding agencies to fund and manage heritage tourism.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Raise funds to provide subsidised loans for heritage building owners to convert their heritage building to hotels, home stays, boutiques and museums.</li> <li>2. Partner with corporates to adopt heritage buildings in the Boulevard town and use them efficiently.</li> </ol>
By 2020, establish a dedicated team leader and strengthen staffing and partners as required.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Sustain Pondicherry Heritage Tourism Committee through a formalized dedicated staff, a partnership entity, funding and program of work. Assess and refine the reporting relationship, communications and coordination among partner organisations and staff.</li> </ol>
Establish and administer a sustainable, diversified funding model to implement the strategic plan.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Identify top priorities from the action plan, develop a brief report, determine applicant agency and assign a fund-raising team.</li> <li>4. Raise funds through annual heritage festival for physical improvement and management of the area.</li> </ol>

## Proposal 3

### State Level Heritage Conservation and Advisory Committee

#### Role of State Level Heritage Conservation Committee

The role of State Level Heritage Conservation Committee (SLHCAC) is to make final decisions on the planning applications, policies and development of the heritage area based on the inputs of Pondicherry Heritage Cell (PHC) and Pondicherry Heritage Tourism Committee (PHTC). It should also ensure sustained growth of the heritage area and boost the economy of the town through heritage without compromising on the heritage value and quality of life of the residents.

The SLHCAC committee shall comprise of

1. Secretary to Government (Town Planning)
2. The Chief Engineer, Public Works Department
3. Representative from Local Administrative Department
4. Director, Tourism Department
5. Director, Art and Culture
6. Representative from Pondicherry Heritage Cell
7. Representative from Pondicherry Heritage Tourism Committee
8. In charge Architect, State PWD
9. Structural Engineer having experience of 10 years in the field and membership of the Institution of Engineers, India.
  - A) Architect having 10 years of experience
  - B) Urban Designer
  - C) Conservation Architect
10. Environmentalist having in-depth knowledge of the region and experience of 10 years of the subject.
11. Natural historian having 10 years of experience in the field.
12. Commissioners of concerned municipalities
13. Representative of State Archaeological Department
14. Chief Town Planner, Town and Country Planning Department
  - A) The Committee shall have the powers to co-opt up to three additional members who may have related experience.
  - B) The tenure of the Chairman and Members of other than Government Department / Local bodies shall be three years.
15. Representative from the Traffic police
16. Representatives from local NGO's and resident associations.

<b>State Level Heritage Conservation and Advisory Committee</b>	
<b>Goal 1: Understand, Preserve and Protect</b>	
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Action</b>
Ensure that effective preservation policies and regulations are included in the Comprehensive Development Plan 2036.	Implement policies, guidelines and regulations to preserve and maintain the heritage precinct with the inputs of Pondicherry Heritage Cell (PHC) and Pondicherry Heritage Tourism Committee (PHTC). Ensure efficient function of heritage assets and expand historic preservation policies, funding and procedures. Encourage inclusion in updates of plans and policies.
Ensure sustainable growth in the heritage precinct.	Conduct periodical meetings to review the planning and development applications of the heritage precinct.
	Protect the heritage precinct from haphazard development. Ensure that new developments in the Boulevard town does not degrade the quality of life of the residents. New developments and change of land use should be allowed based on the assessment of the neighbourhood and street character. Ensure bars, disco and other commercial activities that might potentially disturb the quality of life of the residents are not allowed in the residential area.
	Discourage the use of cars and two wheelers through congestion and parking fares in coordination with the Puducherry Traffic Police. Plan and implement sustainable mode of transport such as public transport, electric shuttles and cycles.
<b>Goal 3: Collaborate, Fund and Manage</b>	
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Action</b>
Coordinate with PHC and PHTC and provide funds for heritage building owners to conserve the heritage buildings.	Incentivise heritage building owners through property tax abatements, subsidised loans and Transfer of Development rights to protect the cultural heritage assets from demolition.



## **Conclusions**

The aim of this research was to perceive the issues of heritage conservation, tourism and gentrification through the lens of the residents, tourists, NGO's and the Government of Pondicherry. First, I explored the current transformations in the area which was done by building use survey and demographic analysis. Second, to understand the issues, separate surveys were conducted for the residents, tourists and heritage building owners. Third, I analysed the current projects and plans for the Boulevard town under the Smart city scheme, draft CDP 2036, heritage regulations of Pondicherry and tourism policy. Thus, identifying the gaps in conserving and managing the heritage area.

Finally, I have proposed a sustainable strategy under three main goals to be executed by State Level Heritage Conservation Committee (SLHCAC), Pondicherry Heritage Cell and Pondicherry Heritage Tourism Committee.

In this final section, I go back to my research objectives and by bringing together the different analysis of the research I highlight my empirical and theoretical contributions. I conclude the research by acknowledging several limitations and suggesting ideas for further research.

### **Unplanned growth, land use and demographic changes**

Unplanned growth induced by commercialisation and touristification has resulted disintegration of the historic area. The demographic changes collected from eight streets in different quarters showed that Boulevard town is experiencing a threat of gentrification. The demographic analysis and the land use map show that the residences are replaced by themed restaurants, hotels and retail shops. I have also discussed how the young residents are moving to cities which is accelerating commercialisation and consequent loss of community. In this section, I have discussed such threats and suggest how tourism and commercial gentrification might evolve from a socio-demographic perspective. The study finds clearly that there is an increasing frustration among residents because of the unplanned growth and development.

The land use map shows the spread of commercialisation in the town. Hotels, restaurants and bars map shows the proliferating tourism business in the area.

Unlike the tourist districts like Venice and Barcelona where the stores for the residents are replaced by tourist's amenities, the case of Pondicherry is different. Here, both the shops for the locals and the tourists compete to get a space in the town. Thereby, transforming the historic district to a commercial district.

### **Residents perception on tourism and commercialisation**

Understanding the unplanned growth and the demographic changes in the town, the survey was conducted among the residents of the Boulevard town. Noise, traffic congestion, overcrowded public spaces, loss of community bonding were the main issues stated by the residents. For many residents, festivals and long weekends are a nightmare and hence avoid going out in the weekends because of overcrowded public spaces. By exploring the resident's perception on the current changes, this research has contributed to better understanding of the threats in the Boulevard town. This interpretation does not explain gentrification in the historic district of Pondicherry but rather foresees the great possibilities of it if appropriate steps are not taken.

### **Tourists perception on destination and heritage tourism**

The survey identified the perceptions and satisfaction of tourists and explored the possibilities to expand heritage tourism. Tourists rated their satisfaction on different facilities in the town. According to the analysis, when considered individually, each factor plays a significant role in influencing the perception of tourists. Even though the tourists were satisfied with the destination and overall had a positive perception about the amenities, most tourists had negative perception about certain areas of the destination ie: traffic congestion, noise pollution, poor parking facilities and transport options, inconsistent pavements and loss of heritage buildings especially in the Tamil town. The study shows that the domestic tourists were unaware of the heritage of Pondicherry but also revealed their willingness to explore. Upgrading old sites, establishing new sites and opening more heritage buildings to the public coupled with effective marketing and management is the way forward to boost heritage tourism in the town. Therefore, heritage tourism if managed efficiently will attract tourists, conserve the heritage buildings and boost the economy.

### **Heritage building owner's perception on heritage conservation and tourism**

Local community, especially the heritage building owner's support, plays a significant role in the success of heritage conservation and tourism. This survey has identified that heritage building owners have become less positive about adaptive reuse and conserving their heritage. The survey also explores the inhibitions of the owners towards tourists and lack of understanding about heritage tourism. In the conclusion, I suggest various strategies to create a positive perception about heritage conservation and tourism.

### **Analysis of projects, plans and policies**

In this section, I have discussed about the smart city projects, draft CDP 2036, heritage regulations and tourism policy. The projects and policies were analysed through the lens of the different stakeholders ranging from government officials to real estate developers. This analysis identifies the gaps in addressing the issues and the need for the special expertise and a dedicated team to work in the required area. The extensive attention provided to the French town for several years leaving behind the Tamil town has caused the Tamil town negatively. Unplanned developments, loss of heritage buildings and community value are some of the hard-hitting changes that cannot be reversed. The analysis points out the contradicting projects and policies and suggests strategies and action plans to mitigate the negative impacts of tourism and commercialisation.

### **Proposals**

To protect the urban heritage area for the future generations, more robust initiatives are required. Hence Pondicherry Heritage Cell and Pondicherry Heritage Tourism Committee are proposed to assist the State Level Heritage Conservation and Advisory Committee. Under three main goals: 1. Understand, Preserve and Protect, 2. Promote, Expand and Celebrate, 3. Collaborate, Fund and Manage, strategies and action plans are proposed to be executed by each team. To counter balance the tourism and commercial driven development and to protect heritage and boost heritage tourism, policy makers should consider these points. Firstly, new building use regulations should be introduced, thereby restricting the growth of commercials in the area. Secondly, coordinate with the local community, especially the residents of the Boulevard town, address their needs and include them in the proposals for a successful heritage

conservation and management of the area. Thirdly, boost heritage tourism and at the same time monitor and effectively manage the destination so that it is not overwhelmed by tourists.

### **Limitations and further research**

Considering the evolution in the Boulevard town and the growing needs of the heritage building owners, more design-based research is required to conserve the heritage and at the same time meet the needs of the residents. One of the major concerns of heritage building owners was the cost of restoration and the limitations in restoring heritage buildings. Hence, more investigation is necessary in this area for finding cost effective solutions. Due to the lack of available resources and most importantly time, carrying capacity of the Boulevard town could not be assessed. A detailed study on the carrying capacity of the Boulevard town would reveal and help plan for the future prospects of the area. However, it would be interesting to explore them in the future study.

## **Appendices**

### **Case studies**

The sustainable heritage tourism strategy was derived within the context of best practiced achieved in other places. Examples were studied starting from New York to Pondicherry itself. Time and again, it has been recognised that heritage can boost the sense of pride of the community and boost economy of the place.

#### **Albany**

Albany is one of the oldest surviving European settlements in New York. The city has major cultural sites and the mayor convened Albany Heritage Tourism Advisory Council to develop a vision and strategic plan. This document provides a clear strategy to make Albany, an international heritage tourism destination. They summarised their goals into three main headings: Promote and Expand, Preserve and Protect, Fund and Manage which has been considered as the key strategy for the Sustainable Heritage Tourism of Pondicherry. Other key requirement identified was to have a separate team to implement the strategy which would be the Heritage Tourism Committee.

#### **Mumbai:**

##### **Creating a Tourist district**

Urban Design Research Institute produced a proposal for upgrading and managing the gateway of India precinct. The action plan consisted of zoning the precinct, redesigning urban nodes and public spaces, area management in coordination with local commercial establishments and residents, physical improvement and traffic management were the key points learnt to manage the area. Private Public partnership, fund raising through annual festivals were proposed to fund and manage the area. Colaba Tourist Destination Association (CTDA) has been formally established to represent the needs of the residents and local commercial establishments. CTDA is responsible in monitoring the physical improvement and creating awareness about the heritage of the place. This association actively represent the concerns and proposals of residents, shops and hotel owners, restaurants and entrepreneurs to the government agencies and potential private sponsors.

The Kala Ghoda art festival was initiated by UDRI in Jan 1999 in association of users and building owners to bring the area into public focus. The funds generated through the festival was used to restore the buildings and improve the streetscape of the area. This demonstrates how the local festivals can bring the residents together and can also generate funds for the betterment of the area.

##### **Derby, Ahmedabad and Pondicherry on Grant Schemes**

Derby, a business district in England was offered a grant scheme by Historic England to listed heritage building owners. Through this scheme, 72 heritage buildings were renovated and refurbished in terms of conservation best practice. The cultural quarter was revitalized and also won the Great British High Street award at the end of 2016.

Ahmedabad municipal corporation in partnership with HUDCO provided subsidised loans to heritage building owners. A two storied residence in Khadia III ward was bought by the owner of the adjacent building who wanted to accommodate the growing needs of his family. The

building represented a typical Ahmedabad house with a central courtyard and an elegant façade, which has a colonial influence in contrast to its vernacular layer. The restored building is being used as an extended living, storage for musical instruments, rehearsals and cultural events. Part of the house has been rented out as a home stay which is generating revenue.

Vysial street, a residential street of the business community in the Tamil quarter of the Boulevard town of Pondicherry was restored under the Asia Urbs program. The facades of 20 heritage buildings were restored to its former glory for which the Pondicherry government received an 'UNESCO Asia Pacific Heritage Award of Merit 2008' for the successful restoration of the street. But currently, the street is succumbing to developmental pressure and five restored buildings were demolished last year alone and are currently being built as commercials and mixed-use buildings. This demonstrates how economy plays an important role in conserving heritage buildings.

All these examples show the strong link between economic regeneration, place making and community engagement in successful heritage conservation.

### **Property Tax Abatements and Transfer of Development rights**

Such schemes are widely employed in North America and a list of known schemes appears below.

- In San Antonio, Texas, owners of commercial properties receive a 100% reduction on their taxes for five years after a restoration project, plus a 50% reduction for a further five years. Owners of residential properties receive a 100% reduction for 10 years.
- Abilene, Texas offers an interesting mix of 'entitlement' and 'performance-based' tax incentives: a 20% reduction of property taxes indefinitely for all listed properties; plus, an additional reduction of 50% following a restoration project.
- In Alabama, property tax is set at 10% of the market value, instead of 20% for non-historic properties.
- In France, owners receive a 50% tax credit for maintenance and restoration expenditure, or a 100% tax credit if the building is open to the public for a specified number of days each year.

According to the Regulations for Heritage Tradable Development Right of Gujarat Development Control Regulations, tradable floor space shall be provided for a building unit with heritage structures or building, or for building units within heritage precinct notified by competent authority in the Heritage Conservation Plan. The tradable floor space shall be provided as an incentive for heritage buildings of highest and moderate heritage value.

Similarly, the city of Sydney operates a Heritage Floor Space scheme. Under the scheme, an owner of a heritage property would be awarded an amount of Heritage floor space by conserving the property. Once the building has been restored, the HFS can be sold or exchanged to enable additional floor space in a new development. Sydney HFS scheme has been proven a useful incentive over an extended period. Hence heritage regulation of Pondicherry can consider Tradable Development rights for owners who wish to sell their property on the context of asset partition or financial reasons.



**Building Use Survey**

**Questions to the owner of the building**

1. Name:	2. Age:
3. Address of the building:	4. Are you living in the same address? A) Yes B) No
5. If no, where are you living?	
6. Native:	7. Occupation/where:
8. Number of people living in the house:	9. Number of children:
10. What are your children doing?	A) No of children studying B) No of children working C) No of children homemaker
11. Where are your children living?	A) In the same building B) Boulevard town C) Other areas in Pondy D) Outside Pondy
12. What vehicle do you own and how many?	A) Number of two wheelers B) Number of four wheelers
13. Where do you park them?	A) On road B) On pavement C) Inside the residence

**Questions about the building**

1. For how many years/ generations are you living in Pondicherry?	
4A. When did you buy the plot?	
4B. Why did you buy the plot in this part of the heritage town?	A) Location B) Affordability C) Proximity to ashram D) Job E) Business F) Others, please specify.....

5. How old is the building?	
6. Is the building rented /leased?	A) Rented B) Leased C) None of the above
7. For how many years the building has been rented/ leased?	
8. What was the previous land use of the plot and up to when?	A) Residential B) Commercial C) Mixed Use [ ] D) Institutional E) Others, please specify.....
9. What is the current land use of the plot?	A) Residential B) Commercial C) Mixed Use [ ] D) Institutional E) Other, please specify.....
G:	G+3:
G+1:	G+4:
G+2:	

**Residents perception Survey Questionnaire**

1. Do you want the Boulevard town to be designated as a heritage area?	A) Yes B) No
2. Have you ever participated in the following local Government programs?	A) Smart city meetings B) Smart city poll C) Smart city ballot box D) Others, please specify ..... E) None of the above
3. Are you aware of the smart city proposals of Pondicherry?	A) Yes B) No
4. If yes, what are the projects you know?	
5. Are you aware that Pondicherry is going to be promoted as Global tourism destination?	A) Yes B) No
6. Are you directly (tourism department, travel agencies, hotels, restaurants) or indirectly (renting your place for tourism related business) getting income from tourism?	A) Directly B) Indirectly C) Both D) None of the above
7. How do you view Tourism?	A) Threat B) Opportunity C) Neutral
8. Do you visit heritage hotels and restaurants in the Boulevard town?	A) Yes B) No C) Sometimes
9. If no, why you don't visit?	A) High cost B) Does' nt have the local authentic cuisine C) Not healthy D) Usually will not go E) Others, please specify.....
10. Do you feel any pressure in the area because of tourism and commercialisation and does that make you feel like shifting to another area but you couldn't because you have lived here for years or you are too old to shift to another place?	A) Yes, we feel the pressure B) No, we don't feel any pressure  <b>Note:</b>
11. Do you feel safe in this area?	A) Yes B) No
12. If no, what are the reasons that are making the area unsafe?	A) Robbery B) Illegal activities C) Molesters D) Drunkards E) Others, please specify.....

13. Do you prefer going out in the weekends?	A) Yes <span style="float: right;">B) No</span>
14. If no, what are the reasons for avoiding weekends?	A) Traffic congestion B) Overcrowded C) Pondicherry is not our place in the weekends D) Drunkards E) Tourists F) All the above G) Others, please specify.....
15. Do you previously go out in the weekends?	A) Yes <span style="float: right;">B) No</span>
17. If yes, where do you usually go in the weekends?	A) Beach B) Park C) Temples D) Market E) Others, please specify
18. What is your mode of transport?	A) Auto B) Two-wheeler C) Car D) Public Transport E) Others

19. Lot of national and international hotel and restaurant chains (KFC, Dominos, Pothys, CGH groups etc) are starting their business here? How do you view their entry in the Pondicherry town?

Statement	Response				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I have wide range of options when hanging out					
Global chains are threat to local businesses					
Restaurants and Hotels disrupt our quality of life in the neighbourhood					
I am happy that my town is growing as a touristic destination					

**Environmental Impact**

Statement	Response				
	Very low	Low	Neutral	High	Very high
Garbage maintenance					
Air pollution					
Vandalism (breaking of public and private properties after drinking or due to fight)					
Noise					
Traffic congestion					

**Social impacts**

Statement	Response				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I have met a lot of tourists with different cultural and social background.					
I am proud about the tourism development because it has represented my town's identity.					
Tourism has represented the architectural heritage of the town					
We have a good tolerance to share facilities with tourists equally.					
I feel respected by tourists.					
Tourism and commercialisation in my community is disrupting my quality of life					
There are better shopping/dining and cultural opportunities in Pondicherry					



**Economic impacts of tourism**

Statement	Response				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Tourism has increased my income					
Tourism has created lot of employment opportunities					
Tourism has changed the patterns or trends of the business in the city					
Tourism has increased the cost of living in the Boulevard town					
Tourism generates substantial tax revenues for our local government that benefit residents					

**Place identity and dependency**

Statement	Response				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The city environment makes me feel comfortable and peaceful					
I will give a word of warning to the tourists for their inappropriate behaviour in my places					
I have invested my heart and soul in this place					
I feel committed to this place					
I would make personal sacrifices to protect this place					

What are the other issues that you face in the day to day life in the town?

<p>Overall, how would you rate this community you live in?</p> <p>A) Very good      B) Good      C) Neutral      D) Bad      E) Very bad</p>	
<p><b>If you could manage tourism in this area, what would be your take on each of the statements?</b></p>	
<p>Discontinue tourism altogether</p>	<p>A) Yes, very much required</p> <p>B) No, not required</p>
<p>Increase the number of tourists currently visiting</p>	<p>A) Yes, we need more tourists visiting our town</p> <p>B) No, we already have enough</p>
<p>Increase the number of tourism business in the area</p>	<p>A) Yes, we require more</p> <p>B) No, we have enough of them</p>

**Heritage Perception Survey**

Name	Address
Heritage building grade	
Typology of vehicle owned	A. Car B. Two- Wheeler C. Bicycle D. None
Are you happy that your building has been listed?	
If no, why?	
Are you aware of the heritage legislation of Pondicherry?	A. Yes B. No
Opportunity for private and public partnership	
How much importance is given by heritage building owners for heritage preservation in Pondicherry?	A. Very low B. Low C. Moderate D. High E. Very high
Advantages of owning a heritage building	A. Vastu B. Pride of owning a heritage building C. Emotional D. Climatic aspects E. None F. Others.....
Disadvantages of owning a heritage building	A. Structural issues B. Asset partition C. Maintenance difficulty D. Change of requirements E. Lack of parking space F. None G. Others .....
Future aspirations for the building	
Opinion of Heritage building owners regarding conserving a building through	A. Highly negative B. Negative C. Neutral

<p>techniques like adaptive reuse etc (Hotel de l' Orient was shown as an example)</p>	<p>D. Positive E. Highly positive</p>
<p>Type of assistance needed by the Heritage building owners for preserving their heritage building.</p>	<p>A. Construction details B. Design C. Financial assistance D. General information E. Not needed F. Other assistance .....</p>
<p>How would you rate the quality of life in the Boulevard town considering especially the extensive commercialisation and touristification?</p>	<p>A. Very bad B. Bad C. Moderate D. Good E. Very good</p>
<p>Do you know about the draft Comprehensive Development Plan 2036 for the Boulevard town?</p>	<p>A. Yes B. No</p>
<p>Would you accept special Building use measures to protect Boulevard town from extensive commercialization?</p>	<p>A. Yes, it is very much required B. No, not required</p>
<p>Do you think a special body or association (Boulevard town Welfare association) with residents and commercials as stakeholders would help maintain Boulevard town better?</p>	<p>A. Yes B. No</p>
<p>What is your ideal Boulevard town?</p>	

**Tourist's perception Survey Questionnaire**

Survey Location:	Age:	Gender:
Nationality:	Occupation:	
Place:	Education:	
Purpose of travel:	A. Leisure trip B. To meet relatives/friends C. Business trip D. Pilgrimage trip E. Educational trip	
How are you travelling?	A. Alone B. With Family C. With Friends D. Organized group	
Do you feel safe in this place?	A. Yes	B. No
If no, what are the reasons that are making the area unsafe?	A. Robbery B. Illegal activities C. Harassers D. Alcoholics E. Others, please specify.....	
Have you visited Pondicherry before?	A. Yes	B. No
If yes, how often do you visit Pondicherry?		
How long do you plan on staying in Pondicherry?		
How many times have you visited Pondicherry before?		

<p>Do you want to take the help of guide in this tourist place?</p>	<p>A. Yes <span style="float: right;">B. No</span></p>
<p>Mode of travelling to Pondicherry</p>	<p>A. Two-wheeler                  B. Car                  C. Public Transport                  D. Others, please specify.....</p>
<p>What is your mode of transport in Pondicherry?</p>	<p>A. Auto                  B. Two-wheeler                  C. Car                  D. Public Transport                  E. Others, please specify.....</p>
<p>If there is better connectivity through public transport, pedestrian pathways and bicycle tracks, would you switch over to sustainable options or would you still prefer to use motorbike and cars?</p>	<p>A. Yes, I will change to public transport                  B. No, I will still rent a motorbike                  C. Will use both                  D. Others, please specify                  .....</p>
<p>Are you going to stay here? And where?</p>	<p>A. Yes <span style="float: right;">B. No</span></p> <p>A. Relatives/Friends place                  B. Hotels                  C. Home stay                  D. Government Guest house</p>
<p>Are you staying inside the heritage town or outside the heritage town?</p>	<p>A. Inside the heritage town (French town / Tamil town)                  B. Outside the heritage town</p> <p>Reason:</p>



Is that a heritage building?	
Why did you choose to stay in this location?	
Was there enough accommodation in the heritage town?	
Which one is the better option?	A. Accommodation inside the heritage area B. Accommodation outside the heritage area Reason:

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