Session – II

Heritage of Chennai through the ages

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The mere words Patnam, Madras or Chennai bring instant recall of what is etched deep in memory, of certain images I our mind with strong association to its location.

What is Chennai?

What is a city remembered by?

Is its landscape?

Is its people?

Is it the events, streetscape or the throbbing culture?

In part, it is certainly a weave of all of these but predominantly it is the built form and architecture that form a frame of reference for the city and links people across generations through their common association with landmark in their perception of the city, establishing a link in time like a string through the past, present and future. It is this overlay of memories that sustains our very beings.

In our everyday life, we experience the buildings and spaces in our city, however we rarely pause to observe. Like Simon & Garfunkel would say

People hearing without listening

People talking without speaking,

Most times we are only seeing without looking.

In an attempt to explore the architectural wealth of our city's heritage I would like to share with you a short documentary film titled 'Madras Vision of Day' named after city's founder, Francis Day.

It narrates the story of how the city has evolved staring out as villages, growing with trade, influenced by settlers, the British with their major imprint on indigenous concepts, groping with post independence issues of planning and urban development.

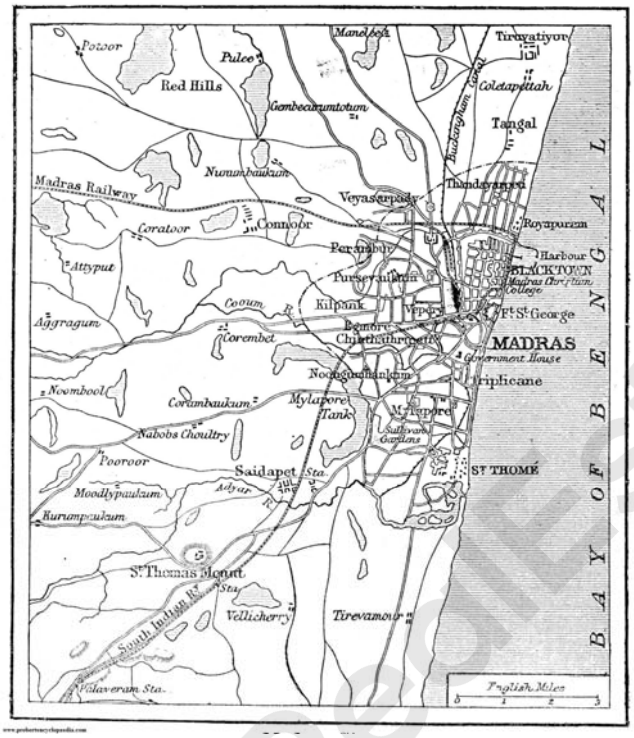
Madras has grown since the film, bursting with malls, multiplexes & flyovers. Many a flashy highrise has risen on the ashes of the last vestiges of a bygone era.

Despite this din & rush for everything new Chennai has risen up on occasion to protect its Heritage. The DGP building and more recently efforts directed towards Bharat Insurance building and Gokhale hall. The City craves a Heritage Act.

A positive step has been that Chennai has been displaying great pride in its Heritage through the Mylapore Festival, Madras Week lectures, even poetry, music, dance and film.

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The key is to integrate it into the normal course of life for citizens, builders, developers, industrialists, decision makers and children who are the torchbearers for the future.













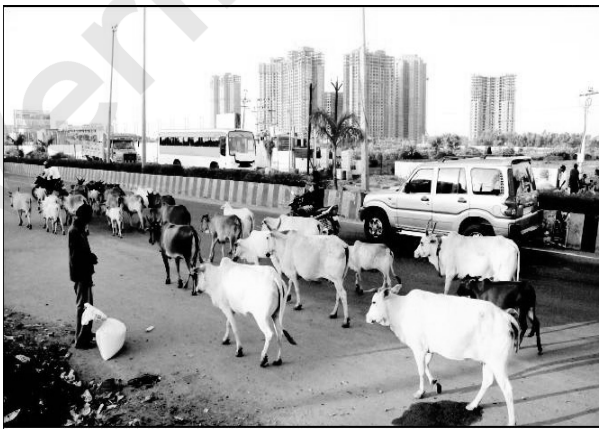





Hotel d' Angelis,
The Garden - Madras




DURING THE BOMBARDMENT OF MADRAS
THE GERMAN CRUISER "Emden" ON
E NIGHT OF THE 22ND SEPTEMBER 1914
HELL STRUCK THIS SPOT AND CARRIED
Y A PORTION OF THE COMPOUND WALL.





















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