CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE PERSPECTIVES: CULTURE, URBAN PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY
2.1 Introduction

The exploration of linkages between variables of culture, urban planning and sustainability is an area of emergent scholarship; furthermore, examples of inter-relationship of culture and urban planning thought or praxis explored in specific contexts is even meagre. Both ‘culture’ and ‘sustainability’ are used in multiple contexts, and the following sections contextualize these terms for purpose of this research. Through literature review, the chapter collates theoretical perspectives on linkages between culture, urban planning and sustainability as reflected in conjunction of these themes.

The broad structure of the chapter focusing on exploration of inter-thematic linkages between culture and urban planning in context of sustainability is shown in Figure 2.1. The Section 2.1 introduces the theoretical context of the chapter and presents definition of ‘culture’ for purpose of the research. Section 2.2 presents the approach adopted for exploration of inter-linkages between culture, urban planning and sustainability. The approach at Section 2.2 is discussed in detail in its sub-sections, which explore the conjunction of culture and sustainability, urban planning and sustainability, and culture and urban planning respectively. Section 2.3 appraises policy interventions, assesses theoretical case studies and discusses the theoretical advancements pertaining to the inquiry, and Section 2.4 presents the conclusions.

The overall objective of exploring theoretical linkages between culture, urban planning and sustainability at Indian pilgrimage towns through literature study is covered at Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. Generic linkages between culture, urban planning and sustainability are explored at Chapter 2, whereas Chapter 3 collates multi-dimensional linkages between them as reflected in context of pilgrimage towns in India. In particular, objective 1 of this research to examine theoretical inter-linkages between the themes of culture, urban
planning and sustainability is partly addressed to discern dynamic cross-linkages between culture and urban planning for its validity in sustainability discourse.

**Culture**

Culture is a fundamental, polysemic, inter-generational concept applied in various contexts, and it is significant to develop a theoretical perspective for conceptual understanding of ‘culture’ in context of this study.

Culture in its various categorizations broadly embodies i) an abstract state, or process of development of universal values in particular societies, ii) a body of knowledge reflecting the intellectual or lived human experience and iii) particular accomplishments in intellectual or artistic domains (Williams, 1998; Soini & Dessein, 2016). At its most abstract, culture reflects “how a society or place expresses importance and meaning” (Landry, 2010). In an extremely inclusive anthropological conception, Edward Tylor (1870) holistically defines culture as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”. In 2001, the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity adopted a definition of culture as “a set of distinctive spiritual, material, cultural and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs” (UNESCO, 2001). The study explores linkages between culture and urban planning in context of sustainability of pilgrimage towns in India, and multiple interpretations of culture necessitate a clear conceptualization of its embodied meaning in context of this study.

This study conceptually envisages culture as an embodiment of shared intrinsic and transient values in collective consciousness of communities; and processes for transmission of values, as also the tacit or explicit manifestations of these values and processes. Culture is imagined as a ‘way of life’ and a way of living together (UNU-IAS and IICRC, 2002); as a generic nomenclature for ‘diverse set of activities and pursuits’ (Sen, 1998); and includes its tangible and intangible manifestations (Hawkes, 2001). Not static and fossilized, culture is dynamic and creative which evolves and mutates relative to time, space and circumstances. The conceptualization recognizes that cultures are unique and also identifies that sensitivity towards the differentiation encourages cultural diversity and heterogeneity (Sen, 1998; Nadarajah, 2007).
2.2 Exploring theoretical inter-linkages between culture, urban planning and sustainability

*Development divorced from its human or cultural context is growth without a soul.*

*(Our Creative diversity, UNESCO 1995)*

Sustainability as conceptualized in the Brundtland Commission Report focuses on the environment, and ecological strategies to ensure inter-generational parity. The broadly recognized considerations for sustainability are variously represented as ‘three pillars of sustainable development’ which include economic, environmental and social aspects. The concerns are paraphrased as ‘triple bottom line’, and further as the three P’s that denote planet, people and profits as three main concerns of sustainability (Elkington, 1998). Thus theoretically, sustainability concerns itself with economic development, social justice and ecological responsibility - though their weightages vary and are largely determined by the local context and philosophy driving development. The three considerations are in dialectical tension, and sustainable development praxis appears as a shifting adjustment among them (Hawkes, 2001). In early stages, the prime determinants included economic development and its environmental implications, with little consideration of cultural aspects, which was considered as included in the social criteria.

The linkage of culture with either sustainability or urban development and planning is still an emerging area of research, with nebulous structured information available from either global research or praxis (Duxbury & Jeannotte, 2010; Nadarajah, 2007). The theoretical inter-relationship between the three domains of culture, urban planning and sustainability is herein explored through a review of cross-sectorial development literature and deduction of thematic inter-linkages between them (Figure. 2.2). Inter alia, the inter-relationship is gleaned through an inquiry into linkages between culture with the wider domain of ‘development’, and ‘sustainable development’. Established inter linkages between culture and urban planning are even weaker, and the role of culture is extrapolated from urban planning response to development and sustainability frameworks. The following sub-sections explore the theoretical inter-linkages between the themes of ‘culture’, ‘urban planning’ and ‘sustainability’
2.2.1 Culture and the sustainability domain

Oxford dictionary defines sustainability as the “ability to be sustained, supported…etc.” The intrinsic meaning implies potential for application of sustainability as a fundamental concept in many disciplines of the development sector. This section focuses on inclusion and advancement of cultural aspects in the wider domain of development to emerge as a key dimension of fundamental importance in the sustainability paradigm. The locus of culture in sustainability is gleaned from literature study, and its increasing inclusiveness in development sector as reflected in three broad categories of development goals, public policy and action and cross-disciplinary linkages is examined (Figure. 2.3). The significance of culture is merited on account of its relevance for economic, social and cultural progress and fulfillment of individuals and communities. Moreover, it is also relevant for its potential role in public policies for poverty reduction, education, environment, sustainable cities, inclusion and reconciliation. Progressively, in policy too, culture’s centrality as a catalyst, driver and enabler (UNESCO, 2013) of sustainable development is being acknowledged.
Figure 2.3: Increasing inclusion of ‘Culture’ in ‘Development’ and ‘Sustainable Development’ discourse

Source: (Varma & Singhal, 2016)
Evidently, culture was recognized as a developmental concern (Bandarin, et al., 2011) integral to the social life in the early 1970’s, and its incremental significance reflected in the emergent sustainability/sustainable development paradigm. It was the emphasis on human-centric development paradigms that led to the increasing consideration of culture in sustainability. As evidence of increasing cognition of its significance, culture has been theoretically advanced as the ‘fourth pillar of sustainability’ (Hawkes, 2001), a potential paradigm shift. Reinforcing its importance further, culture is argued as ‘fourth but central pillar’ of sustainable development (Nurse, 2006), a fundamental enabler of sustainability (UNESCO, 2013). Though culture fails in its identification as a stand-alone goal, its significant role is recognized as relevant in the international development agenda under four areas of the Sustainable Development Goals (UN, 2015). The criteria for inclusion of culture in sustainable development agenda is inter alia supported based on its relevance for:

- “human capacity expansion” (Sen, 1990), and ‘enlarging people’s choices’ as focus of development (World Commission on Culture and Development, 1996);
- social and cultural fulfilment of an individual (UNESCO, 1998), which is increasingly being perceived as objectives of human development
- strengthening the cultural-aesthetic dimension of sustainable development (Tutzinger Manifesto, 2001);
- emphasis on the significance of society’s values, and the necessity of it finding an avenue for expression (Hawkes, 2001) and
- cross-sectorial linkages with disaster resilience and climate change, social development, economic development, peace & reconciliation, environmental sustainability, sustainable urban development (UNESCO, 2013; UN, 2014), poverty reduction and education (UN, 2014).

Greater recognition of culture in the domain of development led to research in the role of culture in sustainability studies. Early research exploring the inter-relationship between culture and sustainability argues culture to have both an ‘instrumental’ and a ‘constituent’ role (Throsby, 1997). The first viewpoint envisages culture as a mode of development, whereas the other focuses on intrinsic values of culture. This further developed into the notion of ‘cultural capital’, which characterized independent existence of culture for applying principle of intergenerational equity (Throsby, 2009). Inter-relationship of culture in its engagement with sustainability envisages three potential roles for culture (Soini, 2013; Dessein, et al., 2015):
- Self-standing: Culture as the fourth pillar of sustainability, envisaged as culture in sustainable development,
- Transversal: Culture as a catalyst in sustainable development, envisaged as culture for sustainable development, and
- Fundamental: Culture as a new paradigm of sustainability, which envisages culture as sustainable development (Figure 2.4).

Source: (Roders, 2013)

Source: Dessein et al., (2015)

Figure 2. 4: Approaches on positioning culture with global sustainable development

The conceptualization of culture in sustainability studies is still nebulous, and three preceding conceptualizations have been explored through eight organizing dimensions that are structured in an interdisciplinary framework for research and policy (Soini & Dessein, 2016). The framework facilitates a distinctive interpretation of interrelation between culture and sustainability in any specific context of inquiry, and supports its communication precisely. This research envisages culture in a transversal role to support sustainability, and
explores linkages between cultural aspects and urban planning for sustainability of pilgrimage towns in India.

### 2.2.2 Urban planning response to sustainability imperative

This section explores significant urban planning concepts that emerged in response to sustainability imperative for achieving urban sustainability.

With linkages identified early, Brundtland Commission’s report — Our Common Future — places the issue of sustainable development at the core of urban policy and planning concerns (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). The conceptual connect of sustainability and urbanism is indicated by assertions that propose sustainability as pivotal in the urban development process (Berke, 2002) and concomitantly, focus on sustainable urban development as imperative for sustainability initiatives (Yanarella & Levine, 1992; HABITAT III, 2016). Yet, concentration of urban population and its quest for economic growth has had substantial adverse implications viz. environmental degradation, resource depletion, deteriorating ecosystems and climate change (Dixon, 2011), and the urban development process grapples for appropriate sustainable responses. Emphasizing on need of a new perspective in urban planning, Global Report on Human Settlements initiated a proposal to envisage liveable, productive and inclusive cities, towns and villages as the goal of sustainable urbanization (UN-HABITAT, 2009).

Contemporary urban planning practices evolve from roots in the concepts of modern urban planning, developed primarily in response to Industrial Revolution in 20th century Western Europe. Historically, the idea of sustainability appears to be of tacit presence in the process of urban planning of settlements, with implicit theoretical linkages. It has been established that urban settlements were perceived holistically as constituents of a larger ecosystem by Alberti, Marsh, Olmstead and Vaux, Patrick Geddes, Mumford, Lynch, McHarg, Jacobs and many others, an aspect that has well been documented by Spiri for the Anglo-American context (Spirn, 2012). Major urban planning concepts of the 20th century were developed in response to the urban conditions in industrial cities, and embodied urban sustainability tenets as identified below (Basiago, 1996):
a. Garden city (Howard Ebenezer): Integration of town and country
b. Neo-tonic city (Patrick Geddes): Holistic view of organism, function and environment
c. Bio-technic City (L. Mumford): Synthesis of nature, machine, human activities and purposes
d. Ecological city (I. McHarg): Environmentally sensitive planning
e. Prototype symbiotic community (C. Canfield): Design based on natural carrying capacities
f. Neo-traditional town planning (P. Calthorpe): Control of regional growth

The urban planning concepts of the industrial towns gradually spread across the globe through processes of colonialism, market expansion and intellectual exchange; they embedded themselves into local planning practices at diverse locations and incongruent contexts (UN-HABITAT, 2009). However, urban planning at earlier stages focused on improvement of livability criteria in a spatial territory, and harbored a fixation on the visual aspect. Urban planning was perceived as expert-driven, focusing on design and spatial planning of human settlements - with complex social, economic or political matters eluding it. Progressively, urban planning started focusing more on automobile-centric transportation, landuse and zoning based on spatial segregation of usages, and design standardization. New cities and settlements conforming to these urban planning principles are perceived as devoid of cultural diversity, unresponsive to the local place, values, and context. They apparently result in alienation of the people from their habitat. An inquiry into antecedents of contemporary urban planning praxis reinforces need of new perspectives to synergize planning with the idea of sustainability.

Following soon after establishment of the sustainability principle, “New Urbanism” gained prominence as an alternative to traditional US suburban design in the 1980’s. It was presented as a community scale urban development model to address the negative consequences of numerous prevailing issues such as placeless sprawl, environmental deterioration, loss of agricultural lands and wilderness and erosion of the society’s built heritage. Offering spatial planning solutions, it strongly advocated the principles of compact developments, livable built environment, coherent urban form fostering a place-identity and sense of community, connections through transit-oriented development (TOD) and interconnected streets friendly to pedestrians and cyclists, mixed land uses, harmony with nature and high-quality parks for environmental sustainability, and architectural design

‘Sustainable urbanism’ also began by expounding similar ideals, rooted in New Urbanism and domains of urban design. At a larger scale and more inclusive, sustainable urbanism was characterized to be just, beautiful, creative, diverse, ecological, compact and a polycentric city having easy mobility (Rogers & Gumuchdjian, 1997). It focused on neighborhood design to provide walkable and transit-served urbanism with high performance building and infrastructure (Farr, 2008). In addition to imperatives of urban design, sustainable urbanism also considered the technological, community and economic dimension of urban development (Kasioumi, 2011) (Academy of Urbanism, 2011). The strategy for sustainable urbanism included adoption of mixed landuse, mixed tenure, mixed housing types, efficient transportation connectivity, emphasis on walkability, high net densities and integrated open spaces (Savills plc, 2007).

Though the sustainability criteria attracted professionals to address wider urban planning concerns, the initiatives evidently continued to focus on issues concerning spatial dimensions of the urban form and remained rooted in design. The social, cultural and economic dimensions of sustainable development were either relegated or simply considered beyond the scope of the movement (Gordon & Richardson, 1998) (White & Ellis, 2007) (Oktay, 2012).

The imperative to broaden the cognitive perspective of urbanization and exploration of its wider inter-linkages at varying urban scales with their surrounding rural area progressively emerged. Mostafavi expands the context of the urban in ‘Ecological Urbanism’ - a framework that deals with these complex economic, political, social and cultural perspectives through conjoining of ecology and urbanism (Mostafavi, 2010). Sustainable urban development and management is increasingly being identified as a critical aspect influencing sustainability, and considered crucial to quality of life of people (UN, 2015). As urban development focuses on sustainability, the planning process is required to meet not only the challenges of urban design but also many other social, cultural, environmental, economic, health and climate issues.
2.2.3 Culture and urban development

The international community now firmly recognizes inclusion of culture as a key innovation for New Urban Agenda (UNESCO, 2015), and envisages it as integral to strategic urban planning. ICOMOS has raised the significance of culture in human and ecological paradigms for urban sustainability (Hosagrahara, et al., 2016). For the first time, the international development agenda refers to culture within the framework of sustainable development goals related to sustainable cities and inclusive societies (UNESCO, 2015). The New Urban Agenda (2016) commits not only to target inclusion of culture as a priority component of urban plans, but also in evolving strategies for implementation. The agenda suitably identifies a need to safeguard tangible and intangible heritage, leverage cultural heritage for sustainable urban development and the engagement of locals towards achieving the objectives (UN, 2016).

It is significant to comprehend the trajectory of cultural role of cities for understanding historical transformations in the culture-urban interface, and its inter-relationship in an evolutionary perspective. This provides a context to conceptualize future cultural role of a city for predicking prognosis of urban development interventions. Based on their predominant cultural function, anthropological views recognize categorization of cities as religious, administrative, economic etc. to examine linkages between cities and processes of cultural transformation (Redfield & Singer, 1954). Studies identifying emergent drivers of urban development also envision city-types premised on the envisaged cultural role of cities in future. Based on identified emergent themes of significant impact on future cultural role of cities, Pratt (2014) presents six future city-types: i) Tourist-experience city, ii) Homeland city, iii) Campus city, iv) Business Lounge city, v) The Omnivore city and vi) Edge city (Pratt, 2014).

Urban studies from an evolution perspective theorize the urbanization process either as orthogenetic or heterogenetic based on cultural transformations effected in the urbanization process. Orthogenetic processes are embedded in traditional knowledge, focus inwards, support perpetuation of indigenous culture by effecting consolidation and reinforcement of culture at a place, and normal at a stage of primary urbanization. In contrast, heterogenetic transformations are usually through diffusion of external influence and ideas; they are normally effected through disruption of traditional cultural systems and processes and widely prevalent at places experiencing secondary urbanization. In the process of urban
development, the conceptualizations are not always distinctively exclusive, and often overlap (Redfield & Singer, 1954).

The polysemic conceptualization of culture enables distinct subjective domains of economy, environment, anthropology, media studies, cultural geography, heritage studies etc. to engage with culture in its intersection with urban development. Envisaging the role of culture as a fundamental context for future planning interventions, Young (2016) identifies three elements of culture for operationalizing it in urban planning as: i) ways-of-life; ii) history and intangible heritage; and iii) environment in the form of tangible heritage and cultural landscapes. It has been argued that the wide ranging cognition of envisaging culture as a ‘way of life’ may be too generic for specific application in the urban planning domain (Skrede, 2015) (Stevenson, 2005). The approaches for synthesis of culture and the professional domain of urban planning require cognition of culture for its potential value: i) as an instrument and ii) for its intrinsic value. ‘Culturization’ describes conceptualization of culture for its operationalization in planning, and envisages extricating a community’s concept of culture as a reflexive, critical and interrogative process (Young, 2008).

Booth proposes planning as a culturally determined process that necessitates understanding culture for urban planning praxis (Booth, 1993). Various development approaches and processes indicate engagement of culture with urban planning. Urban development approaches which focus on various aspects of culture have been adopted in urban planning for synthesis with local culture of a place. ‘Cultural planning’ envisages inclusion of cultural resources in planning for urban and community development (Mercer, 2006). Accordingly, cultural planning does not imply ‘planning of culture’ but an approach to ensure that culture is present and not marginalized in the planning process. Many culture-led and event based urban regeneration strategies have been identified as a key theme for urban development (Singhal, et al., 2009). Cultural mapping is fast emerging as a tool for building of a knowledge base; engagement of the community and empirical action planning that informs synthesis of culture and urban planning (Duxbury, et al., 2015) (Longley & Duxbury N, 2015). It focusses on spatial and temporal mapping of tangible and intangible cultural assets and resources of communities and places. Urban development approaches routinely mandate conservation of built heritage that partially reflects consideration of culture in urban planning process. Cultural statistics are collected for assimilation of cultural information for inclusion in development of evidence based policies. Based on a common understanding of culture, UNESCO has developed a framework for cultural
statistics for universal application (UNESCO, 2009) that can be potentially adopted for consideration in the urban planning process. Increasing emphasis on development of cultural indicators indicates significance of the consideration of cultural aspects for synthesis with the development realm.

2.3 Culture, urban development and sustainability

In recognition of cities being considered as active players in promotion of sustainable development, urban context considerations – specifically significance of its culture - are being imagined as a key tool for sustainable urbanization (UNESCO, 2015). The ICOMOS concept note on cultural heritage and the new urban agenda proposes a key role of culture and cultural heritage for a human and ecological paradigm of conceiving cities. The note envisages cultural heritage as a key element of urban sustainability and examines the role and entry and exit points of culture in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (Hosagrahar, et al., 2016).

Initiatives such as Spanish Strategy for Culture and Development Cooperation in Spain (AECID, 2007), Integrated Community Sustainability Plans in Canada (Duxbury, et al., 2012), Cultural Plans at Australia represent overarching policies and strategies that include a focus on synergies between culture and urban planning. In Asian context, the Kanazawa Initiative explored the role of culture in sustainability of cities wherein culture-centric trajectories for sustainable urbanization were examined through four case studies in different countries (Nadarajah, 2007). The different modes of engagement with culture for sustainable urbanization included: i) internal cultural transformation approach at Patan, Nepal (Tiwari, 2007); ii) multiculturalism and enlightened localism approach at Penang (Nadarajah, 2007), Malaysia; iii) urban cultural identity approach at Cheongju, Korea (Choe, 2007); and iv) cultural mode of production approach at Kanazawa, Japan (Sasaki, 2007).

We examine the literature through three lenses: temporal, spatial and conceptual, which reveals rather weak linkages between the conceptual underpinnings of culture and sustainability and community planning praxis (Duxbury & Jeannotte, 2010). Concurrently, a wider role of culture in sustainability is also being advanced in the urban development discipline, wherein culture is seen as an invaluable tool for sustainable urban development.
(UNESCO, 2015). Culture and cultural heritage is proposed to be of significant value to the sustainability of cities as (Hosagrahar, et al., 2016):

- a driver for inclusive economic development,
- an enabler for social cohesion, inclusion and equity and
- improving liveability and sustainability of urban areas.

In beginning of 2000, the Kanazawa Initiative examined the role of culture in building sustainable cities at four different Asian countries. Four case studies at different locations explored the role of culture in sustainability of each city; and in response to the diversity identified four different culture-centric trajectories for sustainable urbanization (Nadarajah, 2007). These different modes of engagement with culture for sustainable urbanization are briefly summarized below:

1. **Internal cultural transformation approach at Patan, Nepal**: This involved a systematic inquiry to explore and identify eight cultural practices and processes that fulfilled an urban purpose, and contributed to sustainable urbanism. For example, it emerged that a religious festival contributed towards maintenance of water works, and another that facilitated maintenance of the city’s public facilities. It is demonstrated that urban planning processes informed by such transformational aspects of culture can potentially contribute to sustainability of Patan significantly. This approach has spawned a few more projects and initiated a few organizations which invite participation and support of communities for working in domains of conservation, adaptive reuse, visual improvement and tourism development (Tiwari, 2007),

2. **The multiculturalism and enlightened localism approach at Penang, Malaysia**: Sustainable Penang Initiative (SPI) was a project launched to establish sustainable development indicators that adopted a report card tool to evaluate sustainability. The study examined presence of sustainability aspects in various domains including governance, market, conservation etc., and suggested a framework of eight thought principles of cultural repertoire whose integration into various discourses lead to a culture of sustainability. This study identified governance as a barrier for sustainable urbanization since its sustainability principles are endogenous, and not emergent from local culture. It strongly proposes governance approach to evolve
from local culture in interest of multiculturalism, and attain sustainability through this ‘enlightened localism’ (Nadarajah, 2007).

3. **The urban cultural identity approach at Cheongju, Korea**: Cheongju experiences global flows and rapid transformations undermine the local identity. The study recognizes the tension between cultures of consumption influenced by western civilization with Confucian/Buddhist values of frugality, and broadens/confute the debate as between cultural homogenization and heterogenization. It emerges from the study that local responses need careful thoughts on cultural viability in context of this dialectic tension. The study reports that creation of an urban cultural identity is considered imperative, and suggests integration of culture in urban governance, city economy, environment, and other spatio-physical and societal systems (Choe, 2007).

4. **The cultural mode of production approach at Kanazawa, Japan**: This approach underscores creativity and sustainability as key concepts and proposes new production system models that aim towards artification of daily life. It fundamentally examines the role of creative culture for endogenous urban economic development. These would be creative cities based on originality in industry and culture in a sustainable manner (Sasaki, 2007).

Currently, theoretical conceptualization of the linkages are being enunciated and operational frameworks and methodologies for research are emergent. However, the interlinkage between culture and sustainable urban development are still nebulous in contemporary urban planning domain (Rana & Piracha, 2007) (White & Ellis, 2007), and requires additional empirical data and evidence-based validation.

2.4 **Conclusions**

Examination of the role of culture in urban planning and its synthesis with sustainable development is fast emerging as a key area of research and investigation in academia. In practice though, culture is seldom used as a key urban development variable, and is characteristically referred in its intersections with other key sustainability (economic, environmental, social) variables and indicators. Operationalization of culture in development domain also faces the challenges imposed by limitations of legislative
frameworks and targeted policies, complexity of cultural sector, inadequacy of indicators and evaluative metrics and issues related to community participation (Duxbury, et al., 2016). In this background, cultural mapping is fast emerging as a mode of enquiry and methodological tool for identifying the potential role of culture in urban planning processes (Evans, 2015). Empirical researches supported by studies in diverse contexts are required to establish culture as a valuable tool for sustainable urban development. The following Chapter 3 addresses the context by embedding the inquiry into culture and urbanism at pilgrimage towns in India.