

Heritage is also very much part and parcel of people's lives, surviving through rituals and traditions.

### Earthquake strikes Marathwada

A devastating earthquake hit Marathwada in the early morning hours of 30 September 1993. Its magnitude was 6.3 on the Richter scale and it left nearly 9 000 villagers dead and around 16 000 injured. In the 52 villages that were most severely affected, some 30 000 houses were destroyed or badly damaged (Jigyasu, 2001).

The loss of life and property was particularly high in rural areas, where many traditional buildings, which had already become weak and vulnerable, were unable to withstand the shock of the earthquake.

### Vulnerability and capacity of cultural heritage at the time of earthquake

Traditional construction techniques have several features that contribute towards good earthquake performance. These include good stone masonry with good corner joints and through-stones, timber under-structure with flexible tongue-and-groove joinery capable of absorbing earthquake forces, as well as wooden columns resting on stone bases that help isolate the base during ground motion. However, in spite of these features, most of the traditional structures performed poorly during the earthquake, causing many deaths.

There were several reasons for the high vulnerability of these structures, which are linked to the overall development context. Increased poverty of agrarian communities meant that these structures were not regularly maintained, e.g. the traditional application of kerosene oil to wooden beams and columns had been discontinued, thereby accelerating the deterioration of the wood. Some other traditional practices had also been discontinued due to ignorance or loss of knowledge. For example, the practice of periodically replacing the mud layers covering roofs was substituted by simply adding successive mud layers, thereby increasing the dead weight of the roof. The quality of stone masonry had also degenerated to a great extent; rather than building consolidated stone constructions employing through-stones, rubble masonry held together by a mud mortar was merely faced with properly cut stones. For several reasons, craftsmen had lost significant knowledge that had given rise to such a fine cultural heritage in the region.

### Emergency decisions for post-earthquake reconstruction

In the emergency phase following the earthquake, the government took several crucial decisions for reconstruction that would change the destiny of Marathwada and irreversibly impact the rich living