

INFLUENCE OF INDIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE ON WORLD HERITAGE

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Introduction

Cultural Heritage Tourism uses the remains of the history in which the traveler is interested. Cultural Heritage Tourism has positive and negative impact on social-cultural, physical and economic aspects of Indian Society. Ajanta Caves in India which is a world heritage site and caves of Buddhist affiliation have been carved in Deccan basalt.

From a social-cultural perspective tourism affects cultural resources through changes in forms and functions of traditional artworks, commodification of living culture, crowded condition and community members. Tourist activities exact physical impacts on precious heritage in form of vandalism, wear, tear and pollutions. On a more positive note, tourism from the increasing number of people, helps in creating jobs and taxes and stimulates entrepreneurialism in heritage destinations.

This study recognizes the impacts of Cultural Heritage Tourism at Ajanta Caves and its surrounding regions in western India. For this research project, primary data is collected through observation and interviews of local community members, visitors, agents and officers of tourism department and secondary data is obtained from books, journals, survey reports, and publication of the government.

The paper is divided into four parts: the First part introduces research work; the second part presents a general description and understanding of the Ajanta which brings out the significance of the Ajanta caves. The third part explains the Ajanta Ellora Conservation and Tourism Development Project related with impact of tourism in Ajanta. The fourth part analyses impacts of cultural heritage tourism on Ajanta caves through the collected data as well as discusses the

multiplier impacts of tourism such as physical, economic, and social dimensions on the Ajanta Caves and tries to study it from an integrated approach. Lastly the paper brings a summary, conclusions and recommendations. Thus, this study about impacts of cultural heritage tourism analyses how best it can increase the positive impacts and restrict the negative impacts in order to preserve the Ajanta Caves, so that they can be enjoyed by contemporary and future generations on society.

1. Review of Literature

Matheson and Wall(1982) defined 'impact' as 'the form of altered human behavior that stems from interactions between agents and change and sub-systems on which they impinge'. They defined social and cultural impacts of tourism as the ways in which tourism is contributing to changes in value systems, individual behaviors, family relationships, collective lifestyle, safety levels, moral conduct, creative expressions, traditional ceremonies and community organizations.

Maharashtra abounds in numerous tourist attractions ranging from ancient cavetemples, unspoiled beaches, ancient forts and monuments, forests and wildlife, unique hillstations, pilgrimage centres, and a rich tradition of festivals, art and culture. Hence our campaign slogan for Maharashtra Tourism is - "MAHARASHTRA UNLIMITED!".

Tourism policy of Maharashtra 2006 states that, "Tourism has the potential to change the economic face of a region. The benefits of planned tourism development are manifold. Promotion of tourism would bring many direct and indirect benefits to the people." Along with this the policy enlists various direct and indirect benefits of tourism for local community. According to that direct benefits are:

- Employment opportunities in tourism and hospitality sector
- Developmentof private enterprise
- Improved standard of living
- Social upliftment and improved quality of life

- Better education and training
- Sustainable environmental practices
- Foreign exchange earning

Some of the indirect benefits accruing to the local community of a region as a result of tourism development are:

- Infrastructure development- power, water, sanitation, hospitals, roads, etc.
- Market for local produce
- Employment in infrastructure sector
- Economic upliftment due to income multiplier effect.

These direct and indirect benefits are nothing but the positive social, economic, environment and cultural impacts of the tourism development.

Timonthy and Nyaupane(2009) classified that the negative and positive impacts associated with cultural heritage tourism, which have traditionally been divided into physical or environmental, socio-cultural, and economic.

1) Physical impacts

One of most serious effects of tourism on the physical heritage environment is wear and tear. The deterioration of the built environment occurs in a number of ways, although the most direct occurs when visitors touch, climb on, or rub historic structures and artifacts.

In addition to direct structural damage, surrounding green spaces and landscaping are also affected, suffering considerable wear and tear as visitors veer from sidewalks and other prescribed pathways. This often results in compacted soils, where little will grow, and increased soil erosion.

Litter is another problem associated with heritage places. Garbage is a major problem and Ritual litter is common in and around religious places. Also air pollution contributes to the dilapidation of heritage sites as well.

2) Socio-Cultural impacts

The most significant problem related to this and among the most deplorable social outcomes of tourism is the forced displacement of local populations. Heritage conservation and tourism have a major role to play in the forced relocation of indigenous and powerless populations.

According to Greenwood, the Social impacts of heritage tourism are hard to measure. Tourists often enter locals' sacred space to watch and photograph rituals. Local residents often become annoyed and feel that their sacred or personal space is being transgressed by non-believers or outsiders. This often results in conflict when the behaviour of cultural tourists become intolerable to local worshippers and pilgrims. There is also a threat of over-commodification of culture, when destination populations perform rituals for tourists, which may in the process lose their original social or religious value.

This lack of true ownership of culture is one of the most often-cited frustrations among indigenous peoples and local community members in cultural tourism destinations, where culture as a tourism resource is controlled by outsiders. Most commentators today, in line with principles of sustainable development, argue that the use of a society's culture should be done on that society's terms and according to what they seem to be the appropriate use.

But several commentators have observed tourism as a positive force in reviving lost or declining elements of culture. Societal self-esteem and cultural pride are often increased through tourism as local people present their chosen ethnic elements to outsiders.

3) Economic impacts

Economic benefits are the most important reasons behind the development and incentives to communities and governments. The most direct form of economic impact in heritage tourism is revenue regenerated through entrance fee. Heritage tourism is especially prone to create employment opportunities, providing infrastructure and public services for the community, helping fund the preservation and management of historic sites, and overall stimulating the local and national economy.

The World Tourism Organization has listed six major areas of economic benefits of tourism:

- Export Earnings.
- Employment.
- Rural Opportunities.
- Infrastructure Investment.
- Tax Revenues.
- Gross Domestic Product.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation defines the **benefits of Cultural Heritage Tourism** (culturalheritagetourism) as following. The Cultural heritage tourism can have a tremendous economic impact on local economies. To economic benefits like new businesses, jobs and higher property values, tourism adds less tangible—but equally important—payoffs. A well-managed tourism program improves the quality of life as residents take advantage of the services and attractions tourism adds. It promotes community pride, which grows as people work together to develop a thriving tourist industry.

Tourism can be a source of cultural revival through societal self-esteem and pride. Economic benefits are the most important reasons behind the development and promotion of heritage tourism. It provides much needed economic incentives to communities and governments.

2. Description of Ajanta Caves

UNESCO (unesco.org) describes the Ajanta Caves followings as: The style of Ajanta Caves has exerted a considerable influence in India and elsewhere, extending, in particular, to Java. With its two groups of monuments corresponding to two important moments in Indian history, the Ajanta cave ensemble bears exceptional testimony to the evolution of Indian art, as well as to the determining role of the Buddhist community, intellectual and religious foyers, schools and reception centers in India of the Gupta and their immediate successors.

The caves are situated 100 km north-east of Ellora, 104 km from Aurangabad and 52 km from Jalgaon Railway Station. They are cut into the volcanic lava of the Deccan in the forest ravines of the Sahyadri Hills and are set in beautiful sylvan surroundings. These magnificent caves containing carvings that depict the life of Buddha, and their sculptures are considered to be the beginning of classical Indian art.

The 29 caves were excavated beginning around 200 BC, but they were abandoned in AD 650 in favour of Ellora. Five of the caves were temples and 24 were monasteries, thought to have been occupied by some 200 monks and artisans. The Ajanta Caves were gradually forgotten until their 'rediscovery' by a British tiger-hunting party in 1819.

The Ajanta site comprises of thirty caves cut into the side of a cliff which rises above a meander in the Waghora River. Today the caves are reached by a road which runs along a terrace mid-way up the cliff, but each cave was once linked by a stairway to the edge of the water. This is a Buddhist community, comprising five sanctuaries or *Chaitya-grihas* (caves 9, 10, 19, 26 and 29) and monastic complex *sangharamas* or *viharas*. A first group of caves was created in the 2nd century BC: the chaitya-grihas open into the rock wall by doorways surmounted by a horse-shoe shaped bay. The ground plan is a basilical one: piers separate the principal nave from the side aisles which join in the apsis to permit the ritual circumambulation behind the (commemorative monument). This rupestral architecture scrupulously reproduces the forms and elements visible in wooden constructions.

A second group of caves was created at a later date, the 5th and 6th centuries AD, during the Gupta and post-Gupta periods. These caves were excavated during the supremacy of the Vakatakas and Guptas. According to the inscriptions, Varahadeva, King Harishena (c. AD 475-500) dedicated Cave 16 to the Buddhist sangha while Cave 17 was the gift of the prince, a feudatory. An inscription records that the Buddha image in Cave 4 was the gift of some Abhayanandi who hailed from Mathura.

Under the impulse of the Gupta dynasty, Indian art in effect reached its apogee. The Ajanta Caves are generally decorated with painted or sculpted figures of supple form and classic balance with which the name of the dynasty has remained synonymous. The refined lightness of the decoration, the balance of the compositions, the marvellous beauty of the feminine figures place the paintings of Ajanta among the major achievements of the Gupta and post-Gupta style and confer on them the ranking of a masterpiece of universal pictorial art.

3. Ajanta Ellora Conservation and Tourism Development Project - AEDP project (Hidaka *et al.*, 2007; TATA Consulting Services, 2006; Sawant and Ragde, 2013)

1) Phase-I Project brief(1993-2003)

Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation – an undertaking of the Government of Maharashtra State conceived the Ajanta Ellora Conservation and Tourism Development Project and got prepared in 1991, a Master Plan from M/s. Tata Consultancy Services, on the basis of which the Government of India requested the Government of Japan to consider grant of Financial Assistance for the Project. The Government of Japan got the Master Plan assessed by the Overseas Economic Co-operation Fund (OECF) now Japan Bank for International Co-operation (JBIC) and offered a Loan assistance to Government of India for implementation of a part of the Master Plan as Phase I of the Project. The two Governments entered into an agreement for the Loan in January 1992. A Joint Venture of Pacific Consultants International (PCI) and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) were appointed in November 1993 as Consultants for planning and overseeing the implementation of the works under the Loan.

The objectives of the project are:

- To conserve and preserve monuments and natural resources in the Ajanta-Ellora Region.
- To improve the infrastructure in order to accommodate the increasing number of tourists to the region and enhance their experience by providing improved facilities and services.
- To preserve the historical and cultural background of religion like Buddhism and to highlight the significance of Ajanta and Ellora as well as other related sites.

- To provide better visitor management service to enrich the overall visitor experience.
- To motivate tourists to extend their stay in the region, thereby augmenting the country's earning from tourism.

The present Phase of the project consists mainly of building up essential infrastructure facilities and it is completed. As stipulated in the Terms of References the Consultants have reviewed the original Master Plan and have formulated proposals for Phase 2. The proposals were presented by the Ministry of Tourism for consideration of OECF at an Inter-ministerial Meeting. The proposals were reviewed by the fact-finding Mission of OECF in February 1998. The OECF requested the Government of India to submit the proposals next year for consideration. The OECF also asked for provision of certain more details and completion of expert panel review before forwarding the proposals.

The Total project cost was estimated at Yen 4,406 million, which was equal to Rs. 817.1 Million at the exchange rate of Rs.1 equals Yen 5.39. The support from JBIC was Yen 3,745 million (Rs. 494-8 Million) and this is around 85% of the total project cost.

The major works completed in Phase – I:

Monument Conservation, Airport, Afforestation, Roads, Water Supply, Electricity, and Visitor Management System (VMS)

The above works were undertaken during Phase-I. In the meanwhile there was a balance of approximately Rs.380 million from the loan amount due to the depreciation of Rupee, after the signing of the loan agreement. The Government of India requested the Government of Japan for extending the loan agreement, which was agreed. The loan agreement was now been extended to 31st March 2002 and further works were being undertaken based on the recommendations of 5th Steering Committee meeting.

The Sub projects to be executed in extension Phase are shown below and summary of Additional Work Package for the extended period is given as enclosure. The proposed works were completed before February 2002.

2) Phase-II Project brief(2004-2013)

The second phase of the Ajanta-Ellora conservation and tourism development project with the Japanese Bank of International Co-operation (JBIC) sanctioning a soft loan of Rs.300 Crores has become effective from July 31, 2003. The loan clearance was announced after the JBIC held a series of talks with the central department of Tourism and Culture and the Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) in Delhi. The first phase of the Ajanta - Ellora heritage circuit up gradation scheme has won appreciation not only from the Japanese but also from UNESCO. The second phase envisages taking forward the conservation and a development scheme initiated in the first phase, and is estimated to Rs.360 crores. The remaining Rs.60 crores will be brought in by various agencies like the Archaeological Survey of India, Airport Authority of India and five state government agencies.

The second phase was targeted to be completed in five year time and to generate additional employment in the Aurangabad Ajanta area. The plans envisaged restoration and repair of entire cave circuit of Maharashtra, which stretches from Mumbai to Aurangabad. The work to be carried out at these places includes structural reinforcement, chemical conservation of the paintings and artifacts, preservation of percolation within the caves, upgrading the environment, training conservation staff and improving visitor management system.

Another major area of development will be the Lonar Crater, one of the oldest meteorite impact craters in the world (in Buldhana District). Last year, the MTDC built a resort near the crater to attract tourists. Now it plans to clean up the ancient temples on the beach of the lake in the crater and create heritage walks while simultaneously protecting the lake and wooded environs of the crater. Another important project that will be completed in the second phase is upgrading Aurangabad airport into an international airport.

Conclusion

The earlier architectural formulas were re-employed but treated in an infinitely richer and more ample manner. The decoration attained, at this time, an unequalled splendor: the statuary is

numerous (it was already permissible to represent Buddha as a human; these representations are found both on the facades and in the interior). Finally, the wall painting, profuse and sensitive, constitutes, no doubt the most striking artistic achievement of Ajanta.