

IMPACT OF TOURISM ON PLACES OF WORLD HERITAGE

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INTRODUCTION

This is the first of its kind in tourism sector in world heritage and aimed at organizing and training service providers at tourist sites who are otherwise considered as nuisance by tourists and planners alike but are essential part of world heritage tourism scenario. Along with the development of infrastructure in Aurangabad there is a need to cater to small necessities of tourists which are met by mushrooming hawkers whose service to tourists leave much to desire. The micro financing sub projects aimed at organizing, training, and financing this low income segment. Women entrepreneurs will be given preference and suitable NGOs had been identified to training, disburse and monitor the micro credit funding credit and recovery. The beneficiaries included of the scheme are small restaurant owners, tea shops, kiosks, guides, photographers, hawkers, fruit vendors and taxi operators. This would make them more presentable as well as increase their entrepreneurial skills and abilities. The loan amount of the will be channelized through rural banks.

Rajesh Ragde and Madhuri Sawant Ragde (2013) evaluates Ajanta-Ellora has become the first planned tourism destination of World heritage and a prime example of International cooperation in tourism between World heritage and Japan. The External Assistance provided by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for AEDP project is expected to achieve the economic development of this region through the protection of World Heritage sites and development of tourism infrastructure, thereby stimulating local economic activities and increasing living standards of local residents.

1. The Impact of Cultural Heritage Tourism

Madhuri Sawant divides natural, economic and socio-cultural impacts on cultural heritage tourism of Ajanta Caves from interview. In this paper, it can be divided into economic, environmental and socio-cultural impacts on Ajanta caves.

1) Economic impacts

The number of tourists visiting the Ajanta cave has been steadily increasing over the last years as can be seen in the tables below:

Table 1: Numbers of Visitors of Ajanta Caves 2008 to 2011 (The ministry of tourism 2011, 2012)

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011
World heritagen No.	290062	346018	389572	412473
Foreign No.	29365	22964	28192	28576

Afforestation activities created a total of 1.6 million person-days worth of work. Because approximately 70% of the persons employed in the activities were women, the project contributed to improvement of the social status of women, together with creating employment opportunities, and thereby may be considered to have contributed to the vitalization of the local economy.

Aurangabad has an exclusive set up of mini markets and lanes dedicated to selling ancient craft. The areas near Panchakki, Ajanta – Ellora, Paithan, Daulatabad and the Aurangabad city have their own shops, which sell exclusive specialty items. Aurangabad has seen the thriving of many retail, government owned privately held outlets that offer a variety of regional handicrafts, clothes, jewelry, food etc. This has immensely contributed to local employment generation. The marketing of Ajanta as a shopping destination is also a driving factor that made customers come

to buy region specific products like Himroo shawls, jewelry etc. A best example is ‘Paithani Saree’ which is handmade and known to have originated at Paithan which is a 30 minutes drive from Aurangabad.

Due to the extension of the runway and improvement of the take-off and landing system at Aurangabad Airport, a large increase is recognized since the completion of construction in 1998 in the number of airport users, the number of flights arriving and departing.

Table 2: Number of Aurangabad Airport Users

	1990	1998– 99	2000– 01	2002– 03	2004– 05	2005– 06
Total domestic travelers (arriving + departing) (persons)	65,681	92,693	104,87 2	104,91 2	133,19 9	137,38 8

Regarding the hotel industry, when a comparison was made of income and profit data in 1998 (prior to the project implementation) and 2005 (following project completion) obtained in a hotel industry survey (TATA Consulting Services) (of 17 hotels) in the Aurangabad region, it was found that income and profit rose by 11% and 10%, respectively. Moreover, when a comparison was made of the number of hotel employees (including managerial and non-manual positions) in the same region in 2000 (prior to project completion) and 2005 (following project completion), it was found that the number of managerial positions increased by 63%, and the number of non-manual positions increased by 67%. When a comparison was made of data for 2000 and 2005 concerning the average salaries of hotel employees, it was found that the average salary of managerial positions increased 87% and that of non-manual positions increased 78%. Because the percentage of increase in the number of employees is less than the percentage of increase in the average salaries, average salaries are recognized as having increased overall.

Furthermore, in the satisfaction survey concerning this project of shop(78 shops) owners in the project area and surrounding region who are some of the main beneficiaries, an average of over 70% of responses were “slightly improved” or “greatly improved” for each component, as shown on Table 3. So, a favourable evaluation result was seen overall.

Table 3: Results of Phase I Satisfaction Survey Sub-component

Results of Phase I Satisfaction Survey Sub-component	Greatly improved	Improved	Slightly improved	No change	Worse
Roads	8%	63%	12%	17%	0%
Water supply	2%	22%	48%	28%	0%
Public transportation	2%	37%	48%	11%	1%
Guide signs/road signs	7%	33%	41%	17%	2%
Airport facilities	4%	34%	40%	20%	2%
Electric power condition	7%	23%	46%	22%	2%
Paths for events	6%	15%	54%	25%	0%
Media	7%	50%	25%	17%	1%

An assessment of tourism’s contribution to economic development in host regions requires an analysis of the backward and forward linkages between tourism and other sectors, an understanding of the spatial location of tourism activities and identification of the beneficiaries of its economic and other impacts. This means if tourism is to have a major influence on the economy of a country or a particular region, it should have strong linkages with the rest of the domestic economy. Tourism can, therefore, be a catalyst for national and regional development, bringing employment, exchange earnings, balance of payments advantages and important infrastructure developments benefiting locals and visitors alike. (Glasson *et al.*, 1995)

2) Environmental impacts

Tourism contains the seeds of its own destruction; tourism can kill tourism, destroying the very environmental attractions which visitors come to a location to experience. Most tourism development places additional pressure on the environmental resources upon which it is based, compromising the future prospects of the local population and, indeed, the expectations of tourists themselves (Carter, 1991). Glasson *et al.* states that tourism is, by its very nature, an agent of change. Some of the impacts of change may be controlled, regulated or directed. If properly managed, tourism has the potential of being a renewable industry, where resource integrity is maintained or even enhanced. If mismanaged, or allowed to expand within short-term goals and objectives, it has the capability of destroying the very resources upon which it is built.

With the objective of improving the surrounding natural environment, it was initially planned to conduct 500 ha of afforestation and installation of 37.55 km of perimeter fence in the Ajanta region. Moreover, access path improvement from Ajanta overlook view point to the Ajanta cave was also implemented. These additional outputs were effective for improving the area around the site, and in particular, since this access path would contribute to improvement of the flow of visitors henceforth.

Afforestation is contributing to the maintenance and conservation of the ecosystems surrounding the historic sites and to maintenance of the topography by inhibiting soil erosion and landslides in the area around the sites. Some of the afforested areas by this project were in locations not visible from the historic sites and so had no direct effect in improving the scenery of the sites; however, other afforested areas did contribute to the improvement and maintenance of the scenery along the approach paths to the historic sites.

With the aims of historic site conservation as well as improving services for increasing tourists, it was planned to purchase eco-friendly buses (electric buses) for both historic sites. In the initial plan, there were 30 buses for the Ajanta historic site and 3 buses for the Ellora historic site, but in the ex-post evaluation, it became clear that this had been partially changed. At the Ajanta historic site, low-pollution diesel buses had been purchased in place of the 10 electric

buses and were in operation. Although the buses are called “low pollution,” but the diesel buses create a higher environmental burden than do battery-operated electric vehicles, and so it is not easy to evaluate the appropriateness of this change in terms of the difference it makes in the environmental burden. The bus system contributed to reducing deterioration and degradation of the historic sites and the environment. Highly effective measures were taken for satisfying both the heritage site protection and the tourism promotion.

The construction of the tourist complex at the T-junction has been successful in removing the chaotic hustle and bustle caused by the souvenir shops, parking cars, and aggressive sellers. It was also done to maintain an environment befitting of a globally valuable cultural heritage site. This can be commended for having achieved this goal.

The impact of visitors inside the cave also increased carbon dioxide concentration. This highlighted the need for controlling the number of visitors inside the caves at a time. Also no emergency evacuation plan has been prepared till date.

Keeping in view the high influx of visitors and fragile condition of the caves, Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC), in August 2012, initiated a project to create a replica of these caves with the aid of foreign technologies and financial assistance from JICA.

3) Socio-cultural impacts

A large crowd is pulled annually by the Ajanta Ellora festival, formerly known as Ellora festival, which sees a lot of national, state, local and international involvement. It is one of the best ways to study the marketing mix involved in promoting the site as a tourist attraction. Local students from institutes like hotel institutes, tourism courses etc are invited to join the organizers and delegated various tasks to be a part of this mega event. It has been one of the drivers of tourism has been the Ajanta – Ellora festival that was started as a cultural event by the authorities. Many well-known World heritage artistes perform cultural events on this occasion. Of all the 4 P’s the most used, necessary and exemplary were the heritage place itself, people

involved, products/services offered and the simplified processes in making Ajanta to top the traveler's list.

Lighting system in the Ajanta cave (conventional and optical fiber lighting systems): Optical fiber lighting reduces radiant heat and ultra-violet rays, which deteriorate the murals. It also enables a number of murals to be open to the public in a safe manner and is a highly effective measure for satisfying both heritage site protection and tourism promotion.

MTDC has prepared pamphlets, leaflets, and promotional videos to provide visitors with information on the overview, value, and importance of the historic sites, which offer general information to a certain degree. They are prepared in English, French, German, and Japanese, as well as Hindi and Marathi.

Social equity advocates for the fairness and equal access to resources by all the user groups. The aim is to ensure equity in the distribution of costs, benefits, decision-making and management. This assumption is believed to have the potential of eradicating poverty on the poor communities.

2. Conclusion

Tourism should bring benefits to host communities and provide an important means and motivation for them to care for and maintain their heritage and cultural practices. The involvement and co-operation of local and/or indigenous community representatives, conservationists, tourism operators, property owners, policy makers, those preparing national development plans and site managers is necessary to achieve a sustainable tourism industry and enhance the protection of heritage resources for future generations (ICOMOS 1999).

MTDC an undertaking of Maharashtra state conceived the Ajanta – Ellora Conservation and tourism development project and prepared in 1991 a master plan from Tata Consultancy Services, on the basis of which the Government of World heritage requested the Government of Japan to consider grant of financial assistance for the project. The Government of Japan got the

plan assessed from the Overseas Economic Co-operation Fund (OECF) now Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) and offered loan assistance for the implementation of the master plan as phase –I of the project.

The second phase of the Ajanta - Ellora Conservation and tourism development project is for the first phase of Ajanta – Ellora heritage circuit up gradation scheme won appreciation not only from Japanese government but also UNESCO. The second phase envisaged taking forward the conservation and a development scheme initiated in the first phase.

Economic impacts is a major issue of cultural heritage tourism of Ajanta on society of Aurangabad by improvement of airport, widening of road to reduce time, project's activities and employment in shop, restaurant, hotel, transportation section and so on. Environmental impacts are through Afforestation, installation of fence, operation of eco-friendly buses to reduce pollution, the construction of the tourist complex at the T-junction and etc. Socio-cultural impacts are such as festival and exchanging cultural custom directly or indirectly between visitor and host people and each other by pamphlets, leaflets, and promotional videos.

The following are the few suggestions on impacts of cultural heritage tourism of Ajanta caves:

- Need for controlling the number of visitors inside the caves at a time for need of carbon dioxide
- Need of good resorts(Star Hotels) or facilities near (T-junction, 4 KM from Ajanta Caves) for Local economic growth
- Need of regular meetings and survey of local residents to understand and involve in decision-making of tourism policies
- Need of master plan for Home stays and local products (handicraft, items of Ajanta Caves and etc)

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