

Probe in to Heritage Tourism and Management of Three World Heritage Sites Similar in Nature

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Abstract—World heritage sites are duly & finally tagged by UNESCO. India has many such world heritage sites. Once world heritage site is tagged to some site, many responsibilities go on respective organisations associated with it to thoroughly manage the site. Reason for this is that once site avails world heritage tag, tourism over their gets high and rapid boost. This paper attempts to probe into few world heritage sites, therefore.

There are two areas called prohibited areas and regulated areas with respect to all three sites. Prohibited area extends to 100 meters from boundary of caves and regulated area extends to 200 meters from boundary of caves i.e. protected site.

Core area of Ajanta caves is managed by Archaeological Survey of India (A.S.I.). Its management comprises conservation of all the caves, visitor management, structural monitoring of caves and loose boulders, capacity building of its associated staff, awareness raising in tourists, cleaning of caves etc. Same is case with Ellora caves and Elephanta caves.

Buffer zone is managed jointly by combination of A.S.I., the forest department and the Government of Maharashtra and few others partially varying at all three sites. Various legislation helps these authorities to manage its core area i.e. caves and its buffer zone.

It can be concluded that heritage tourism and management of these three sites is complex task and requires sizable internal coordination.

Keywords— *Heritage, Tourism, Management, World, Site (key words)*

I. INTRODUCTION

There are heritage sites of different categories in the world. INTACH plays important role in our country in conservation of heritage. Archaeological survey of India and Archaeological survey of different states of India has many protected monuments under it. Highest and of utmost importance are world heritage sites. They are duly & finally tagged by UNESCO. India has many such world heritage sites. Obtaining world heritage tag itself is a long and demanding task. Above all, once a world heritage tag is received, concerned authorities need to act responsibly and needs to continuously adhere to standards set by UNESCO. Organisations associated with it need to thoroughly manage the given world heritage site. Reason for this is that once site avails world heritage tag, tourism over their gets high and rapid boost. Keeping balance between rising tourism around world heritage site and conserving world heritage site could be challenging task. Studying/comparing world heritage sites similar in nature would give better insight into this topic. This paper thus/therefore attempts to probe into few world heritage sites, therefore. It is a **probe into-** as title of paper speaks-

heritage tourism and management of three world heritage sites similar in nature.

II. CORE

Some world heritage sites in India were enlisted which were primarily found similar in nature. Few of them similar in nature across India were explored/screened/filtered. Finally it was found that Ajanta, Ellora and Elephanta rock cut caves were best combination for conducting this probe. Brief of these three sites go like this

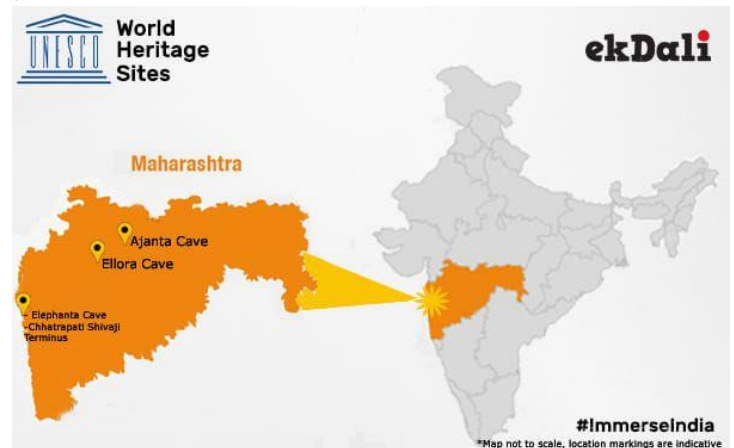


Fig. 1. Three world heritage sites of Maharashtra. (Source:Pinterest, ekDali.com)

All three sites are located in single state (Maharashtra) and therefore would offer reasonable commonalities/similarities.



Fig. 2. Panoramic view of Ajanta caves. (Source:Wikipedia)



Fig. 3. Kailash Temple, part of Ellora caves, (Source: whc.unesco.org)



Fig. 4. One of the caves of Elephanta caves. (Source: whc.unesco.org)

All three sites are rock-cut caves adding to one more commonality/similarity. All three sites are in mountains/hills and in reasonable forests. This makes study more simple and easy for probe which is the intention of this study.

Preliminary study says that there are two areas called **prohibited areas** and **regulated areas** with respect to all these three world heritage sites. Prohibited area extends to **100 meters from boundary of rock-cut caves** and regulated area extends to **200 meters from boundary of caves i.e. protected site**.

In case of Ajanta caves, **Prohibited area** is named as “**World Heritage Property**” area and **regulated area** is named as “**Buffer**” area (refer figure 5) at map by world heritage committee. **Prohibited area** is one which contains/houses prime point of attraction i.e. “**Protected Monument**” i.e. rock-cut caves in case of these all three world heritage sites.

In case of Ellora caves, **Prohibited area** is named as “**Inscribed**” property and **regulated area** is named as “**Buffer zone**” of the property (refer figure 6) at map by world heritage committee.

In case of Elephant caves, **Prohibited area** is named as “**Archaeological**” area and **regulated area** is named as “**Prohibited**” area (refer figure 7) at map by world heritage committee. This awkward change of name seems to be likely because of geographical situation of Elephnta caves. Elephanta caves is a small island in the sea unlike Ajanta caves and Ellora caves. Therefore for convenience sake entire island seems to have been treated as prohibited area.

Core area i.e. protected area or protected site of Ajanta caves is managed by single organization called **Archaeological Survey of India (A.S.I.)**. Same applies to Ellora caves and Elephanta caves as well. Its management comprises around 6 to 7 different types of tasks. They are namely conservation of all the caves, visitor management, structural monitoring of caves and loose boulders, capacity building of its associated staff, awareness raising in tourists, cleaning of caves etc.

Buffer zone i.e. regulated area of Ajanta caves is managed jointly by combination of mainly 3 organisations namely **A.S.I., the Forest Department and the Government of Maharashtra** and few other organisations partially/marginally varying at all three sites.

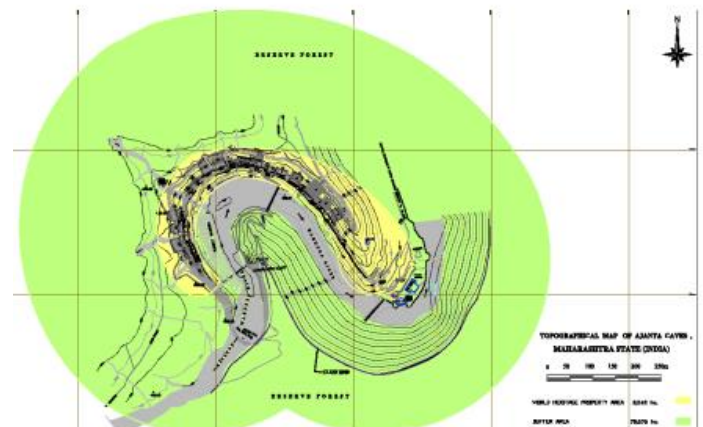


Fig. 5. Map of Ajanta caves. (Source:whc.unesco.org, 2012)

Gharapuri is a village on the Elephanta island with population of about 1000 persons (census-2011).

<https://dwiep.ncscm.res.in/Island/IslandDetails/INMH021> writes about Elephanta caves that partial fuel-generated electricity, Elephanta jetty, post office, restaurants need to be put in or needs to be well put in. Although ferries are available from the Gateway of India and Keshavaji Naik Fountain of Mumbai to reach Elephanta island. Good electricity and accommodations is essential for promoting the tourism in this place.

Another organisation <https://citizenmatters.in/> writes that GEM (Gharapuri Elephanta Manthan, a community engaging organisation) got 58 custom-designed bins installed on the island, made from multi-layer plastic (MLP); good initiative. As a result of these efforts, over 15,000 kg of waste has been collected in just six months. GEM is involved in the refurbishment of public toilets also in collaboration with Rossari Biotech.

Organisation Ek Saath has initiated the construction of a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) at Elephanta caves, so that waste can be sorted more effectively and then sent for recycling.

Interventions by <https://indianculture.gov.in/node/2537395> to enhance visitor's experience at Elephanta caves draws attention to construction of pathways, construction of flight of steps from jetty to caves, maintenance of custodian's quarters, Site Info. Centre etc.

"Ajanta-Ellora Conservation and Tourism Development Project" evaluated by Kenichiro Hidaka and others states that this project (by World Heritage Studies, University of Tsukuba in Japan) seeks to balance conservation of the World Heritage Site with usage of it for tourism promotion and local economic vitalization.

Let us review, which all are the organisations managing these core or inner area and buffer or outer area. Primary organisation dealing with both is Archeological Survey of India (A.S.I.). But other organisations/departments handling management of buffer area are - one can say assisting A.S.I. - Forest Dept., Tourism Dept. and Gram Panchayat applicable

to all three caves sites. MMRDA, Urban Deve. Dept. and Town Planning dept. are also other organisation joining A.S.I. in case of Elephanta caves. There are few N.G.O.s also joining hands at all 3 sites especially in Elephanta caves.

Legislations used by organisations mentioned above are Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act (1958) and Rules (1959), Indian Forest Act (1927), Forest Conservation Act (1980), Municipal Councils, Nagar Panchayats and Industrial Townships Act, Maharashtra (1965) and Regional and Town Planning Act, Maharashtra, (1966). These legislations help said authorities to manage its core area i.e. caves and its buffer zone.

III CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that

- 1: Heritage tourism and management of these three sites is complex task and requires sizable internal coordination between different departments.
- 2: Tourist satisfaction needs to periodically assessed and needs to respective up gradation/implementation subsequently needs to be done.
- 3: Tourist satisfaction plus local population satisfaction both needs be balanced.
- 4: Heritage conservation need not be compromised while satisfying tourists' local's needs

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