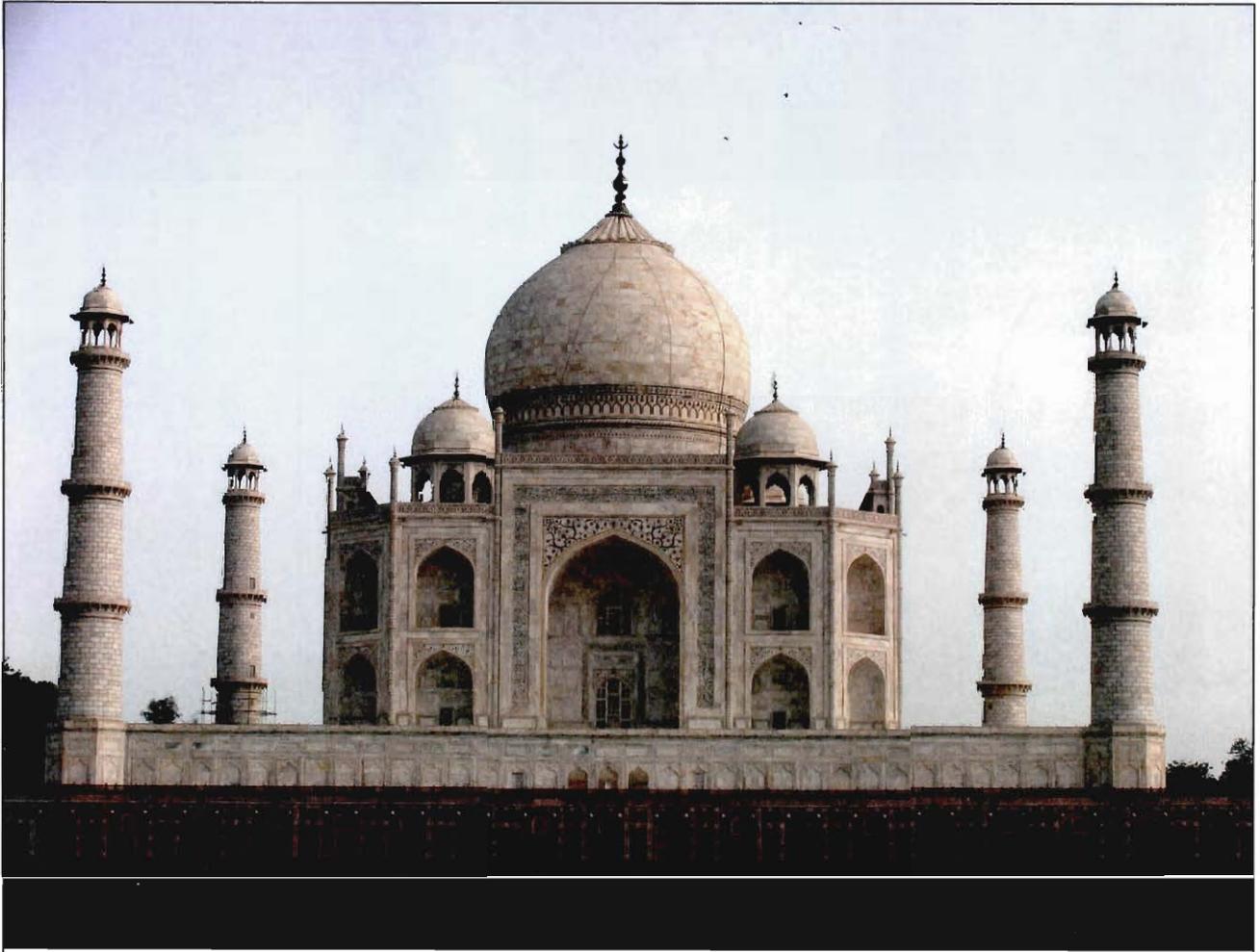


Tourism Assessment
and Concept Proposal
for
CAP Heritage Walk
and related projects in
Agra, India



June, 2006



HD

Heritage Design
USDA Forest Service
Tourism Assistance Services
www.heritagedesign.org

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Agra, India

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at the request of
USAID/India

with assistance from
USAID/EGRAT
and
International Programs/
USDA Forest Service

June 2006



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Fig.2. Location Map.

Summary

This report is a summary of a technical assistance trip I made (June 6-16, 2006) at the request of USAID/India to assess tourism initiatives in the city of Agra. The Cross-Cutting Agra Programme (CAP), formed of a partnership between USAID/India and CURE (Centre for Urban Renewal), is driven by the creation of sustainable livelihoods, the implementation of sanitation interventions, and more recently, by growing tourism development in the form of a heritage walk. My assessment is that the heritage walk is useful and feasible, and contained here are recommendations for its implementation. Long range possibilities, such as the CAP project area along the Yamuna River, involving east bank communities, are also assessed for tourism possibilities beyond the CAP intervention period. Observations and recommendations are made for enhancement of Agra tourism through community action. The heritage walk can be a model for future tourism projects.

Background and Description

The Cross Cutting Agra Programme (CAP), supported by USAID with CURE as implementing partner, aims to strengthen the livelihoods and the living environments of selected low-income communities in Agra. During stakeholder analysis, tourism emerged as a potential driver to accomplish these goals. As a result, CAP partners have focused activities on projects in preparation for tourism and requested a tourism expert to assess the project's feasibility.

The economic impulse of Agra, a city of 1.27 million, is primarily from tourism linked to the Taj Mahal and other World Heritage sites. During the 16th and 17th centuries Agra was capital of the Mughal Empire that stretched all the way to Persia. Agra still contains many existent structures of that ancient city. Despite the presence of the world-renowned Taj and a host of 2,000 larger and smaller monuments, tourism to the city is shrinking. All actors in the sector have articulated their concern. Agra, where nearly half of the city's population lives in slum areas, is known as a polluted and congested city. Loss of livelihoods among city residents who are dependent on tourism, in particular the poor, are cause of much disaffection. Still, millions of tourists from around the world visit Agra every year, attesting to its global appeal and importance.

The CAP project is designed to feature a cluster of lesser known monuments and improve living conditions in the slums that shadow these monuments. A proposed Heritage Trail is the backbone of this effort to improve livelihood through development activities, and sanitation around the monuments and neighboring communities. Within that large study area, attention has focused on a smaller Heritage Walk proposal (the primary focus of the present report) that could be supported during the duration of CAP.

The reasoning was that livelihood development in Agra linked to its key economic stimulus would provide the validation and appropriate mechanisms for transfer of lessons to other communities within Agra, and beyond. Of importance is the fact that City Development Planning (CDP) and its supporting City Development Strategy (CDS) programme are needed to access international urban development funds through JNNURM. The CDS process, to be initiated by CURE with USAID support, will be used to support the development of appropriate institutional arrangements to roll out interventions and sustain them. A demonstration intervention will help prepare detailed project reports for JNNURM funding.

This process led to the request for a tourism assessment and ideas for the Heritage Trail which will help guide and focus CAP interventions in its final phase and provide linkages between CAP and CDS.

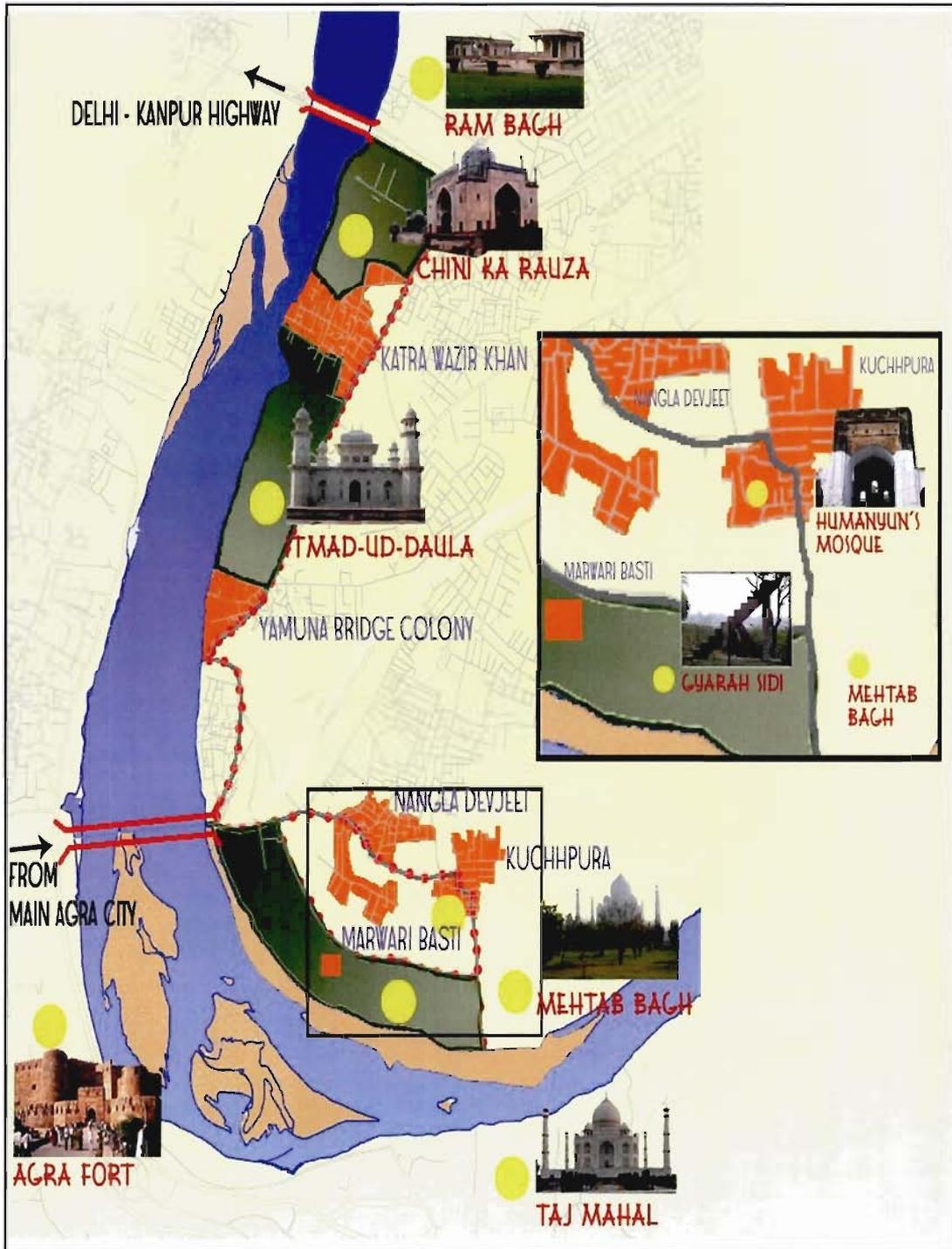


Fig. 2. CAP Heritage Trail Study Area (Heritage Walk area in box).

Terms of Reference

This request for tourism assistance was aimed at assessing the CAP tourism interventions —the larger Heritage Trail concept and, in particular, the feasibility of the more focused Heritage Walk project. If the project was considered feasible, assistance was meant to propose design ideas that would ensure success and sustainability, consider stakeholder needs, and to provide a road map for future actions.

Another requested assistance task was to assess Agra's current tourism approach, to suggest improvements, and to suggest ways for the city to link tourism to the heritage walk model and to the larger CDP-CDS work programme. A related request was to create an overall vision for improving Agra tourism to be presented at an initial CDP visioning session (Annex I: Terms of Reference).

Methodology

An initial meeting at USAID/India offices in Delhi (June 8) reviewed assistance strategy with the CURE staff, USAID program coordinators, and FIRE personnel. The bulk of June 9-13 took place in Agra assessing the project. The Agra team consisted of CAP personnel, and included Debashish Nayak, Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation Heritage Programme Advisor, contracted to assist in building the capacity of the project local teams. This combination of international and local assistance was instrumental in the success of the assessment (Annex II: Agra Assessment Team). Our combined field team and meeting with various stakeholders were instrumental in gathering input from various stakeholders (Annex III: Agra Consultation).

The resulting assessment and concept plan for the Heritage Walk, the larger Heritage Trail area, and for Agra tourism development was shared with a representative group of city stakeholders at a workshop; this included a participatory exercise designed to solicit input into the planning process.

Returning to Delhi, an exit meeting was held once again at USAID/India offices to present initial findings and focus on possible mechanisms for moving the project forward. A working meeting with CURE (CAP/Agra's implementing partner) in Delhi helped to finalize a roadmap of tasks to implement in the next few months for the Heritage Walk.

Before leaving Delhi, a document presenting an overall vision for improving Agra tourism was produced at the request of CAP for presentation at a CDP initial visioning workshop for heritage and tourism held in Agra, June 20 (Annex IV: Agra Tourism Assessment and Recommendations). Also produced was a short assessment and vision for the larger CAP Heritage Trail area on the east bank of River Yamuna (Annex V: CAP Heritage Trail Study Area Tourism Assessment and Concept Vision).

Considerations

Everyone we met with was supportive of the CAP Heritage Walk project, showing great interest in increasing tourism and keeping visitors for longer visits in Agra. Currently, most visitors come to Agra only for the day to see the world heritage sites of Taj Mahal, Agra Fort and Sikandra, and then return to Delhi, Jaipur, or other destinations.

Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) administers all monuments in the country. The CAP Study Area is within the ASI-designated Agra Heritage Corridor, a monument corridor flanking both banks of the River Yumanu and encompasses most of the major structures of the historic Mughal City. Mehtab Bagh (Moonlit Garden) is a major ASI property in the CAP Heritage Walk area that increasingly is being recognized as being integral to the Taj Mahal complex, and it is assumed that that management criteria applies to the garden, as well. Humayan's Mosque is another ASI monument in the Heritage Walk area.

Municipal and division commissioners expressed support for the project and offered general assistance. Uttar Pradesh (UP) State Tourism expressed support, but indicated that they are most interested in the idea proposed by USDI NPS to convert the rural area across from the Taj Mahal into a 'Taj National Park'. This signifies that agricultural lands should be turned into forests, for which a thick block of trees was planted on what had been productive farmland. UP Tourism acknowledges that any further action towards the Park concept is probably years away. UP Tourism also promotes the idea of limiting motorized traffic on the road through the area and leading to Mehtab Bagh.

The Tourism Guild of Agra, a powerful block of hoteliers and tour operators, is generally supportive, yet they are protective of their economic investments (concessions). The concept of tourism not centered on the traditional monument model is outside of their purview. There seems to be a traditional "closed-loop pattern" among hotels-guides-shop owners that is jealously guarded.

Tour Guide Association in Agra, with various training levels, is the most organized and well-trained of a complex myriad of licensed guides in the city, all focused on monument interpretation. Only licensed guides may conduct tours in ASI monuments. Consultation with them at this point in time was avoided. Currently, tour guides only come to Mehtab Bagh on Fridays, when the Taj Mahal is closed. Mehtab Bagh will, no doubt, be of growing importance as awareness and demand leads tour operators to include it into the Taj experience.

The Supreme Court Monitoring Committee is concerned with air quality, as well as ground disturbance, around the Taj Mahal and other monuments. A buffer of 500m for the Taj and 50m around other monuments is required, unless special permission is granted. Other land management jurisdictions and land ownership issues in the CAP heritage walk area need to be investigated in order to understand the playing field.

The Assessment Team agreed that additional stakeholders should be consulted. These include civil society groups, elected representatives, district commissioner (police), and the power board. At the UP state level, Urban Development and UP Tourism need closer communications. At the national level, policy concerns need to be addressed with ASI, Ministry of Tourism, and Ministry of Urban Development. The Team believed that international organizations to consider include UNESCO, WHC, UNEP, and INTACH.

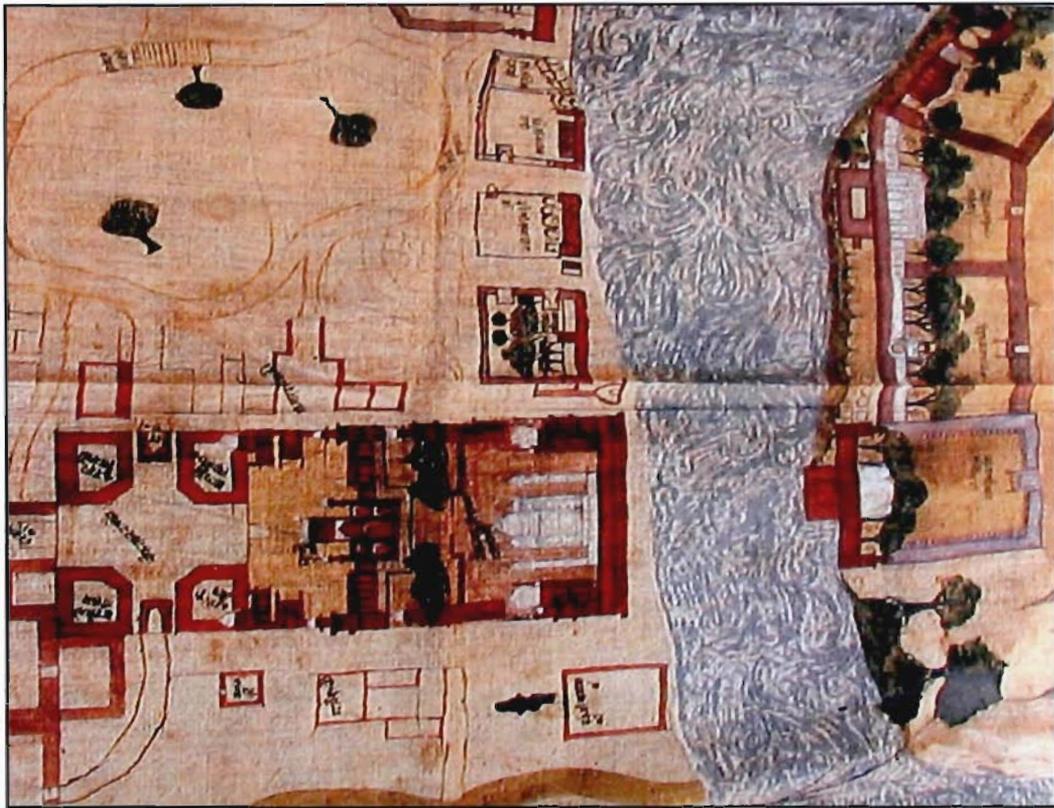


Fig. 3. Taj Mahal complex is shown straddling Yamuna River in this 17th c. map. Note gardens and aqueduct (white) on right bank.

Fig.4. Taj Mahal complex and project area in recent satellite image.



Feasibility Assessment

A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) approach was used to assess the feasibility of the CAP Heritage Walk project. Following are the results of the analysis:

Strengths

The setting has good attraction potential for tourists, such as Marwadi Basti, a 90-year-old Rajasthan refugee encampment that clings to its heritage, and Kachpura, a medieval village with a generous 'sense of place' and charm. Between these two communities is an idyllic riverside setting of small agricultural plots separated by diked walkways, with a skyline dominated by the Taj Mahal and the Agra Fort across the river. Added features include a 350-year-old Mughal garden irrigation system of aqueducts and step wells.

A well-established tourism market in Agra draws millions of visitors annually. Alternative visitor opportunities to monument tourism are quite viable.

CAP has assembled information about monuments and the greater Heritage Trail area, digitized the trail area using GIS, and prepared a larger area trail map brochure. A CAP training programme for tour animators focused on basic guiding skills and familiarity with nearby heritage monuments has created a cadre of 17 tour animator guides from local communities.

Communities have expressed readiness to participate in heritage tourism. CAP is already working in related activities, such as micro-enterprise skills development, business capacity-building and sanitation issues in these and adjoining communities. CAP has completed livelihood and household mapping of all settlements, and inventory of home-based livelihoods in the selected settlements, and they have mobilized women's groups in three settlements along the larger Heritage Trail area.

Local government and tourism associations support the venture. CAP has mobilized support from municipal and division commissioners, the Tourism Guild, Tour Operators Association, Small Hotels and Restaurant Association for Heritage Trail area improvement. The Tourism Guild has agreed to produce directional signage to the monuments on the east bank River Yamuna.

Weaknesses

Agra has a reputation as a congested and polluted city. Currently, Agra tourism is based solely on monument tourism featuring three World Heritage Sites. Few tourists spend more than one day in the area.

Agra lacks a city tourism development/master plan. Uncertainty exists regarding land tenure, property rights and resource rights and authorities. Government institutions have unclear, or even competing, plans in the Heritage Walk area.; and authorities in the area. These issues would have to be researched, agreements and partnerships formed.

The Heritage Walk organizational or management capacity would have to be built from the bottom up. (CAP livelihood programs have created an understructure that could be built upon.)

Basic infrastructure in the heritage walk area, such as telecommunications, services, and sanitation facilities, are lacking.

Opportunities

The niche market is wide open for a different “value plus” experience. Field and post-trip research makes it apparent that the area offers much more than a rural agricultural and community tourism experience. Here were the original Mughal gardens of the Empire, dating back 500 years. Kachpura contains one of the oldest structures in Agra (Humayun’s Mosque, dating to 1530) and may have been the original burial place of Babur, the founder of the Empire. Understanding is growing of the complex nature of garden irrigation systems of Mehtab Bagh (Moonlit Garden) and the Taj Mahal complex.

The project has the potential to be self-supporting and to improve the quality of life in the area. The project also has the potential to be good for the environment through solid waste management programs and, hopefully, less reliance on pesticides.

Opportunities for partnerships abound. The support already expressed can be enhanced, and institutional support can be established.

The project has the potential to serve as a much-needed best practice model for other Agra communities.

Threats

The policies and future management of the Agra Heritage Corridor and Taj National Park are unknown. Kachpura borders on Mehtab Bagh. There will be of growing emphasis for this area to be part of the Taj Mahal complex and incorporated into the Taj tourism experience.

Tourism and economic change impact communities. The size of the Heritage Walk operation would have to remain small and tightly controlled to preserve the resource and improve the product.

It is unknown whether individuals and communities can work together successfully in a business venture. Only planning and experience will tell whether competition will divide communities.

The absence of visible action after building stakeholder expectations could create discouragement and bitterness. Immediate follow up is required. Skepticism and strong business interests in the private tourism sector slows the pace of participation. The Tourism Guild seems unwilling to change existing methodologies and to adopt new paradigms.

Analysis

The CAP Heritage Walk project is considered feasible, offering potentially a rich and much needed visitor experience opportunity and a very marketable business enterprise. Organization and management are required, business and tourism training is needed, strategic partnerships must be built, and some basic infrastructure is needed. The following product concept and process is offered towards these ends.



Figs. 5-6. Scenes from the village of Marwari Basti, the start of the Heritage Walk.





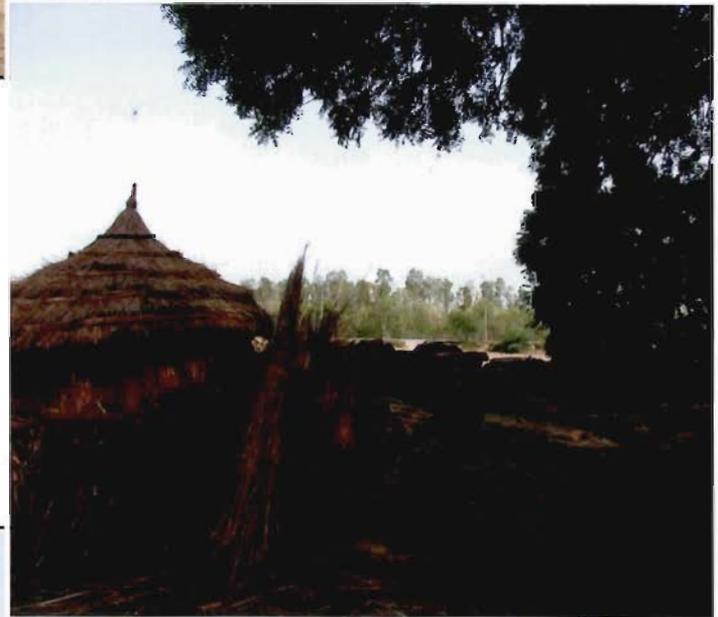
Figs. 7-8. Scenes from along the Heritage Walk.





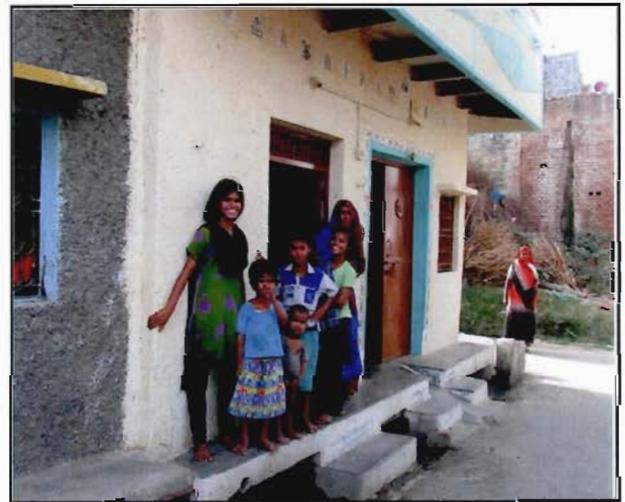
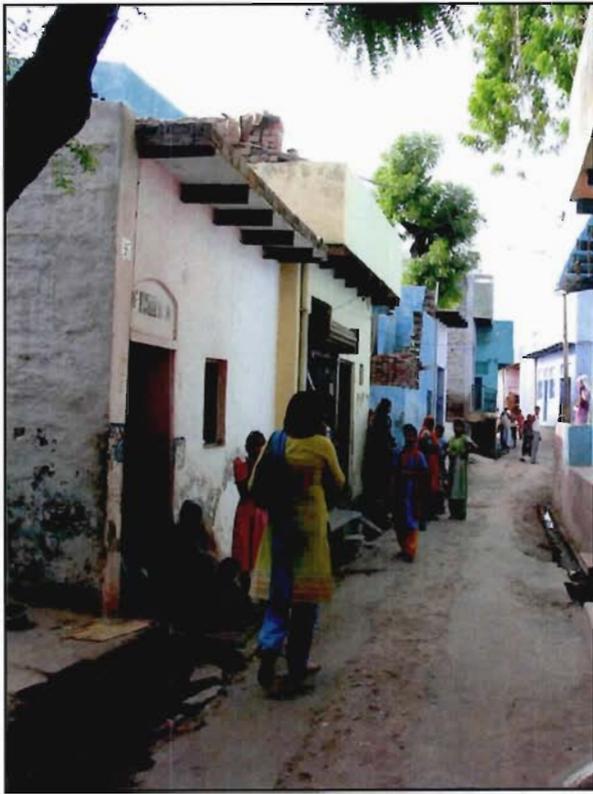
Figs. 9-10. Stepwell along Heritage Walk, part of a 350-yearold irrigation system.



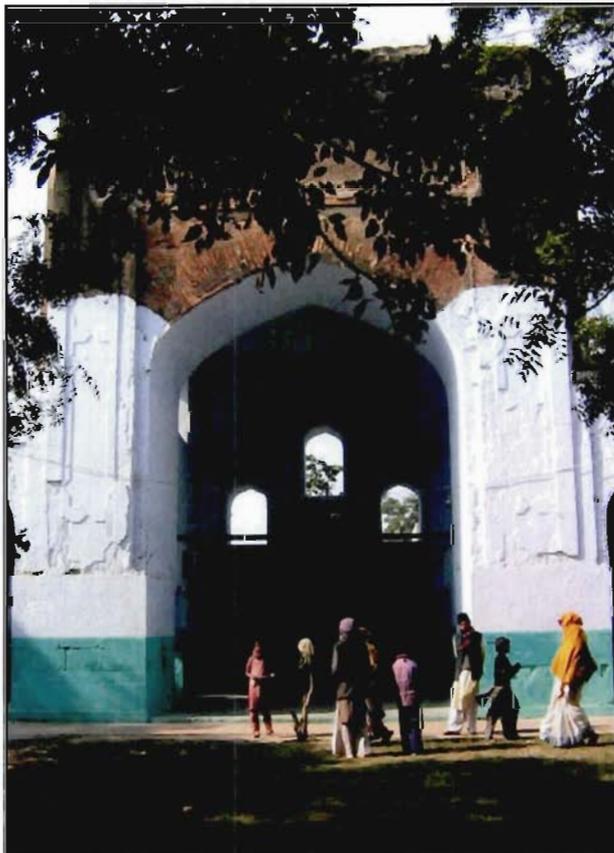


Figs. 11-13. Scenes approaching the village of Kathpura along Heritage Walk.





Figs. 14-16. Kachpura village scenes.

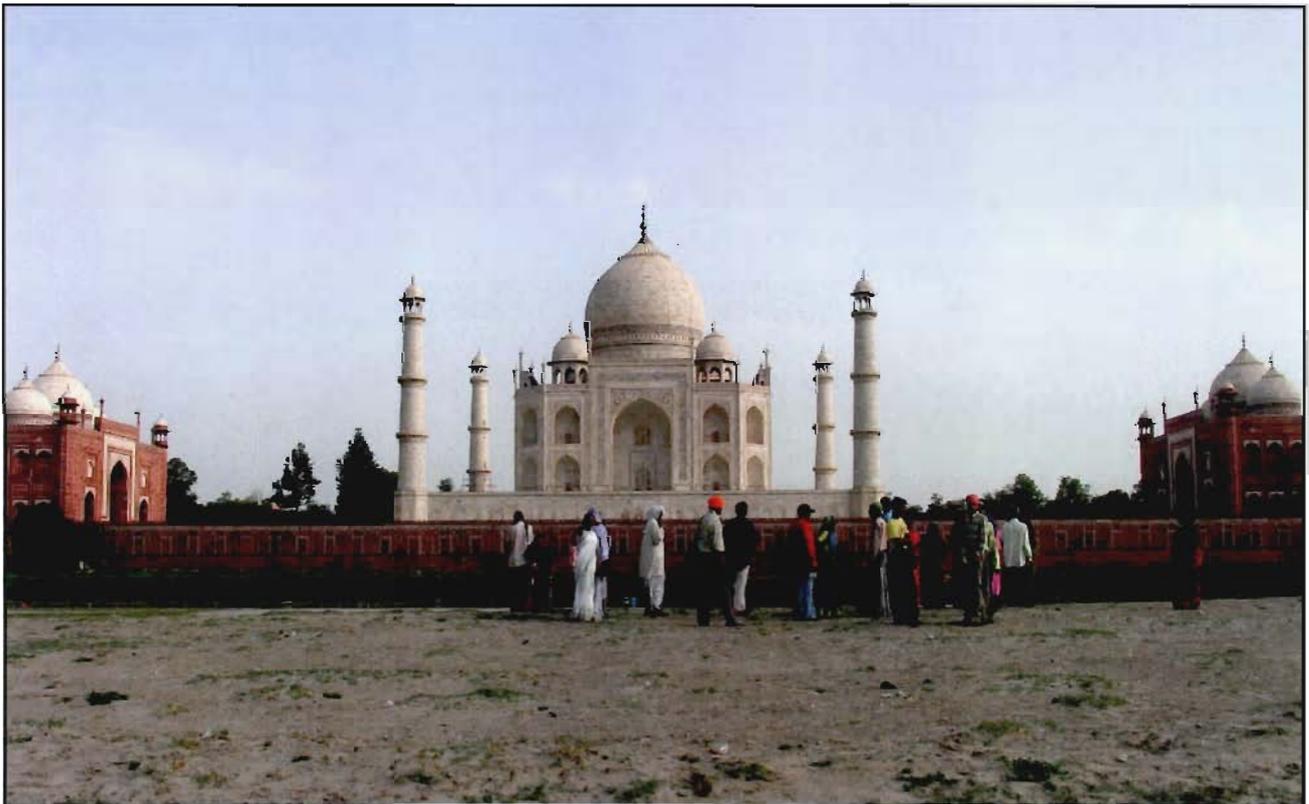


Figs. 17-18. Humayun's Mosque and 16th c. Mughal tombs in Kachpura.



Fig. .19. Walkway between Mehtab Bagh (r.) and Hindu temple on way to Taj Mahal overlook.

Fig. 20. Taj Mahal from east bank of River Yamuna.



Project Proposal: Mughal Gardens Heritage Walk

This working title incorporates the Agra theme, and links to the historic features in the area. Mughal Gardens Heritage Walk (MGHW) is conceived as a 2-km walking loop that incorporates the two communities of Marwari Basti and Katchpura, along the linking riverbank, agricultural dikes and fields. A leisurely guided walking tour would take visitors about 1.5 hours to complete.

MGHW is conceived as a community-based tourism enterprise that offers a high-end visitor product. It would be marketed, presented, and priced as a special heritage experience with a skyline dominated by two major sites, the Taj Mahal and Agra Fort. The MGHW concept is that 'visitors are our guests' with whom the communities share their local history and oral heritage, their arts and foodways. The communities look after their guests' security and respect their privacy, recognizing that this is good for business. Visitors see how a community tourism enterprise is a green model for Agra, and beyond.

Visitors would begin their walking tour at Marwari Basti, a 90-year-old raw migrant village imbedded with the culture of Rajasthan, another part of the historic Mughal Empire. Here they are greeted by tour animator/guide who provides an overview of the tour, and orientation to the area. Guides then turn to the Marwari Basti village, explaining where the culture came from, its history and current culture with a connection to Mughals. Community artisans produce authentic crafts for sale.

Along the walk, visitors learn about Mughal times and gardens, and the 350-year garden aqueduct and well system built atop even more ancient Mughal complexes. Gayarah Sidi (Eleven Steps), Humayun's 16th century astrological observatory is also located along the way. Visitors walk the dikes observing agricultural practices that are virtually unchanged from Mughal times. Their tour animator/guide shares local stories passed down through generations.

Visitors see how these people live today, and learn from community members about their arts and food ways. In Kachpura, a medieval village with narrow walking streets clustered around Humayun's Mosque (c.1530), visitors can have tea, coffee and local treats in an outdoor cafe in the village square, near to artisans and their crafts. The walk cumulates at Mehtab Bagh (Moonlit Garden) with the awe-inspiring view of Taj Mahal directly across the Yumanu River.

MGHW interpretation offers a unique oral history, a "behind-the-scenes" treasure not available anywhere else. Everything a visitor hears and sees is unique. Tour animators/guides are from the communities, and offer authenticity and intimate "insider" access to the community. They carry a quiver of roll-down fabric banners, or scrolls, to orient and to illustrate key points; these are attached as needed to discrete stands placed periodically along the Trail. No permanent signage mars the landscape or requires maintenance.

Product Niche and Market Assessment

Increasingly, visitors want a local experience with meaning and integrity. They want experiences that are socially and environmentally responsible, where they can connect with a place and its people. MGHW is a good model for this type of experience.

MGHW is conceived as a high-end product, to be marketed, presented, and priced as an exclusive experience. To sustain the experience and limit impact on the communities, MGHW should be a very limited product offering, an alternative to the average Agra tourism experience. It would be best seen as an alternative, away from monument guides and traditional tour groups. Marketing should be done through word of mouth, website links, and publications directed to travelers who are looking for 'authentic' experiences.

Tour groups should probably be limited to no more than 10-12 people, and the number of those tours should be limited to no more than 6-7 per day. One group should never see another group on the same walk: visitors should feel that they are the first to experience this place. Tours should operate no more than 4-5 days a week to mitigate impacts to the villages. Communities can decide how to best adjust these figures to retain their social fabric and traditional ways.

At this juncture, it is not possible to accurately assess domestic travelers in India. Therefore, foreign tourists alone will be considered here. Last year 3.2 million people visited the Taj Mahal. Of these, 40% (1,280,000) were foreign travelers. At least 50% (614,000) of these are independent travelers.

Conservatively speaking, 20% (128,000) of these are 'responsible travelers' - those looking for environmentally and socially responsible ways to connect with a place and its people. These are travelers who independently research visitor opportunities in an area. This group is our niche target market. Of this market, 15% (16,280) would be needed to run the enterprise at full capacity. In other words only one-half of one percent of all Taj Mahal visitors is needed to justify this opportunity. The financial potential is addressed later.

Planning and Management

MGHW is conceived as a community-based tourism (CBT) enterprise that would operate on several different levels: a core tour business, an associated artisan product development and sales programme, and a community development and improvement project. These would all come under an umbrella of a CBT management and steering group who would be subject to stakeholder review and input.

Management of Change

Community tourism is about social and economic change. Community tourism can enhance the sense of community identity, heritage awareness and pride, and broaden horizons. It has to be an ongoing, participatory process that analyses the benefits and impacts of the CBT enterprise for the whole community. It has to provide incentives for everyone involved. Everyone in the communities is affected by MGHW, everyone has a role in its success, whether as a tour animator, an artisan, a farmer whose fields are crossed by the tour groups, and residents whose hospitality toward visitors creates success and sustainability. Everyone stands to benefit, as they are all part of the business.

Challenges include groups and individuals having to form new working relationships and identity as a larger entity, leading perhaps to resentment among adjoining communities. To be successful, everybody needs to be involved, and taken very seriously by all stakeholders. There are many pre-

planning decisions to be made, while others will appear slowly, sequentially, as they are revealed by experience. To initiate the venture, there must be buy-in and willingness to participate, trust in the management structure, and at least some visible and soon-coming benefits.

A two-way understanding of the project's goals and methodology is needed. Careful explanation is needed of what the communities have to offer visitors, how to best preserve the integrity of the visitor experience and the community assets, and how success or failure depends on the way in which visitors are treated. The community needs to understand that their livelihood and prosperity depend on maintaining the product and its reputation, including the elements that make it successful, such as no hassling of visitors, and no inappropriate behavior. Visitors are to be treated as guests, and everyone needs to look out for their security and safety.

After an initial period of pilot tours in which people have gained some measure of experience and understanding of possible impact on their communities, further meetings should be held. The process should be introduced slowly to simultaneously build awareness and experience, and so as not to overwhelm the communities

The advantage of this venture is that it can all be done in successive layers, building upon experience and small steps. It can begin with what already exists, starting small and slowly building up as needed. This project can start right now, and build over time.

Organizational Capacity and Mechanism

The actual MGHW tour business is at the center of this enterprise. At the core are community tour animators/guides, and a small business center that provides information, takes reservations, arranges transportation, and handles other operational logistics. This requires financial mechanisms to be in place. The current business plan for tour animators/guides needs to be expanded to reflect this larger approach. The prime marketing tool of the business center would be a MGHW website, containing a tour description, schedule and fees, contact information, location map, and just enough background information and imagery to interest potential visitors.

A larger MGHW/CBT operation could oversee the various enterprises of the venture, and set the operational parameters. A thorough management plan needs to address all phases of the operation, yet remain flexible enough to quickly respond to changing conditions. The Plan should address product development, training, infrastructure, marketing, quality control, and mechanisms for profit distribution. The Plan should include collective benefits (funds used for the whole community) as well as individual benefits salaries, employment, and opportunities for micro-enterprise earnings (for example craft sales).

A substantial and set percentage of income generated should go into a MGHW product development fund to be used to enhance the product offering. This is especially crucial in the first years of the operation when reputation is being built. For quality control, guests should be asked for feedback and to complete short forms upon completion of the tour.

The enterprise needs a board of advisors representing the necessary tourism and business expertise, and political clout in municipal, state, and national government. Such board members would provide immediate credence and value to the project, and be invaluable in forming partnerships to strengthen and support the MGHW effort.

Management for Community-based Tourism Organizations

Community-based organizations are often driven by strongly held values aimed at poverty reduction, community well being, environmental sustainability, and heritage/cultural protection. Community-based organisations require job creation & training, site development and enhancement, and the equitable distribution of all benefits among community stakeholders.

General management skill sets required

Leadership: integrity, transparency and accountability in responding to community and visitor needs; commitment to learning and innovation;

Entrepreneurship: creative problem solving and relationship building; training in product development, visitor services, and human resources;

Communications: writing/editing, publicity/marketing, product identity (branding) and placement, grant writing and funding.

Finances: accounting (bill paying, taxes, contract writing), salaries, benefits, profit distribution.

Specific tourism skills and scope of work

- Basic knowledge of responsible tourism principles and community-based sustainable tourism;
- Tools for running small businesses and financial management;
- Awareness building, understanding and trust among all stakeholders;
- Ability to hire competent staff that shepherd the goals of the organization, keep detailed financial records, and maintain project documentation;
- Production and sales of tourism-associated products (artisan crafts, food/beverage, tours, visitor information, etc.)
- Marketing strategies, product promotion and placement;
- Ability to design and conduct workshops and training programs;
- Experience in writing manuals, educational, and promotional materials.
- Capacity to build and coordinate a network of partners/supporting institutions among governmental sectors, educational institutes, non-governmental organisations and private business for the benefit of the enterprise and to promote its ideas and plans.
- Coordination between community and key project partners to develop sustainable networks in the region and internationally.

Katchpura Restoration and Enhancement

Planning should include the restoration of Kachpura. Although the community can begin the MGHW enterprise in its present condition, great effort should be put into improving its appearance and living environments of its residents. A planning effort should identify and inventory key architectural elements that give the area a sense of place, and a unifying theme should be identified. A guideline should be put in place for all construction, renovation and removal of built environment. Renovation should enhance both exteriors and interiors, including services and sanitation that improve the standard of living of its people. The concept is to constantly improve living standards as well as the product offering. A large percentage of MGHW net income should go into the Kachpura renovation fund. Architectural opportunities are there to implement green designs.

Plans should include the restoration of Humayun's Mosque. This would be an ideal partnership with ASI. The mosque yard should be restored into a simple, yet beautiful Mughal garden with well-tended Mughal tombstones. As this is one of the oldest Mughal structures in Agra (1530), the burial place of Babur's friends and advisors (and possibly the original burial spot of Babur, himself), the atmosphere should be one of awe and great beauty. The visitor should be made to feel that they have come to a very special place, indeed.

Involvement and Benefits to other Communities

A sari market in the adjoining community of Nangla Devjeet, could possibly be incorporated into the walk and enterprise. (I became aware of it only after leaving Agra.) Yamuna Bridge Colony, the portal access to MGHW, would no doubt benefit from a Heritage Walk a street market of artisans. Katra Wazir Khan, another nearby community that has a cloth shoe-cover production operation, could produce souvenir products for MGHW. An enterprise partner of mini-buses (minimum fleet of two, creating jobs for more people, perhaps in adjacent communities) could pick up visitors at their hotels (for a fee) and deliver them to a simple, open-sided welcome pavilion at Marwadi Basti.



Fig. 21. Shoe-cover production in nearby community of Katra Wazir Khan, a CAP livelihood project.

Protection of Offering

The MGHW story script and logo should be copyrighted (after the CBT organization is registered) so that no one else can use it without permission. The story would include the interpretation of Mughal gardens and agricultural practices, their relationship to modern agriculture (same methods, same crops), centuries-old community oral history modern communities, and a cutting-edge community-tourism model is unmatched. The products being offered are provided by the tour animators and the communities. Other tours could not offer visitors the "inside" story, nor the direct access to the community, and signage. Guests would wear a ticket on a string (made locally) to identify them as such.

Artisan Products

Visitor attractions can also include the creation of products with tour animators guiding the interaction between visitors and the artisans at work. Locally-produced artisan crafts should be as high-quality and unique as is the MGHW. Training can be done with local artisans in the two communities to create products more desirable to visitors and suitable to the venture.

A pleasing souvenir would be a MBHW wall hanging in the form of a decorative silk-screened, roll-up banner with a wood roller kit (a smaller version of the same banners used by tour animators). The stamped MGHW map and logo hanging from polished wood rollers would make an easily transportable, high-quality product, and a very desirable item to hang in one's home. Knowing that this product is made by, and supports, local communities would make it a valuable and satisfying souvenir. The nearby east bank community of Katra Wazir Khan is already producing cloth shoe covers featuring stamped logos as part of a CAP initiative. This would be a natural and easy extension to that enterprise, generating income in surrounding areas, while allowing the MBHW communities to concentrate on more 'authentic' artisan crafts products that visitors can watch being made.



Fig. 22. Concept for souvenir wall hanging.

Local foods are another potential artisan product. A taste of Kachpura can be a snack with tea or coffee in the village square. Healthy and desirable local dishes made from locally-grown and pesticide-free ingredients benefits everyone.

Financial Potential

If MGHW is to be sustainable, it would have to totally generate its own necessary funds, at least after an initial period of provided technical assistance. Often CBT enterprises are proposed for communities and areas where it is difficult to see where sufficient market base and income potential exists to provide support. MGHW has much going for it, but what are the potential financial benefits for MGHW? Could the MGHW enterprise really be self-supporting?

Some basis is needed in order to begin to calculate this income potential. How this measures against community needs will have to be determined. The following is offered for that discussion only. The income figures for the tour and associated ventures are calculated to show the potential generation if the business is operating at full capacity. Although this is considered feasible, it will not happen overnight.

The tour at full capacity, with around 1400 visitors a month paying a tour fee of 400 rupees each, would yield a net income of 560,000 rupees/month.

Other income could be generated by artisan products, such as high-quality products matched to the venture theme. If we assume an average of 200 rupees per visitor, the annual income would be 280,000 rupees in sales.

MGHW souvenir wall hangings could sell for 400 rupees per unit. Estimating that at least one-third of visitors would be buyers that would mean 186,666 rupees per month in sales. Production levels of 1000 units per month, at 33 units per day, would employ a number of local people.

Katchpura Tea Service

In a corner of the main plaza or courtyard of Kachpura, tables and chairs placed under an awning could serve as a movable outdoor cafe for refreshments such as tea, and coffee, along with local baked goods or sweets prepared by the community. This would provide a desirable rest stop halfway through the tour. Supposing sales averaged 100 rupees per visitor, this would net 140,000 rupees per month.

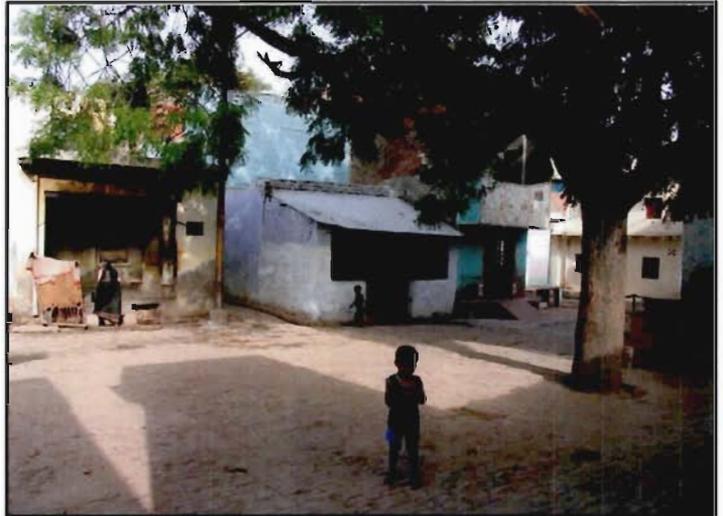


Fig. 23. Kachpura public square would make good location for tea service.

Kachpura Guesthouse

This is an option that should be introduced slowly, and only after the MGHW enterprise has been established, the people of Kachpura have adjusted to the new community business of tourism, and the village is in the process of renovation.

Kachpura could offer a very limited number of rooms for overnight visitors, limited to 1 or 2 rooms on the 2nd story of a new or renovated village building. Lodging would require clean rooms with a private toilet and bath, and an unobstructed view of the Taj in a veranda overlook. Rooms should have cross ventilation from windows, insect screening, and shades.

Downstairs should be a small dining room and kitchen where the caretaker could prepare and serve breakfast and an evening meal of fresh foods representing local cuisine. Optionally, food service could also be provided in another nearby location. Safety and security of visitors should be insured. Conversely, having overnight visitors in the community is potentially disruptive to the social fabric. Community overnight stays could be limited (to certain nights per month) to mitigate the disturbance. This should be a community-owned enterprise, as it affects everyone in the Kachpura community.

Across the river in the city, the price for lodging with a glimpse of the Taj Mahal is hundreds of US dollars. Here, the Taj with an expansive view, within a quiet medieval village setting, with great character and fresh local food can be yours. A price of US \$80 is a reasonable initial nightly rate to begin the venture. That would mean a potential monthly net income of 71,040 rupees (2 rooms x 10 nights/month = US\$1600).

Taj Viewpoint Concession

An additional community venture that would serve a well-beyond the clientele of MGHW would be a simple refreshment service located adjacent to the temple at the riverbank and Taj overlook. This level, shaded and peaceful setting would only need a few sets of simple tables of chairs, perhaps set on a flagstone floor. The back of this area is defined by the graceful arch of a Mughal aqueduct.

Refreshments such as bottled water, tea, and coffee could be served to visitors. To be able to sip a cup of tea while looking at the panoramic view of the Taj Mahal in such a setting would be a priceless experience for visitors. This is a much-needed service, and potentially a very profitable business, as thousands of tourists visit this location. A public toilet is needed here.



Fig. 24. Temple courtyard at Taj viewpoint, Mehtab Bagh.



Fig. 25. A good location for beverage service at Taj viewpoint. Note aqueduct remnants in background.

Needs and Next Steps

It is important that MGHW begin now, and then build slowly toward full development. These are some of the first development steps and needs:

Community Consultation

Present the concept of the enterprise to communities and explain that there will be a pilot project to get things started.

Assessment Tours

In order for communities to understand the programme and potential impacts, a series of pilot tours should be conducted to simulate the real thing. These provide tour animators/guides with experience, and income, along with the recognition of their new profession. Tours can be conducted with CAP, USAID and other partner contacts. These should be paid tours with the income going into an existing CAP community account, for people to see real benefits. The idea is to provide the guides 'behind-the-wheel' training and generate income, while giving the community an opportunity to see the venture and its effects on their daily lives. Pilot tours could be conducted in Hindi, in order for the tour animators to gain confidence and presentation practice.

Create Tour Script and Banners

A quality tour script is needed that weaves the story of Mughal history, local oral tradition, and today's communities. This story will shape the contents and layouts of interpretive banners.

Community Assessment Workshops

Follow-up assessment workshops with community groups measure reactions, adjustments, and can launch initial planning efforts.

Organizational Management Training and Establishment

A basic need is a MGHW umbrella mechanism or organization. This would require a specialist to work with business strategies and planning, financial planning, and staff training in areas of visitor behaviour and services. A guidance board is needed to begin building institutional and community partnerships.

Further Tour Animator Training

English language training is needed for the tour animators. This can be a combination of a tutor coming into the community for a certain number of hours per week, and on-the-job experience.

Expansion of Tour Business Plan

A business plan should be prepared for the tour organization which is at the heart of the programme. The business center would need a computer with internet access and a phone in order to provide information and to schedule reservations. The Center would determine how money is collected and deposited, how tour animators/guides are paid and the rate they are paid, etc. Policies can be amended as the venture evolves into a MGHW business plan to promote sustainable livelihoods for community youth, and as tour animators learn to manage the operations.

Community Tourism Training

A long-term Community Tourism Coordinator needs to be assigned to the enterprise to assist in all the details that will be needed in gearing the communities to a tourism enterprise focus. This includes tourism awareness training and hospitality workshops, appropriate artisan craft training; food vendors would need training in sanitation norms and small business management.

Infrastructure and Built Environment

Community toilets are needed for Marwari Basti and Kachpura, with attendants trained in sanitation and maintenance. Communities need training in the importance of facility upkeep for the success of the tourism enterprises. A third toilet is needed at Mehtab Bagh Taj overlook if it is developed into a community concession enterprise.

A welcome pavilion would be beneficial in Marwari Basti. Simple banner stands could be installed at several key points along the trail. Trail tread could be widened and firmed.

A Community Built Environment Plan

An inventory and assessment of Kachpura architectural infrastructure should begin at the programme outset to determine built environment guidelines and priorities. A planning effort should identify and inventory key architectural features that give it a unique feel and sense of place to the area. A central theme should be identified. And guideline should be put in place for all construction, landscaping, and renovation, including the removal of existing elements.

Agra Linkages

An enhanced approach to overall tourism in Agra is needed - one tied to clean-up of slums and other urban renewal efforts to reveal and make accessible additional Agra assets (Annex IV: Agra Tourism Recommendations). As the leading economic driver of the city, tourism should benefit all segments of the population. Economically motivated urban renovation and tourism efforts require a new paradigm, one that is community-based. Wherever possible, the community should define and shepherd their own development. Government should be a supporter of this effort, but cannot be an effective instigator.

Community-based organizations (CBOs) could be a mechanism to promote tourism aimed at sustainable economic development and positive social change for Agra: urban renewal and poverty alleviation, and regeneration of Agra's overall tourism product. In which CAP initiates, government supports, and international economic and technical assistance strengthen the projects.

Development in Agra should be a focus of CDP-CDS, In which CAP initiates, government supports, and international economic and technical assistance strengthen the projects. Replicable models include the CAP Heritage Walk as part of this larger effort. In addition to the Heritage Trail Study Area on the east bank, there are other neighborhoods and sections of the city that could assess the opportunities for this type of enterprise and their measurable social benefits.

Agra Community-based Tourism Network

Potential community-based tourism enterprises would need the support of a centralized organization to access planning and development tools. This has the advantage of avoiding duplication of efforts, benefiting from cumulative experience and networking with all stakeholders and partners.

An Agra Community-Based Tourism Network organization (ACTNet), for example, could be an incubator and strengthen and empower individual community efforts through the participatory development of CBT. As an umbrella organization, ACTNet could be the node around which all Agra CBT capacity-development services are embedded, and the primary training provider/facilitator for CBOs engaged in community-based tourism management activities. ACTNet could provide a basic roadmap forward, and serves as a screening mechanism for potential CBTs, provide assistance to strengthen the technical and managerial capacity of CBOs, be a conduit for international finances and assistance, an advocacy organization with city institutions, as well as a marketing mechanism for Agra CBTs..

In addition to establishing a framework for wider Agra tourism, ACTNet would also insure continuity of service and inter-organizational involvement to improve institutional capacity and promote linkages across sectors. ACTNet could provide best practice models not only for Agra CBOs, but in other cities throughout the region.

ACTNet strategic interventions could include:

- Identify and assessment; identify assets, assess capacity, and measure feasibility, market demand, and financial sustainability;
- Identify local needs for specific capacity-building assistance. Based on these needs, develop a technical assistance package that combines workshops, training programs, mentoring, and grants to address the ability of NGOs to facilitate and support CBOs;
- Assist CBOs to form legal trusts and develop management plans, and directly (or through provision of subgrant) provide an array of managerial skills focusing on (1) broadly based, dynamic community participation, (2) effective project and financial management, and (3) a sound understanding of management practices;
- Develop a Policies and Procedures Manual, and establish the vision and a long-term strategic development planning needed by CBOs;
- Facilitate a joint-venture agreement between Agra area communities, registered as the Agra Community Trust, and ASI to take over the management and protection of certain monuments;
- Establish guidelines for dealing with the various institutions;
- Assist with the development of a national policy in coordination with international organizations, and a consultation process with regional and local stakeholders;
- Assist with business plan development, business management, marketing planning, enterprise registration, taxation and investment strategy;
- Build leadership capacity, provide training in business development and management, provide instruction in community-based tourism, at the community level;
- Develop a CBO-leadership training course that provides access to basic skills needed to help their CBOs organize and conduct activities more effectively;
- Develop certification programs for CBTs in order to insure knowledge of standards and benefits;
- Monitor mechanisms and measurable results;
- Oversee marketing that connects CBTs with global marketing/branding/packaging;
- Create partnerships and partnership building capability;
- Create educational materials for awareness of Agra heritage and tourism potential; and
- Expand CAP website to include ACTNet, with links to member organizations, government agencies, and relevant data warehouses; an intranet part of the website could provide a range of CBT specific tools and resources, which will be made available to member CXBOs, and linked closely with online training modules.

Support and Sustainability

This type of tourism development effort has to be done at ground level: a top-down approach won't succeed. While support and intervention is needed, CBOs must be self-supporting and not dependent upon outside support. A sustainable funding mechanism is needed to provide technical and financial support to build capacity. Development of a long-term strategic marketing plan for ACTNet would enable its members to market products in international markets, to enhance city government and institutions in line with CBTs and their approach to tourism and city development.

A CBO Challenge Fund could be established to provide short-term funding on a grant-matching basis for capacity development initiatives. Stepped lending, the process by which borrowers who repay loans on time are eligible for increasingly larger loans, would keep initial risk at a minimum while allowing micro entrepreneurs to grow their businesses and increase their income. A percentage of Agra monument visitor fees could be a source of funds for this support effort.

CDS initial efforts could include a strategic planning process involving all Agra stakeholders. SCALE, a 'whole-system-in-the-room approach' developed for USAID by AED, is a good tool that helps sets common goals and commitments to action. This is a first step in follow through actions by USAID, keeping the information flowing between them, sometimes infusing cash or equipment, or other materials. AED could apply SCALE to any tourism project involving the GSTA [see below].

Agreements and partnerships could be developed with UP Tourism and Department of Tourism/ Government of India for support to the ACTNet approach and the promotion of Agra CBTs. There are large number of historical buildings/monuments which are currently not actively being managed or protected by ASI. Through agreements with ACNET/individual CBOs and Department of Tourism, efforts could be made to co-ordinate preservation, conservation and upkeep of old buildings. Moreover, these properties could be developed into heritage hotels, tourist museums, / tourist complexes and/or tourist resorts in collaboration with private entrepreneurs. Such partnerships could support efforts to revive traditional building arts and craftsmanship, etc.

UNEP's Tourism Programme provides support by developing principles and offering technical assistance to destination management organizations interested in using the Local Agenda 21 frameworks producing environmental standards. UNEP can assist governments to produce effective policies, agreements, and implementation programmes to national government through local authorities and regional organizations.

Another source of potential support is the World Heritage Centre, whose objectives include: strengthening a WH site's economic value to the local community, aiding communities around the sites to market their products, assisting in raising demand for local products that offer local communities an alternative economic source, training local community members in tourism related activities to participate in the industry and receive tourism's benefits (this includes training local people in business and marketing skills to promote existing products that have positive impacts on conservation), planning and capacity-building in tourism, and assisting in the development of promotional and educational materials to raise public awareness.

Other potential sources of international assistance includes the proposed Global Sustainable Tourism Alliance (GSTA) that has been organized with USAID/EGAT under the USAID Global Development Alliance program. The GSTA could be used to address sustainable tourism holistically, considering the social, environmental, governance and economic issues affecting tourism development. The GSTA would aim to build, strengthen, and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the entire tourism value chain: policy environments, local tourism boards, and

Small, Micro, or Medium-sized Enterprise, to better meet the demands of tourists. A foundation to this approach is in helping to create consensus, reach common goals, improve communication, and foster collaborative action among multiple and sometimes non-cooperative value chain stakeholders. The desired end result will be a commitment by all participating entities to implement joint initiatives, and transfer a greater level of the financial, promotional, investment, and developmental responsibilities away from international donors to private sector tourism industry leaders and local Small, Micro, or Medium-sized Enterprise. The GSTA is expected to be accessed through a USAID request proposal, and would require a one-to-one dollar match with implementation partners.

The Green Globe Certification Programme can provide a pathway required to protect CBO assets on which their livelihoods depend, while gaining a competitive edge. While this is a longer-range benefit once CBTs are formed, its concepts should be introduced early in planning.



Fig. 26. Olive vendor in Agra market.

Conclusion

The CAP Heritage Walk project is a feasible and economically viable product. The process has been started by CAP, and the MGHW can begin operating in a limited capacity with very little effort. Building an organizational structure and management team is needed to initiate the enterprise, a process that will require outside assistance pm a variety of levels. Open communication and participation with the stakeholder communities is fundamental to the project's success. The experience gained from a pilot project will be the best teacher of what is needed for a successful enterprise.

The importance of Mehtab Bagh as part of the Taj Mahal complex is increasingly recognized, especially when people see that there is money to be made here with tourism. The MGHW is an opportunity for local communities to take the lead in what is done here, and to establish themselves economically and socially before further development takes place.

The potential for the larger CAP HeritageTrail area is tremendous, but it will require long-term coordination and partnership-building to make it happen. The development of a River Walk along the high east bank of the River Yamuna, linking Mughal monuments and community walks and enterprises, could be a key element in the ACTNet approach, and a key visitor offering in the enhancement of Agra's economy.

All the elements of the city tourism success are already in place: a rich medieval Mughal heritage, centuries of artisan workshops, a vibrant market place and other unique neighborhoods and features. These elements haaave but to be cleaned up, enhanced, and made accessible to visitors in a 'Reveal Agra' approach.

An Agra-wide approach to changing the city through CBT should be a focus of the CDP-CDS programme. An ACTNet organisation could be the driver for this change. Agra needs a best-practice CBT model for multiple community cooperation. Mughal Gardens Heritage Walk can provide that model. MGHW tour animators/guides could become ambassadors to other city communities, sharing their experience and knowledge in developing opportunities for community well-being through responsible tourism.

All the programmes presented in this assessmenty are viable and can advance sustainable development in the city. The benefits to local people and visitors alike are evident. The cornerstone is simply to begin: the smallest on-the-ground effort at change can spark more action. That is worth more than a mountain of planning.

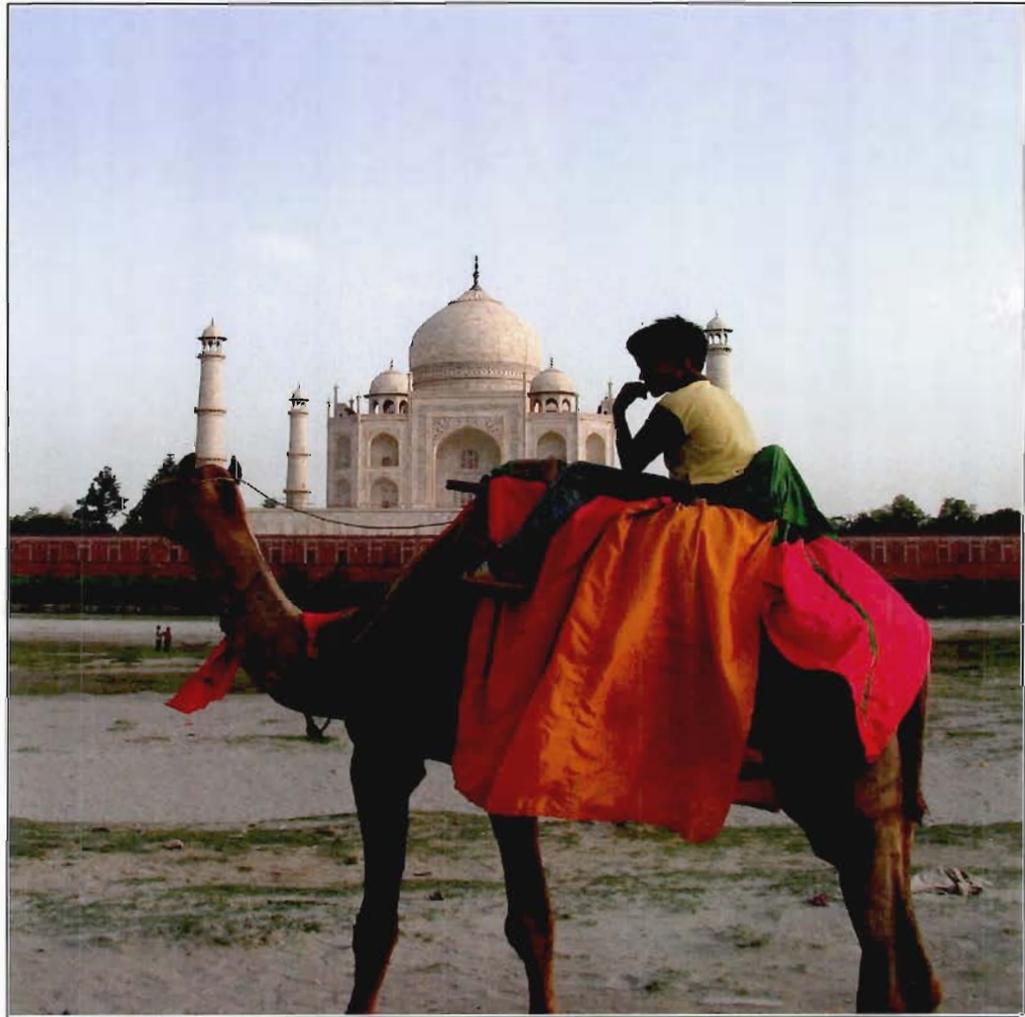


Fig. 27. Boy and camel at Metab Bagh Taj Mahal viewpoint.

Annex I: Term of Reference for Tourism Consultant for Cross-Cutting Agra Program

Mapping the range of tourism stakeholders for Agra and defining their potential role in the context of CAP-CDP-CDS-JNNURM. Who all should CAP-CDS Tourism Task Force be talking to consulting within Agra and outside? What questions should we be asking of them?

Analyzing the tourism based products /activities, in particular the village heritage walk, being developed/proposed under CAP from the perspective of their commercial viability and capacity to generate sustainable livelihoods for poor women and youth groups. Are products being developed under CAP viable/sustainable?

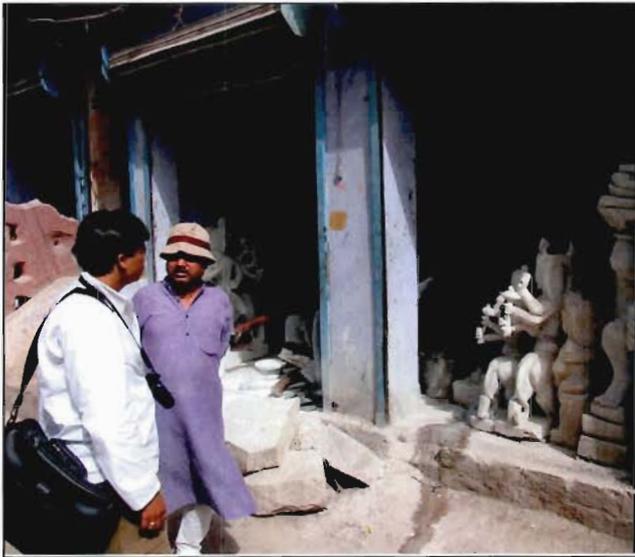
Preparing a framework for tourism development in Agra in the context of promoting sustainable livelihoods for the poor, with appropriate linkages with CAP-CDS-JNNURM.

Identify from the above the set of activities that can be implemented under CAP, CDS and JNNURM? Prepare a log frame matrix with goals, objectives, activities, measurable indicators, stakeholders, and indicative budgets for implementation of these activities.

Identifying other tourism products that could be developed in the context of Agra. What more can we do? Are there other products that can be developed?

Discuss the proposed tourism framework/ /products with key city stakeholders before finalization.

Develop capacities of the CAP–CDS team on implementation of the proposed project activities.



Figs. 28-31. CAP team in Agra and Delhi.

Annex II: The Agra Assessment Team

Consultants:

Daniel Mattson
Director of Heritage Design (HD),
USDA Forest Service Tourism Assistance Unit.

Debashish Nayak
Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation Heritage Advisor;
Founder/trustee of CRUTA (Foundation for Conservation and Research of Urban Traditions and
Architecture Advisor)

CAP, CURE and USAID:

Renu Khosla
Director, CURE

Shveta Mathur
Program Manager, CURE

Kamna Swami
Program Manager, CAP

Rajesh Kumar
Project Officer, CAP

Hitesh Vaidya
Training Advisor, FIRE

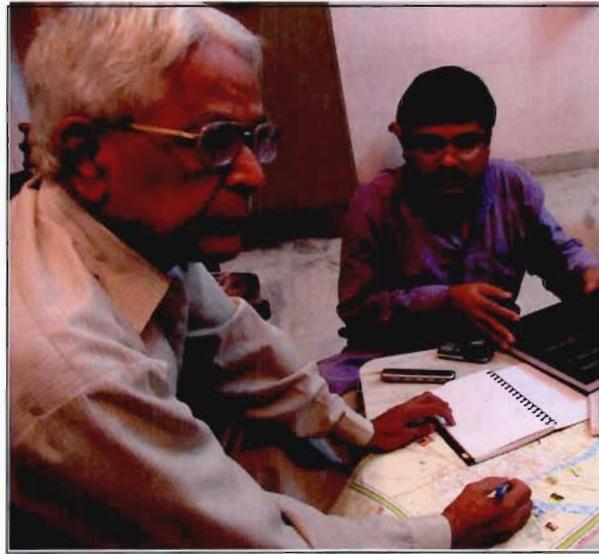
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Lee Baker
Chief of Party, FIRE

Ambar Dwivedi
Secretary, SANKALP

Renu Khosla
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Shveta Mathur
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Figs. 32-34. Consulting in Agra.



Annex III: Agra Consultations

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President, Tourism Guild of Agra

Mahatim Singh
Secretaty, Tourism Guild of Agra

D.K. Burman
Joint Director, Uttar Pradesh Tourism

Professor R. Nath
Mughal Architecture Expert

Workshop Participants, June 13

Dr. Ashok Kumor
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C. P. Pandey
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Jagdis L. Chandra
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R.P. Singh
Chied Engineer, ADA

Pawan Kumarlain
Citizen Council of Agra
Mathatim Singh
Secretary, Tourism Guild of Agra

Biresh Shomna
Food & Beverage Manager, Taj View Hotel

D. P. Bhaha
General Manager, Trident Hotel

R. Muralidharan
Accommodations Manager, Taj View Hotel

Vimay Pacinodh

Ravi Singh
Agra area farmer and environmental activist

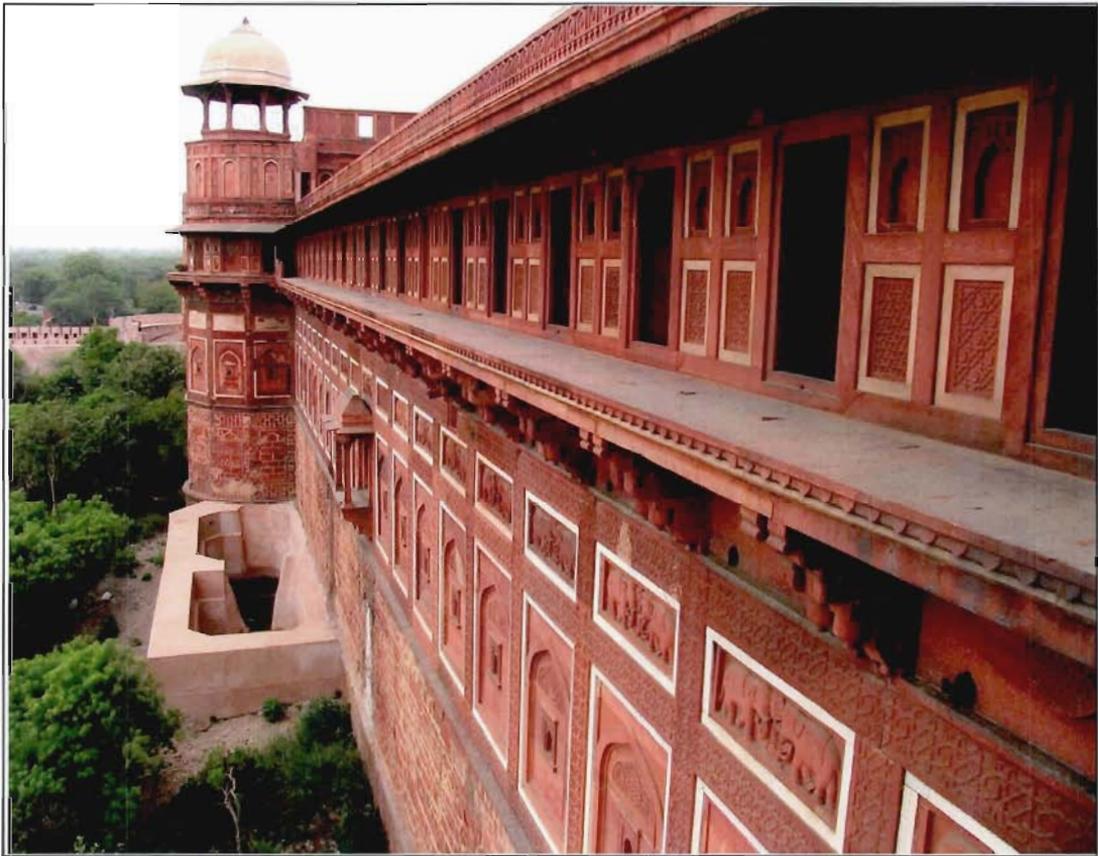


Fig. 35. Agra Fort World Heritage Site.

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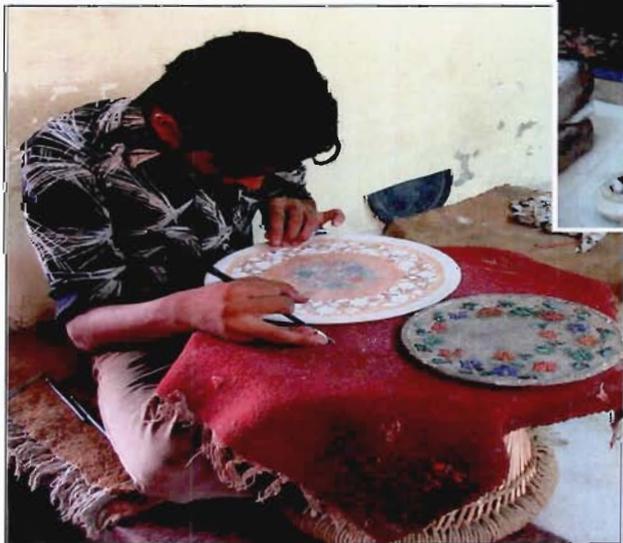
Debashish Nayak
Advisor, Heritage Programme
Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation

Kamna Swami
Program Manager, CAP

Rajesh Kumar
Project Officer, CAP



Figs. 36-39. Artisans of Agra.



Annex IV: Agra Tourism Recommendations (for AGRA CDP Heritage and Tourism Visioning Session)

Within the context of the CAP/USAID tourism assistance work, I was asked to make an assessment of Agra tourism product and make a few recommendations for its enhancement. This is especially relevant as it may relate to the current CDP-CDS efforts and the role of community projects. The following comments, based on visits to the city, consultations with local government and organizational personnel, are framed in my experience developing best practice tourism models in various parks and cities, in various parts of the globe over many years. The comments contained here are confirmed by Mr. Debashish Nayak, Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation Heritage Advisor and founder/trustee of CRUTA (Foundation for Conservation and Research of Urban Traditions and Architecture), based on his cumulative experience working in various cities in India and abroad.

Agra tourism has been traditionally based on “monument tourism.” Visitors see the World Heritage Sites of the Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, and Sikandra -, and then depart. Why would they want to stay longer? Why see another monument once you have seen the best? What else is there to do here? The answer from the visitor’s viewpoint is currently not obvious. From the community’s perspective, the answers will require a more complex approach.

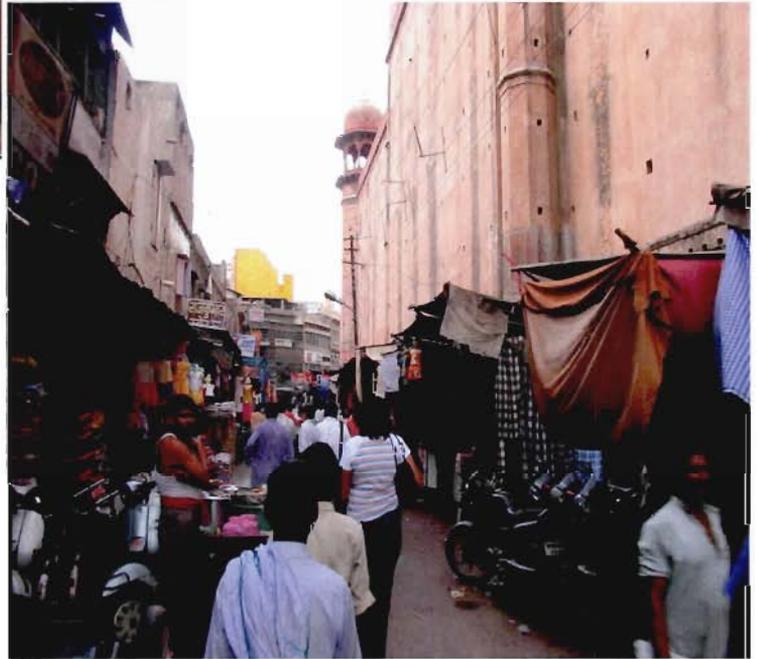
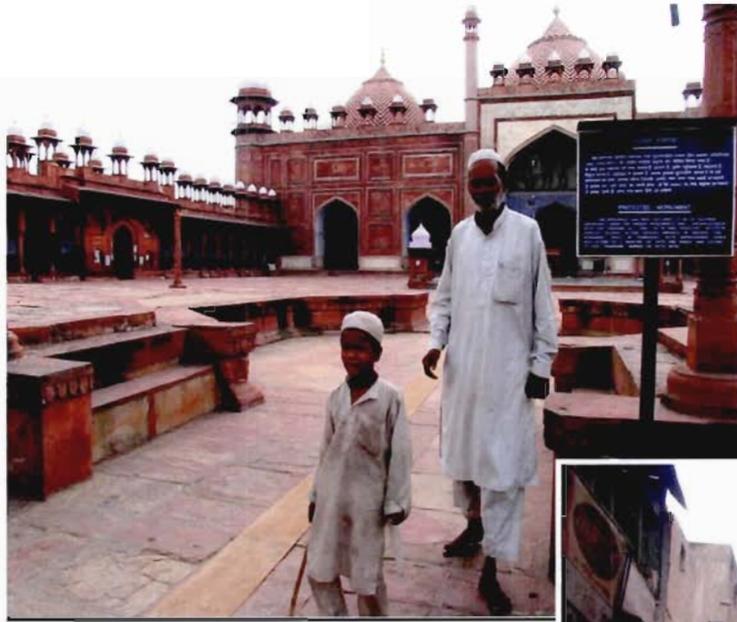
What does Agra have to sell that would make visitors want to stay longer? What can Agra do to improve its tourism economy, to keep visitors here longer? What is Agra’s product beyond the “big three” monuments. What are Agra’s assets?

The answer is the same everywhere: it is the ‘sense of place’ of where you live. Place is not just the land (or in this case the city), its heritage and its people – it is all three. What makes you unique from anyplace else in the world is this combination of who you are. It is important see what these combinations of elements are, and then preserve and enhance them. If you lose this, you lose your future.

Tourists increasingly want ‘authentic’ experiences. No one really travels to a place for just one ‘thing’, whether its termed ‘ecotourism’, ‘heritage tourism’, “adventure tourism” or any of the dozens other of labels commonly used. People really travel to experience the best of a place.

What are those best elements for Agra? The obvious response is the Mughal City of the 16th-17th centuries. Agra’s best is not confined to just a few monuments, but expands to include the entire Mughal city: how was it designed, how did its people live, and what were the various parts of society, what is the meaning of that city in the span of history, and how does it impact present-day Agra?

Tourism is all about visitor experience. This is the bottom line in building a successful product. Visitors want to experience place, but also to have a variety of interesting and enjoyable ways to do it. They need the basic services wherever those opportunities are offered. They want at least rudimentary levels of sanitation and safety. They want to be oriented to a place, know where they can go, and what they can see. It is the same for all people - locals and visitors from afar.



Figs. 40-43. Agra market area has great potential as a heritage walk.



Reveal Agra

Agra also has an important history stretching back thousands of years before the Mughal Empire, and was instrumental to India's history in the centuries since the Mughal era. Agra's people represent the span of this story. It is as seen in the arts and trade, workshops, community layouts, building construction and detailed architecture elements of Agra's various neighborhoods and communities.

A city-wide tourism focus should be to 'reveal' Agra. This means cleaning it up, removing those elements that hide its true nature. It means making it accessible to visitors and providing them opportunities to experience it. It also means creating tourism opportunities that better the quality of life of for the communities, the beauty and authenticity of the city, and that provide lasting economic and social benefit.

Tourism is the major economy of Agra, so it must involve everyone. Think of the city as a tourism factory, with all members of the city having a role and a job in production. If the factory is to be successful and sustainable, investments have to be made in improving the product and in improving the capabilities of all the workers.

Tourism is the driver for the real aim: economic and social development. Tourism should never be developed for the visitor only, but for the local people. Cleaning up communities, improving living conditions, and (as Debashish Nayak says) 'getting the city back to the people' provides the very basis to draw visitors to the city. Visitors are looking for this authenticity; something of value to the community will also be valued by visitors.

But if we look only at the 'big picture' of development it may seem overwhelming and too difficult to accomplish. The vision must be kept in mind, but attention has to be focused on small, bite-size pieces and accomplishments. Instead of waiting for governments to do it, it has to be done by the people for the people. It has to be driven by community initiatives and motivated by economic gain for local communities. You reclaim the city one house, one street and one community at a time. The role of the government should be to encourage and support this effort.

Educate and Empower

Everyone in the city should have some sense of the deep heritage of Agra; people need to be reminded that their heritage counts. The concept of the Mughal City needs to be "sold" to local people as well as to visitors. A sign banner with a map of the Mughal City superimposed over the present day city would help as such a visual prompt.

A city heritage group should can hold workshops and encourage community organizations and businesses into join in renewal efforts and possible ways they can benefit from tourism. Empower communities by providing models and spokespeople from successful community-based tourism programmes. Small neighborhood-based tourism cooperatives and similar business models are the key to real change.

Education efforts should also focus on tourism hospitality training. Visitors want to interact with local people, but they do not want to be hassled. Local people need to be informed about the expectations of international travelers: they do not want to feel that they are being taken advantage

of, or cheated. Community tourism enterprises and vendors should protect their reputation, realizing that treating visitors as their guests is directly tied to the success of their business. Enhancing Agra tourism is in everyone's best interest.

There should be an inventory of various architecture elements in the communities, resulting in a guide to architecture that provides a common language, and an understanding and of the importance of this resource. Guidelines should be developed for each block, neighborhood or community, as needed. These should steer community clean-up, renewal, and restoration efforts, and guide determine city planning.

Branding

'The City of Taj' has been a good brand, but it is locked into the idea of "monument tourism" dependent on Taj Mahal and the other World Heritage Sites.

'Agra of the Mughal Empire' is a broader branding effort. Agra can claim the Mughal Empire. The city that was the capital of one of the most powerful empires in world history has that right. Agra is the the Earth's finest example of a medieval Moghul city, and it has the first and best preserved Mughal garden in India (Ram Bagh). It is the original burial place of the Baber, the empire's founder of the Empire.

This approach not only provides the context for Agra's story, but it creates a wider global interest in Agra and expands the opportunities for interpretation and visitor experience. Framed in this approach, Agra becomes a regional center for understanding and bringing to life the Mughal Empire, not just home of its remnant structures.

Some Beginnings

A visitor centre should be established close to Agra Fort in the Old City. This location emphasizes the value in the area and will be a catalyst for urban renewal. It should be placed in view of the fort and other features. It should emphasize the use of colorful graphics (instead of words) to create excitement and dissolve the language and literacy barriers.

It's five themes should be:

The Mughal Empire

Mughal Agra

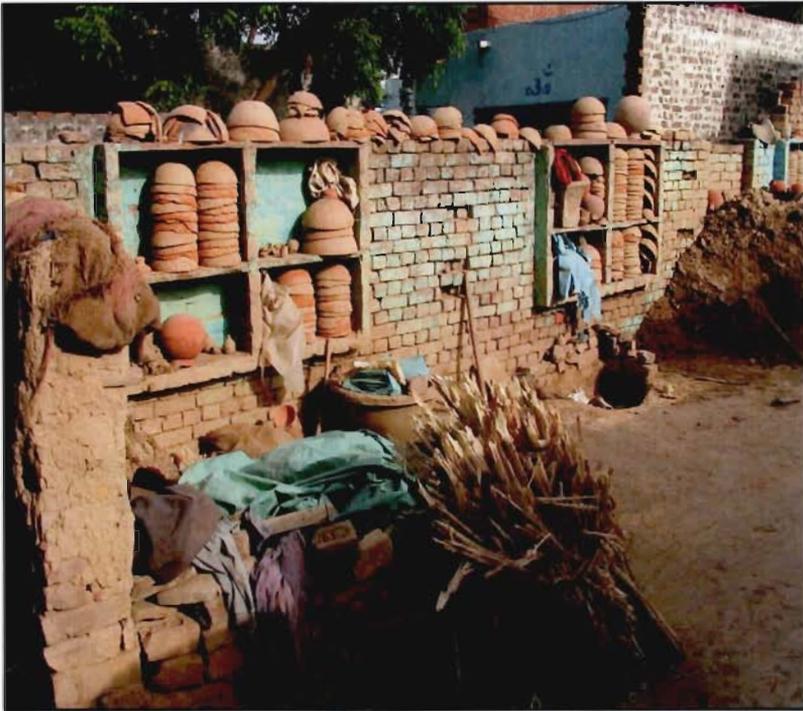
Agra before the Mughals

Agra after the Mughals

Agra's People and their Arts

The visitor center should serve as an anchor for heritage walks that extend out through the market and other nearby neighbourhoods, as well as to the Fort and other monument features. There are good possibilities for heritage walks through other communities of the city.

The important thing is to start – just do it. Don't get too caught up in planning the big picture. The solution is to right now start doing something. Build even some small success, and it will spark more action. People need to see something on the ground to believe in it. Doing now even the simplest things mentioned in this report will be a catalyst for change.



Figs. 44-45. Potter of Katra Wazir Khan.



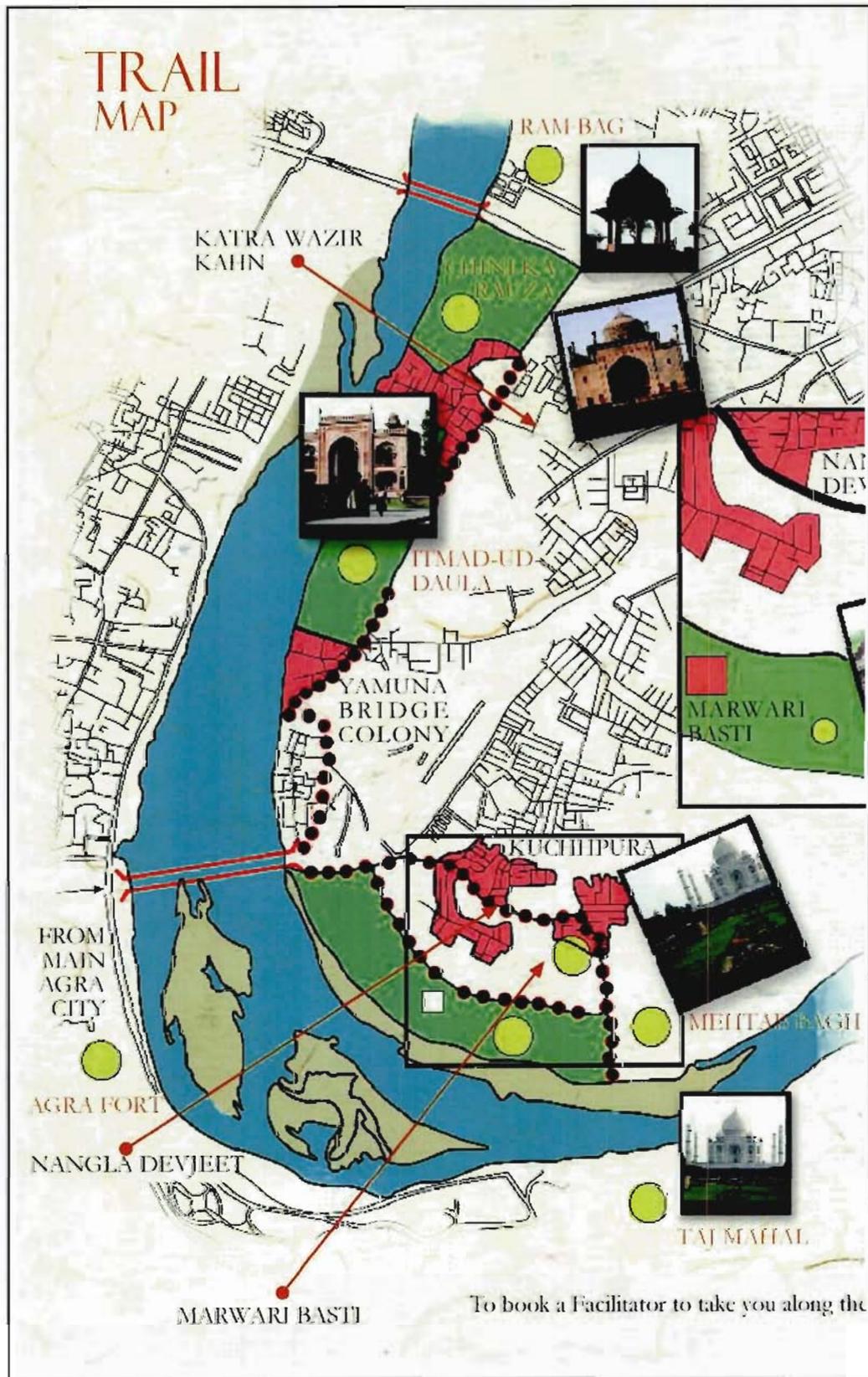


Fig. 46. CAP Heritage Trail Study Area map.

Annex V: CAP Heritage Trail Study Area Tourism Assessment and Vision

The East Bank of the River Yamuna is rich in Mughal heritage and semi-rural communities. It was here that 16th-century Mughal emperors chose to build their palaces and pleasure gardens. The East Bank still features these magnificent monuments, however overlaid by slum communities and traffic congestion. The Cap proposal here is for a heritage trail connecting all these features and communities.

Assessment

A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) approach was used in assessing the feasibility of this larger CAP project. The elements addressed here are similar to those of the more focused Heritage Walk.

Strengths

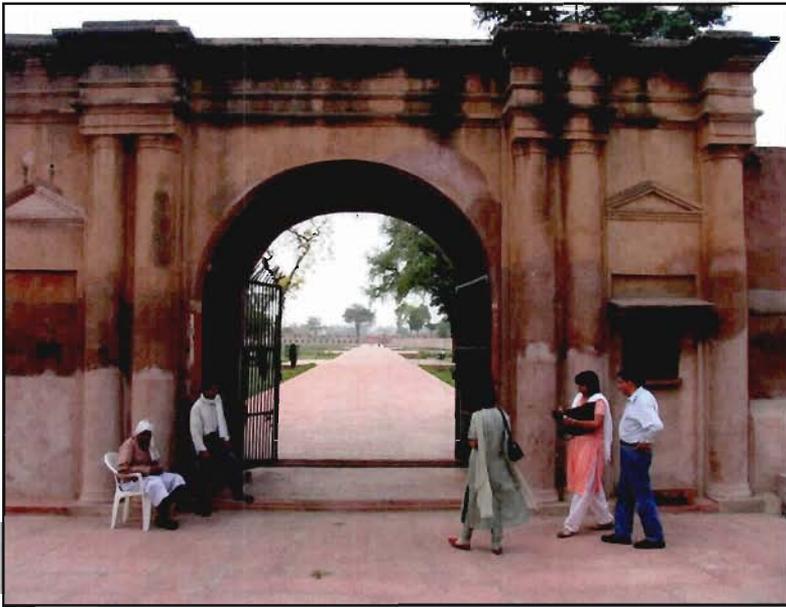
The setting has good attraction potential for tourists. Some of the best examples of Mughal monuments and the only existing Mughal gardens are located on the east bank. The adjoining communities contain potential for visitor draw: narrow walking streets, interesting village features, the opportunity to visit artisan workshops.

A well-established tourism market in Agra draws millions of visitors annually. Alternative visitor opportunities to monument tourism would no doubt be viable. The ease of access from the main city is another plus. The area is easily accessed from the main city.

CAP has already assembled information about monuments and the communities in the areas. An excellent trail has been created, based on digital city base maps, and a heritage trail brochure has been produced and to be placed in local hotels, tourist information centers and on the CAP website. A CAP training programme for tour animators focused on basic guiding skills and familiarity with nearby heritage monuments has created a cadre of 17 guides from local communities.

Area communities have expressed readiness to participate in tourism. CAP is already working in related activities, such as micro-enterprise skills development, business capacity-building and sanitation issues in these and adjoining communities. CAP has completed livelihood and household mapping for all settlements.

Local government and tourism associations support the venture. CAP has mobilized a general agreement of support from municipal and division commissioners, the Tourism Guild, Tour Operators Association, Small Hotels and Restaurant Association to for Heritage Trail area improvement. Guild has agreed to produce signage to east bank River Yamuna monuments.



Figs.47-49. Scenes of Ram Bagh, CAP Heritage Trail Study Area.



Weaknesses

Slum conditions in much of the area, heavy traffic congestion along main transportation corridor.

There is no organizational or management capacity for the heritage trail concept; it would have to be built from scratch. CAP livelihood programs have created an understructure that could be built upon.

The highway fly-over (overpass) is a serious congested area that isolates Ram Bagh from the majority of the east bank area.

There is a lack of basic needed infrastructure: telecommunications, services and sanitation facilities, clear trail corridor.

Agra's negative tourism reputation. Currently, Agra tourism is based solely on monument tourism featuring only the three World Heritage Sites. Few tourists spend more than one day in the area.

Uncertain land tenure, ownership and property rights; no doubt there are overlapping jurisdictional issues. These would have to be researched and agreements and partnerships formed. Agra lacks a city tourism development/master plan. Uncertain future plans government plans for the area.

Opportunities

It is a wide open niche market for a different value plus experience. Ram Bagh, the oldest and best-preserved Mughal garden in India, could be replanted and renovated. Under the direction of ASI and a Mughal garden expert, a master gardener could develop and oversee a partnership program with neighborhood plant nurseries. Its fountains and water channels could also be brought back to life. Ram Bagh could become one of Agra's major attractions.

The project has the potential for being self-supporting and improving the quality of life in the area communities. It also has the potential of being good for the environment, like solid waste management programs and, hopefully, less reliance on pesticides.

The opportunity for urban renewal on a small scale. There are many other tourism-related micro-enterprise and community cooperative business opportunities within the CAP Heritage Trail area.

Threats

Impacts on communities from tourism and economic change. Unknown if individuals and communities as a whole can work together successfully in business ventures; possibilities of jealousy between communities; only actual planning and experience will tell. Numerous stakeholders involved in Heritage Trail improvement plans (street vendors and hawkers, shop keepers, ASI, etc).

Skepticism and competing strong business interests in the private tourism sector slowing the pace of participation.



Figs. 50-51. Itmad Ud Daula (also called 'Little Taj') in the CAP Heritage Trail Study Area.



Feasibility

This is a great opportunity and should be developed. It needs to happen, but there are many issues to work out. It should tie to a Agra tourism development plan and projects coming out of CDP-CDS project. It should be taken in small bites. Ram Bagh garden is a good place to begin. In keeping with the Mughal sense of symmetry, east bank development should reflect that of the west bank. An ideal mechanism for this is linking these Mughal features and their adjacent communities in an extended river walk that hugs the east bank from Ram Bagh to the Yamuna Bridge Colony. The challenge is to keep focus on the ground and accomplishing change one project at a time.

River Walk Vision

Imagine this scenario of the not-to-distant future:

At Ram Bagh you can walk back in time, experiencing the fragrant gardens and hear fountains of the ingenious irrigation system as Babur and Jandahir planned it. From there you can continue south on Mughal walls that overlook the river far below and views of Agra Fort and the Taj Mahal.

The walkway connects the fabulous monuments of Chini Ka Rauza and Itmadu-ud-Ullah, while winding through narrow streets of adjoining communities. Along the way, you can rest and have tea or coffee under an awning concession, or dine at a community cooperative café. Continuing on you walk by small artisan workshops. Periodically are walkways accessing the main business street, where shopping and other attractions are possible.

The 4-km river walkway is enough for two days of exploring. Clean and safe community guest lodges along the way provide look out onto the monuments and of Agra across the river; and provide a peaceful alternative to high rise tourist hotels. The possibilities continue down the river to Yamuna Bridge Colony, and then tie with Mughal Gardens Heritage Walk, Metab Bagh and the fabulous view of the Taj Mahal.

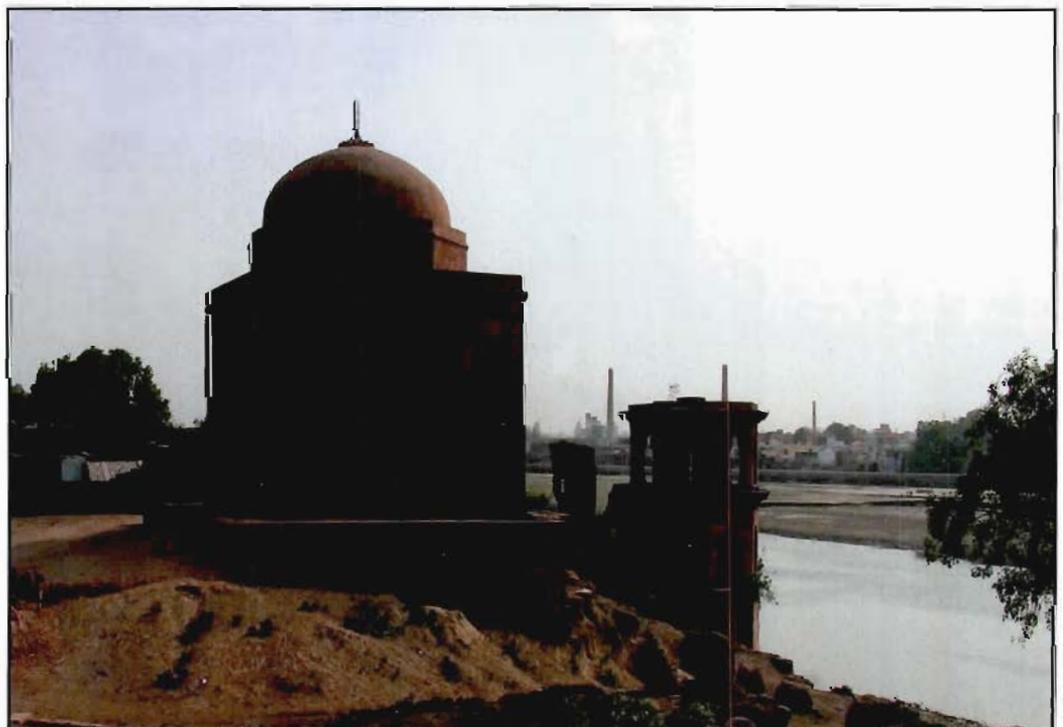
Conclusion

The heritage trail concept has much potential as a viable coalition of enterprises and as driver for urban renewal. Its development would greatly enhance Agra tourism. The river walk concept is a long-term programme. The concept should be a focus of the CDP-CDS process.

Beginning with individual pieces will provide energy and models for others. Ram Bagh renovation is a good project. Another starting point is connecting the major monuments of Chini Ka Rauza and Itmadu-ud-Ullah, with a walkway along the river through the community of Katra Wazir Khan. CAP livelihood and sanitation projects here have provided a foundation.



Figs. 52-53. Chini Ka Rauza, adjacent to the community of Katra Wazir Khan, in the CAP Heritage Trail Study Area.





Figs. 54-55. Yamuna Bridge Colony in the CAP Heritage Trail Study Area.



